

AN UNJUST JUDGE AND TWO MEN PRAY

LUKE 18:1-14

Have you ever had to keep on asking mom or someone else for something? Sometimes it just seems they aren't listening doesn't it? But they usually do answer. Jesus told this parable or story to teach his disciples that they should continue to pray and not to give up when their prayers were not answered right away. God answers our prayers with either yes, no or wait for the right time. But God's answer is always best and He always hears our prayers.

Jesus said, once there was a wicked judge who feared neither God nor man and was very unfair. A poor widow lived in his city. She kept on coming to him and asking him to punish a man who hurt her. For a while, the judge would not listen to her. Afterwards he said to himself "It's not that I fear God, but this woman bothers me so I'll do what she asks". Then Jesus said, "If that unfair judge did what the widow asked because she asked so often, won't God who is holy and good and who loves His children eventually give them what they prayed for, even if for a while it seems He is not listening to them?"

Then Jesus told another parable or story to those who thought they were better than others and thought they did not need to repent of their sin. Jesus said 2 men went up to the temple—that's like a church---to pray. One was a proud Pharisee, a Jewish leader and the other was a shady tax collector. The Jewish leader, the Pharisee, stood where everyone could see him and prayed "God I thank you that I am better than other men and especially that I am better than that bad tax collector over there for I fast twice each week and I give the church a tenth of all I earn."

But the tax collector who knew how bad he was and was sorry for it stood where he hoped where no one would notice him. He bowed his head and beat upon his chest with great sadness and said to God "God be merciful to me. I am a sinner. Forgive me." Then Jesus surprised the crowd by what he said about the 2 men. He said that the cheating tax collector went home forgiven while the Jewish Pharisee did not. "Everyone who is proud will be brought low", Jesus said. "But those who are humble and confess their sins will be forgiven and honoured. Peter wrote in First Peter chapter 5 verse 5 in the Bible "God is always against the proud but will always give grace to the person who will be humble.

I trust you're not too proud to let the Lord work in your heart and life. Or too proud to accept what Jesus did on the cross for you. Jesus died for your sins. He took your punishment and your place on the cross. Admit you are a sinner in great need of God's grace. Then as a child in God's family you can ask God to take care of you and guide your life daily. Be proud of Jesus and live your life to honour Him. Take time to pray. Then read today's Bible story in Luke chapter 18 verses 1 to 14.