



Daily Reflections

October 16, 2016

Scripture

Luke 18:1-8

Jesus told his disciples a parable about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary.

He said, "There was a judge in a certain town who neither feared God nor respected any human being.

And a widow in that town used to come to him and say, 'Render a just decision for me against my adversary.'

For a long time the judge was unwilling, but eventually he thought, 'While it is true that I neither fear God nor respect any human being,

because this widow keeps bothering me

I shall deliver a just decision for her

lest she finally come and strike me.'"

The Lord said, "Pay attention to what the dishonest judge says.

Will not God then secure the rights of his chosen ones

who call out to him day and night?

Will he be slow to answer them?

I tell you, he will see to it that justice is done for them speedily.
But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

Our Scripture Reflection

I LOVE this Gospel story! Why? Primarily because of one line: "lest she finally come and strike me." The Greek literally reads, "lest she gives me a black eye." The judges' statement reveals how corrupt and unmerciful he truly is. He cares for no one other than his own hide and the corrupt political establishment to which he belonged. However, as uncaring and self-serving the judge is, Our Lord teaches us that Our Father in Heaven is completely loving, caring and merciful. When we ask, we will receive what we NEED as determined by Our Father. We must be persistent as we ask and trusting. Please remember the poor widow the next time you find yourself frustrated with prayer.

Food for your Journey

I have a 7-year-old granddaughter by marriage named Madeline. She is blond, skinny and tall for her age. ...

What I want Madeline to know is that the best thing about prayer is the relationship itself. Whether or not she gets what she asks for, I want her to keep asking. I want her to pester God the same way she pesters her mother, thinking of 12 different ways to plead her case. I want her to long for God the same way she longs for her father, holding fast to him even when his chair is empty.

When she complains that none of this does any good, I am going to ask her to tell me the difference between how she feels while she is praying versus how she feels when she thinks about giving up. If I am lucky, she is going to tell me that she feels more alive when she is praying, and that is when I will tell her the story about the persistent widow

-Barbara Brown Taylor, "Bothering God," *Christian Century*, March 24-31, 1999, 356.

The following saying hangs framed on my office wall: "Do one thing each day that scares you."

Standing at my office door, I know the challenges hidden in innocent-looking stacks of paper, a computer that will deliver e-mails (pertinent and not), and a keyboard that won't enter a book manuscript without my aid. Some days it takes courage just to walk in.

Yesterday I called a disgruntled woman. I was scared because I knew it wasn't going to be pretty. But it was the right thing to do. "Okay, Lord, this is my one-thing-that-scares-me opportunity for today. As I lifted the receiver, I whispered, "I'm depending on you."

-Ruth Koch, "One scary thing," Rev., May-June 2000, 41.

The widow wanted nothing more than for the judge to take her case. In the lyrics below, Thomas Dorsey asks the Lord, not to take his case, but to take his hand, to take his life and guide them through the coming storm:

Precious Lord, take my hand,
Lead me on, help me stand;
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
Through the storm, through the night, Lead me on to the light;
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.
When my way grows drear, precious Lord, linger near;
When my life is almost gone,
Hear my cry, hear my call,
Hold my hand lest I fall;
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

-- Thomas A. Dorsey, "Precious Lord, Take My Hand," 1938, in The Presbyterian Hymnal (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 404.

Prayer from the Heart

Dear Father, You love me more than I can imagine and You know my needs. During my times of impatience and doubt, give me the grace to surrender my worries and concerns to You, completely. Amen.