

Sermon Sunday 15th October

Isaiah 58:1- 7 and Luke 18: 1- 8

Persistent Prayer

The events of the past week in Israel and Gaza have brought home to me the constant need for persistent prayer for a lasting peace between Israel and Palestine, aid for the injured and for destroyed buildings and homes to be rebuilt in Gaza and Israel and the release of prisoners and hostages, unharmed.

Do you pray for peace in this world? In my own daily prayer cycle, world peace persistent always one of my prayers, a persistent prayer each day to God to bring peace to this earth and for a place where all can live without fear. I suppose the cynics would say that my prayers are useless because obviously they are not being heard or dealt with by God, which we all know is rubbish. God works in His time, not ours. What you and I must do is be persistent in all our prayers.

The readings today are about being persistent in prayer, in our conversations with God when we ask Him for help, for individuals and situations. We may not get an immediate answer but by sharing in prayer with God the pressure we feel can be relieved or as a clerical acquaintance once said to me 'Over to you God, too difficult for me' which he said always relieved the pressure and eventually gave him answers.

Luke 18.1. THEN JESUS TOLD HIS DISCIPLES A PARABLE TO SHOW THEM THAT THEY SHOULD ALWAYS PRAY AND NOT GIVE UP.' The widow was persistent in seeking justice from a Judge we are told who cared not for man or God. However, by being persistent the Judge eventually gave in and gave justice to the widow. Jesus tells His disciples in explaining the parable, IN VERSES 7 AND 8 'TO LISTEN TO WHAT THE UNJUST JUDGE SAYS. AND WILL NOT GOD BRING ABOUT JUSTICE FOR HIS CHOSEN ONES, WHO CRY OUT TO HIM DAY AND NIGHT? WILL HE KEEP PUTTING THEM OFF? I TELL YOU, HE WILL SEE THAT THEY GET JUSTICE AND QUICKLY. HOWEVER, WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMES, WILL HE FIND FAITH ON EARTH? The answer to this question is a whole new

series of sermons; however, read on to verse 14 and you will see how faith and confession brings about God's blessing.

We know when Jesus returns, He will bring justice for all true believers which is why we must be persistent in our prayers until this happens.

Isaiah tells us or demonstrates to us what happens if we are not persistent in prayer. The Israelites paid lip service to God. VERSE 3 WHY HAVE WE HUMBLD OURSELVES AND YOU HAVE NOT NOTICED? Questioning God but they do not or do not want to see they have to be wholly or totally faithful in their prayers and actions. This is a common theme in both the Old and New Testaments, hearing Gods word but not a total commitment to God and the teachings of Jesus. Where do you sit on this? I will leave you to ponder this but urge you to be persistent in prayer and faith.

The Psalms are a collection of WRITINGS showing faith, thanks, and woe. Psalm 84 verse 1 'HOW LOVELY IS YOUR DWELLING PLACE, O LORD ALMIGHTY. MY SOUL YEARNs EVEN FAINTS FOR THE COURTS OF THE LORD.' Compare this with verse 4 Psalm 85 'RESTORE US AGAIN, O GOD OUR SAVIOUR AND PUT AWAY YOUR DISPLEASURE TOWARDS US.'

We must be always persistent in faith and prayer, not just pick and choose the easier ones or ways and then wonder why we do not eventually receive an answer from God and His Son Jesus Christ. The Bible Old and New Testament contains the answers, we must have faith and be persistent in prayer with God. Amen.

Let us Pray. Heavenly Father, help us all to hold dear to our faith and let our prayers be open. We thank you Lord that you hear and respond to our prayers. Amen.