

The Heart of Prayer

Luke 18:1-14

1/15/01

Intro

Last week the Lord told the disciples that difficult times would come before His return.

This week He encourages them by teaching them about how much God cares for them when they pray. This will be a great help to them during those difficult times He spoke of.

He wants them to stay faithful in prayer because of how it will strengthen their faith.

Here are lessons about the heart of God in prayer.

I. You Don't Have to Twist God's Arm.

Vs 1- 8

A. The parable is a contrast between an unrighteous judge and God.

- The unrighteous judge neither feared God nor cared about men.
- The woman had to bother him, "give him a black eye," in order to be heard.
- ***How much more*** will God listen to our prayers, who cares for us deeply?

B. Prayer is a significant part of our faith.

Vs 1 & 8

- Prayer keeps us connected to the Lord.
- We are changed by our inputs and an important part of prayer is God's input into our spirit.

Illus- Some people are like a watch that gets set once a week.

How much better would it be to stay in tune all the time. Prayer does this.

C. We also need to trust in God's timing in His answers.

We don't always rush in to fix our children's problems. It's not always the best thing for them.

God wants us to have the character of Christ, and sometimes that means allowing us to learn through trials.

Illus-"God has not always answered my prayers. If he had, I would have married the wrong man-several times!" says Ruth Bell Graham.

II. We Need to Have the Right Heart When we Pray.

Vs

A. The Pharisee was guilty of the sin of self-sufficiency.

- He was even more outwardly righteous than was required.

Illus- King Nebuchadnezer found out how much God despises this attitude.

B. We must be careful about judging our righteousness by a comparison with others.

Vs

- We can stay two steps behind the world all the way to the pit.

C. It's a mark of our times that the opposite could be true today.

- It's the modern equivalent of the publican who thanks God that he is not like those canting humbugs, hypocrites, and killjoys, whose chief offense is simply that they take their faith seriously.
- We call people legalistic if they just believe in living with a higher standard.

Conclusion

Jesus wants us to have the same encouragement as the disciples. Difficult days will come, but do not lose faith. And the key to that is to pray.

III. God Does the Exalting Around Here.

A. Humility allows us to see life from God's perspective.

- Because we're not in the way.

B. The publican was changed because of his heart of honesty.

- Change is what God wants to see most in our lives.