THE PARABLES OF PERSISTENT PRAYER

MAIN THOUGHT  Like the persistent friend and persistent widow, we should pray without ceasing (I Thess. 5:17).

THE PARABLES

THE PERSISTENT FRIEND (11:5-13). The obligation of hospitality is the way of life in the Middle East (Rom. 12:13; 1 Pet. 4:9). Here a man was unprepared for a late night visitor and woke his friend, who was prepared (1 Cor. 16:2) but unwilling (1 John 3:17). Because of the friends BOLDNESS and PERSISTENCE, the man did get up and gave him what he needed (Heb. 4:16).

THE PERSISTENT WIDOW (18:1-8). Helping widows is the way of life in the Middle East (Jam. 1:27). Here a widow was seeking justice but the judge would not hear her case. In the end her persistence paid off and she was granted justice.

THE LESSONS

• Unlike the FRIEND who was asleep and did not want to be bothered and the JUDGE who did not care, our God does not sleep (1 Kings 18:27) nor is he reluctant to answer our prayers (Heb. 4:16; 1 Pet. 3:12; 5:7). This is a lesson in CONTRAST: if the unwilling friend and uncaring judge can be moved by persistence, how much more can a willing and caring God.

• Prayer is not for everyone (Psa. 66:18; Isa. 59:2). As the man was a “friend” and the woman was “elect” (18:7), so too must you be a CHILD OF GOD for your prayers to be answered (11:11-13).

• Like the persistent friend who did not initially have the means to help, we are still to ASSIST, ADVOCATE, and PRAY for them (Eccles. 4:9-10; Jam. 5:16).

• God’s DELAYS (Hab. 2:3) do not mean that he does not care or listen. Daniel experienced a delayed answer when the angel bringing it was delayed (Dan. 10:12-14) by a demon, the Prince of Persia, who fought the angel for 21 days! His SLOWNESS can mean salvation to many (2 Pet. 3:9).

• These parables do not teach that you can get any prayer answered by nagging God long enough. Like the widow, our request must be JUST and IN THE WILL OF GOD (Matt. 6:10). He will not give you a snake (11:12) or a scorpion (11:13).

• The widows delay concerns the delay of his SECOND COMING (17:20 ff.). We are to keep praying IN FAITH for his coming until he returns (18:8).