

PRAYING THE PARABLE STORIES

INTRODUCTION

In praying the parables this August, we can see where we might find ourselves within these Biblical stories. We can also use the parables for theological reflection because they contain “life lifelikeness” with everyday subjects that turn the world upside down (Peter Rhea Jones). Jesus’ parables are subversive, as evidenced in the two stories shared below (Jones). Praying in the parables helps us understand how Jesus wanted us to treat others and act according to the urgency of the coming kingdom.

LEARN MORE

Read Joyce Huggett, *Praying the Parables: A Spiritual Journey Through the Stories of Jesus*
Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press 1997

THE PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE & THE TAX COLLECTOR | LUKE 18:9-14

The pharisees were scholars and believed prayer was critical to their faith. They also understood their role in interpreting the Torah for the Israelites, a role that set them apart from other Jews. In this parable, a pharisee goes to the Temple for daily prayers--about his own righteousness-- and stands in a prominent place to pray. His heart, however, did not reflect Jesus’ welcome of all people. The pharisee’s prayer suggests he is spiritually self-sufficient and well-informed. It is considered the most theological of all of the parables.

Also praying in the Temple is the tax collector, with his eyes downcast, beating his chest. He comes before God with great humility. As Jesus shares this parable, He does not condemn the tax collector’s line of work, but rather uses the story to help His disciples--and us--understand more about the Kingdom of God.”

PUT YOURSELF IN THIS STORY

Read the story several times to listen to Jesus’ storytelling, and pray with faith. What do you see and hear?
How would you pray?
If you wrote this parable, how would the story be different?

SAMPLE PRAYER

Psalm 51:2-3 “Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.”

THE PARABLE OF THE UNJUST JUDGE & THE PERSISTENT WIDOW | LUKE 18:1-8

While we do not know with certainty what the widow was asking of the unjust judge, it is likely financially related--desperately needing the money or resources owed to her. Widows were supposed to receive special attention from judges because of their frailty, and she would not relent in repeatedly going to the judge until he ruled in her favor. While the judge does not represent God, Jesus focuses on the widow with great compassion, and He uses the story to encourage believers to pray without giving in. When people you love suffer, pray with great passion and without ceasing. When you need direction, pray until you find guidance. Whatever the need or concern, pray with the urgency of the widow who would not give up. Let the parable encourage you. Thank God for His answered prayer.

SAMPLE PRAYERS

“And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us” (1 John 5:14).

“And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him” (1 John 5:15).

PUT YOURSELF IN THIS STORY

What do you hear in this parable?
To whom do you most relate?
What prayer reflects your heart and how do you feel led to pray?
How would you apply the story to your life; what would it sound like?