

Answer My Prayer, Give Me What I Want

Intro. In the Lord's time and culture, women had little power. If her husband died, she had no way to earn money. She could not own property. She had to depend on the Jewish community which had laws to take care of widows and children. Depending totally on others can be a difficult way to live, always wondering where the next meal is coming from or where to find a safe place to live.

I. The judge had a lot of power in the community and obviously had no interest in serving either God or people. We don't know what the widow was asking for. Maybe it was that she be allowed to keep her house or her husband's business, rather than the judge giving it to one of his friends. We *do* know she was persistent. Maybe she waited outside his

house to see him on his way to and from work. She probably was in his court every day. He got tired of her and thought that one day she might smack him on the side of his head. So, enough already; he gave up. The dishonest judge is *not* an example of how God answers our prayers. The judge gave the widow justice because he was afraid of her. Incredible! The judge feared the power of the woman. That makes no sense. Except in the Lord's parable stories. They are usually about a reversal of power or an ending no one expects. Remember, the first teaching of the Lord: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. (Matthew 5, Beatitudes)

The parable story contrasts the dishonest judge who did the right thing for the *wrong reason*,

with God who does the *right thing* for the right reason. The judge *did not love* the widow; God *does love us*. If that is true - and I believe it is – why aren't more of our prayers answered?

Some of our prayers are silly or selfish: to pass a test or for someone else to fail. Other prayers are for things that are not good for us, and we know it even as we pray. I tell you a secret: God doesn't answer *all my* prayers. I prayed for the healing of my parents from cancer. They were not. I was angry. I thought it was a good prayer. Being a priest does not give me an advantage over anybody's prayers. God does not necessarily hear mine first.

Concl. So why do I keep praying? Because God answers *some* of my prayers. My father *was* healed, just not the one I wanted. But I

keep asking: for my family and friends, the healing of a friend after surgery, the people hurt by the hurricanes and for you. We pray for each other. We pray primarily to improve our relationship with God, not to nag him for things the way children at times nag their parents for things. We cannot force God to give us what we ask. Like good parents, God does not always give us what we want. He often gives us what we need. That is why I keep talking to God and listening.

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