



GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion

47 – A Similar Lesson

Announcements:

10/24 @6:30 -

*Men's
Discipleship*

- *Question 1*

10/26 @7:00 -

Prayer

10/27 @6:30 -

Grace Group

10/30 @8:30 -

Sunday School

ICE BREAKER: Has God ever answered one of your prayers in a particularly powerful way?

READ: Matthew 15:21-28

As we have been doing throughout all of Matthew, our focus in looking at the healing of the Canaanite Woman's daughter was who Jesus was. In particular we were interested in seeing what it tells us about who he is and what he came for. In doing so often what we are called to do becomes a secondary point. On Sunday, this was focused really on one point as we spent a little time looking at what I called "persistent faith". Today we will be diving deeper into this same thought, but with a slightly different angle. Jesus famously told a parable that teaches us a very similar lesson, and today I would like us to look at both the parable and this story to see what they can together teach us about the life of faith!

READ: Luke 18:1-8

As we found in studying the parables in Matthew, it is much easier to understand a parable when we are told what it means, and this one is thankfully one that is explained to us. This parable is to show us that we "ought always to pray and not lose heart." This parable is about trusting in God and having, as we talked about on Sunday, persistent faith that he will answer, and answer for his glory and our good. What makes this really interesting is faith could be described as the asking and faith is also the belief that he will answer. In other words faith operates at the beginning and faith is what causes us to continue! So it is faith that causes us to ask God for things (in the case of this parable: justice, in the case of the Canaanite woman: healing for her daughter, in our case it could be a great many things!), and it is faith that helps us wait for God to answer. Faith is not a one time thing, but rather a way of life. It is a firm and continuing belief in who God is and what he has promised. And faith like this will never let us down!

DISCUSS: Why is it important to understand both sides of faith here (i.e. faith as the start of asking and faith as the desire to keep on asking)? How is this helpful to your life?

Secondly I would like to turn to the outcome of such faith. In Matthew we read that this woman is rewarded and this woman's daughter is healed, in Luke the widow's continual pestering is rewarded and she finally receives justice. In other words, the end result of faith is reward. Now we should be careful, this is not a blank check and if you just believe hard enough you will get all your hopes and dreams. But similarly we should be careful not to undersell the strength of What God is promising here. We can boldly say that faith is rewarded and God will answer persistent and fervent prayers. He is the God who heals and restores, he is the God of justice. And Jesus tells us that he will answer "speedily" (while remembering that how God counts time and how we do is often different!). Ultimately again we are dealing with faith, for the reason we can be bold and persistent in our prayers is that we know that the God we are praying to can and will answer!

DISCUSS: How can we maintain the balance in knowing God will answer while not being too presumptuous? How can we temper our prayers in this regard?