

Week of March 25-31

P.U.S.H.

Scripture Reading: Read Luke chapter 18

When I was a teenager, the Holy Spirit touched our church's youth group in a mighty way at a weekend retreat. Upon our return, we came to the altar to pray at our church's Sunday evening service. The time: 7:40 PM. When we finally left the altar that evening, it was after 11:00 PM. A bunch of teenagers, touched by God, had just prayed for over 3 hours! Our parents and other adults at the service could only stand in wonder at God's work. But God wasn't done. Not by a long shot. It became common practice for the youth group to wait on the Lord in prayer and worship. We pursued the Lord in our youth group meetings, in church services and on our own. Many of us were called into ministry during that season of revival.

As I reflect back on those formative spiritual years as a teenager I still stand amazed at the sovereign work of God. Those extended seasons of prayer had a profound influence on my life and on the lives of the other teens. It was during those times we learned the importance of prayer, of waiting on God, or, as it was often called, "tarrying" and "praying through." We learned that God hears and answers the prayers of those who persistently and passionately pursue him.

Our chapter reading today opens with Jesus sharing a story with his disciples about persevering prayer. In the *Parable of the Persistent Widow*, as it has often been called, Jesus uses an argument of the lesser to the greater. If an unjust judge will give aid to a persistent widow, how much more will God, the righteous judge, give aid to his own children who persist in prayer to him?

God has established a universe in such a way that prayer has the ability to move the hand of God and to change the course of history. In the epistle of James, the author tells us that we have not because we ask not. Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 7 and Luke 11 to ask and they would receive. God answers prayer.

There are times, however, when the enemy hinders answers to prayer like he did with the prophet Daniel (cf. Daniel 10:13). Those are the times when God calls us to pray through and to not give up. It often requires waiting and tarrying on God and praying until He answers. We're not talking about trying to manipulate God to get our own way. Far from it! We're talking about lining our prayers up with his will and persistently praying until his will comes to pass.

Unfortunately, the church too often has forgotten both the need for and importance of persistent prayer. In an era of immediate gratification and "microwave" prayers, who has time to "crock-pot" a prayer and let it simmer for awhile? Yet, there are some answers that only come over a season of prayer. It makes one wonder how many times we've missed out on God's blessings because we gave up too soon. May it not be the case for the revival that God has intended for our valley. May we pray through so that God's kingdom and glory fall here.

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Two steps: 1) Plan on attending the church's next prayer meeting; 2) Make it a point to seek the Lord with other believers at the altar next Sunday.

Take-away: *To pray through means you Pray Until Something Happens.*