

In today's Gospel, we just heard Jesus tell His disciples a parable about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary." Clearly, all of today's readings are telling us that we need to be persistent in our prayers to God. They tell us about the importance of prayer, and how we need to have some discipline and persistence in our spiritual life. We are asked to believe like this widow here, who simply will not give in to this dishonest judge.

We all know someone just like her, people who wear us out, people who are kind of a nuisance to us. They just seem to be there when we least expect them, and they wear on us. But God already knows our needs, and He still wants us to keep asking Him to help us, to keep reaching out to Him every chance we get. I believe that most of us believe in the power of prayer (at least, I think that's the case). Today's Gospel affirms that. So we just need to keep asking and trusting God hears and answers our prayers.

But today's parable is not just about "believing" in prayer, it's about having "faith-filled" persistence in prayer. Because there will be times when we may feel our prayers are not being answered, and there will be periods in our life where we experience "spiritual dryness". These can be big obstacles to our persistence in prayer. It will take great faith in God during those times, that we can wait quietly on the Lord to answer us, no matter what. And this means we need to believe in the power of God, and that He can make things right and help us in our time of need. So during those times of waiting, when we bring our needs to Him, no matter how long it takes to receive an answer, it can be a true act of faith.

To help us understand this gospel a little better, I would actually like for each of us to consider this parable from a different angle altogether. First of all, we will need to constantly believe and place our trust in God, and understand that He is actually much different from the judge in the Gospel story.

Because He definitely will not ever get tired of hearing from us, and He is in fact waiting with open arms for us to reach out and contact Him. We should never forget that it's God who speaks to us first, and we are the ones not listening. That means we ourselves then become much like the judge in the story. We actually turn a deaf ear to the widow, who in this case, happens to be God. The roles become reversed, and we become the ones who are not paying attention to Him, and then we come across as uncaring and the person who is not listening to the voice of God in our lives.

We have to remember God does not give up on us? He does not lose heart. He does not get too tired or frustrated that we have chosen NOT to listen to Him, or NOT follow through with Him when He calls us! No, God will be patient with us for as long as it takes, no matter what we do, or what we don't do on our end. He already knows the very best thing for us to do is strive to live out what He is asking us to do. If only we can believe it and accept it.

And so, hopefully we can try to look at this parable in a new way. By reversing roles, and understanding God will be the patient one in our relationship with Him, it will challenge us to recognize when we don't listen to God's voice, we are the ones who will suffer. Let's not make God keep asking us to listen to Him over and over again (although He will). Rather, let's begin by opening our hearts and praying to Him today and every day, and living out all of His requests for us. Then we can truly be all that He calls us to be.

So we just need to remember today, God is actually the persistent one. He is going to be like the widow, and He is NOT going away. And that's truly Good News for us.