

# Sunday Morning Resources

Sunday 19 October 2025 - The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity

**Lectioary Readings** (depending on the kind of service you are leading, you may use one or more of the following readings – however, you **must** use the gospel reading, as this is what the homily is based on)

Genesis 32.22–31; Psalm 121; 2 Timothy 3.14-4.5; Luke 18.1–8

## Homily

**Today's homily has been written by Susan Rawlings, LLM, Madingley (Benefice)**

Gospel: Luke 18, 1-8

Prayer

Jesus had been teaching the people about his Second Coming, the time when God's kingdom would finally be established in the world. It is quite a difficult matter for us to grasp, let alone the disciples standing round Jesus, more than 2000 years ago. When will it happen? What will happen? What do we do about it?

Jesus responds by telling the disciples a parable, with a certain amount of humour in it. The parable is about the need to pray always, and not to lose heart. Then we will be ready for anything. The story is about a judge and a widow – two people in very different circumstances. One rich and respected, the other poor and set aside. The widow is petitioning the judge for justice. The judge is described as neither fearing God nor respecting the people. In other words, he is arrogant and self-seeking, with little or no regard for people less important than himself. And this is bad, because people in authority were expected to have a special care for the weak and the unprotected in society, for example widows and orphans. The widow, humble though her position was, kept on coming to the judge and demanding justice. He had clearly turned her away many times. But the widow did not give in. She continued to badger the judge with great determination. The judge found this very annoying: it must have made him look uncaring in everyone's eyes and maybe his conscience was beginning to trouble him. So, he decided to give in to the widow, not out of compassion for her circumstances, but so that she would stop bothering him and give him some peace from her demands. So, for that reason he granted her justice. It was an act of self-interest, not compassion, but the plucky old lady got the justice she had wanted.

It is often possible to draw a parallel between ourselves and the characters in Jesus' parables, but in this case it doesn't quite work. We may identify with the widow, but we can't do the same with God and the judge. God is the opposite of the judge. He wants his people to come to him, he longs to be badgered by us and willingly answers our prayers. As Jesus says, "Will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night?" (18.6). God never gets tired of us coming to him and never turns us away.

But, oddly enough, many of us can find prayer difficult. That can be because prayer doesn't seem to be effective. Nothing seems to happen or change, so we can't have been heard. Then it seems that there are no consequences for not praying. What difference has our prayer made? In any case, there are so many responsibilities and commitments pressing on us that prayer can get relegated out of our day. We can end the day without having said a word to God. Even in church on a Sunday our attention can drift. And all this can be very disappointing and we may lose the heart for prayer. And that is the very moment when we need it most.

But what is prayer? Putting it simply, maybe it is bringing ourselves into the presence of God. Whatever we need or wish to say to him, we take ourselves into his presence. Nor does our prayer necessarily have to be in the form of a petition. It can be thanksgiving, the recognition of God's unceasing love and care for his people, or praise for his glory, or simply joy in his presence.

There are many examples in the Gospels of Jesus' teaching about prayer. This parable is not the only example. The most well-known teaching is the Lord's Prayer, where the disciples ask Jesus to teach them how to pray (Luke 11:24 and Matthew 6: 9-13). Then we hear that Jesus himself went away from the crowds and the disciples to pray alone. Not long after he heard about the death of John the Baptist, his cousin, Matthew tells us he "went up a mountain by himself to pray" (14:23). Chapter 17 in John's gospel is a prayer for his disciples. Luke tells us that he prayed from the Cross for his executioners, asking his Father to forgive them (Luke 23:34). And before he died he prayed to his Father: "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46).

So, Jesus' message to his disciples, and that includes us, in this parable, is that we should persist in prayer, pray continually, take ourselves into the Father's presence, and trust to him to provide what we need. But we need to ask for his help – pray to him. Finally, one of my favourite prayers. It was written by Bishop Lancelot Andrewes in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It can be found in his Book of Private Prayers, which is still in print today:

"Pray, that you pray more often."

### ***Ways to Engage all Generations***

When different generations are gathered together in worship there is an opportunity to build relationships and to encounter God in our conversations as we build relationships and learn from each other no matter what our ages, stage of life or faith and for all present to feel included. Adding some wondering questions to the service at an appropriate moment can help to do this.

Wondering Questions: Some wondering questions that may help to engage all generations to ponder and explore during the talk, service or during the week may include (three or so) of the following style of questions:

- I wonder what your favourite part of the story/passage is? I wonder why that is?
- I wonder who your favourite character is? I wonder why that is?

- I wonder how \_\_\_\_\_ felt or I wonder how \_\_\_\_\_ felt when \_\_\_\_\_ happened?
- I wonder how you feel about \_\_\_\_\_?
- I wonder where you are in this story?
- I wonder what part of the story is about you?
- I wonder what the [tree, pearl, coin] could really be?
- I wonder why \_\_\_\_\_ said \_\_\_\_\_?
- I wonder what we can learn about God in this story?

The last question would be a particularly good one to ask

### ***Suggested intercessions***

All our needs are God's concern. Let us pray to him now.

Father, make us a listening Church, welcoming to the hesitant, encouraging to all, attentive to needs and understanding of differences.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Father, we pray for the world in need: for those suffering in the destruction caused by war, for those facing poverty and famine, for those caught up in natural disasters, for the dark places where no light shines.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Father, we pray for our community, our family, neighbours and friends, sharing one another's sorrows and joys, giving and receiving one other's help.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Father, we remember those who have asked for our prayers. Take their needs and provide for them, take their pain and heal them, take their suffering and comfort them.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Father, as we call to mind those we love who have died, grant them the welcome of your love at their homecoming to your eternal kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Thank you, God our Father, for knowing our needs even before we know of them ourselves.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

***Suggested hymns/songs***

Amazing grace

Be thou my guardian and my guide

O God our help in ages past

Father, hear the prayer we offer

Through the night of doubt and sorrow

I, the Lord of sea and sky (Here I am Lord)

Now thank we all our God

What a friend we have in Jesus

Give me joy in my heart

O thou who at thy Eucharist didst pray

Lord, we come to ask your healing

O Lord hear my prayer

Immortal love, for ever full

***Activities to accompany the service***

If you are looking for resources to accompany the service for engaging younger children, then there are lots of online resources. The following free to access/download resources may be useful starting points:

- <https://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/>
- <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/>
- <https://www.faithinkids.org/>
- [reflectionary.org](https://reflectionary.org) – lectionary-based resources
- [engageworship](https://www.engageworship.org) – in particular 'Area 52' for lectionary-based material
- <https://www.bdeducation.org.uk/product-category/primary-age-5-11/>  
(weekly@ lectionary resource)