

Luke 18:1-8

“The squeaky wheel gets the grease.” But why? It’s because a squeaky wheel can become so irritating that it can drive a person out of his mind. And it can also be an indication that the wheel is not safe. The squeak is there because everything is not as it should be.

The widow Jesus speaks of in Luke 18 is just such a squeaky wheel. Everything is not as it should be in her life. She has an adversary attempting to harm her legally. He is using the law against her, but she is in the right. Yet she is defenseless. She is a widow. She has no means with which to fight her adversary. Even though she is in the right, she cannot win her case.

And so this widow becomes a squeaky wheel. She comes to the judge of the city pleading with him to help her. He ignores her. But she persists. She keeps coming to him again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again...are you getting sick and tired of hearing me say “again?” This is how the judge feels. He is sick and tired of this irritating widow. She is driving him out of his mind. “The squeak...I can’t stand it!” he cries. He has no love for the widow. He couldn’t care less if she is harmed by her adversary in court. He has no fear or love for God. He doesn’t care in the least if justice is upheld in his city. He truly is a horrible judge. The last thing he wants to do is to help this widow. But the squeak! He can’t take it anymore! And there’s also this...her trouble could become his trouble. The harm that would come to her could also bring harm to him. And so finally he grabs the grease and applies it to the squeaky wheel. He uses the law to legally help this widow. He gives her justice against her adversary.

Friends, even if our God was exactly like this judge, He would help us out of our trouble for no other reason than our persistent prayers. But the beauty of the parable is that this judge is the exact opposite of what God is like. The judge cares only about himself; God’s care and concern is all about you. The judge is irritated by persistent people; God cannot become irritated, for He greatly desires for us to come to Him day and night. The judge helps the widow just to be rid of her; God helps you out of love for you, and so that you learn to keep coming to Him for every need that you have.

But here is something we ought to consider: As God is the opposite of the judge, so we are the opposite of the widow. She persists; we do not. She refuses to give up; we give up easily. She doesn’t care that she is bothering the judge; we stop crying to God for help too quickly because we don’t want to bother Him.

Shame on us. We think we are showing love and respect to God by not persisting in prayer; by not being so demanding with our cries for help, yet the exact opposite is true. By not persisting, we are showing that we do not love and respect Him; that we do not really trust His promises; we are showing that we really are not His true children.

Luke 18 begins with Jesus telling this parable so that we learn “*always to pray and not lose heart.*” These are exact opposites. The opposite of continual prayer is losing heart. Becoming tired and weary as Christians is the opposite of persistent prayer. Enduring as God’s children through constant prayer is the opposite of losing faith.

God sends trial after trial into our lives, not so that we despair and lose heart, but so that we are constant in prayer; so that we are driven to His words and promises. The unbeliever, who is not God's true child, believes that God does not care and will not help. The true child of God believes that God cares but that He is slow to help. But this is not so. "*God speedily gives justice to His elect,*" says Jesus. From our perspective, God's help is slow in coming. But from God's perspective, He quickly comes to help us in times of trouble.

Now the widow in the parable would certainly not have persisted had she not been convinced that she was in the right. She was a squeaky wheel because she knew, beyond a shadow of doubt, that justice was on her side. For this reason she refused to give up.

Friend, you can see yourself as the widow in this way. Your adversary, the devil, is against you, and he has a strong case. He intends to legally, in the court of God, harm you in body and soul forever. "*The soul that sins shall die,*" is God's own truth, and the devil levels this charge against you. "So you think that you are God's child?" says Satan, "But you don't act like God's child, do you? No wonder He isn't helping you. God does not care about you or your troubles. You deserve your problems, and you deserve to die forever in eternity!"

Judging by our day-to-day life, Satan's charge is spot on. We are disobedient, every day. Why should God help us when we ignore Him? Why should God care about us when we act like we don't care about Him; about obeying Him? In court, the Law does accuse us. We are but sinners, and so we deserve to die. We are as helpless as the defenseless widow.

But friend, God hears your pitiful squeaks. He hears, He cares, and He acts. He puts His own beloved Son on the witness stand to speak in your defense. Jesus shows His nail-pierced hands and cries, "I died for him, for her. *Father, forgive them.* I took their guilt. I was punished in their place. I suffered the death that they deserve."

Every Law in the book is against you, but God is on your side. Jesus made sure of this by His sufferings, death, and resurrection. Your adversary has the Law on his side against you, but you have Christ on your side. And so you have a God who forgives you; a God who loves you dearly, who cares about you and every trouble facing you.

This is why you can be persistent in prayer. God loves His squeaky wheels. Your cries for help, your squeaks, are beautiful music to His ears. It's the person who does not believe this who will stop squeaking. But as you believe, so shall it be unto you. If you are convinced that God loves you; that He is on your side even though you are a helpless sinner, His justice will come to you speedily. This is Jesus' promise.

Do not doubt, but be as the widow. Believe what your loving God says to you. Trust in His promise to you. Remember your Baptism daily. You are God's child. You are forgiven sinners.

Leave in peace and hope. But leave also as squeaky wheels, squeaking to God day and night if need be, because He hears, He cares, and He acts. He is on your side. Amen.