

Importunity- A Key to Effective Prayer

Valleys Family Church Sermon
Phil Gibson, Sunday 30th Sep 2012

Introduction

- Last time- Jer 33:3, Ps 40:1
- My own experience in prayer -one of my greatest struggles has been to fight against my prayers becoming formal, cold or dry. Sometimes I might as well have switched on a recording of yesterday's prayers.

Importunity

Reading:

Luke 11:5-10

And he said to them, 'Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything'? I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ESV

The Context:

- The man had a need. Friend visits unexpectedly. No 24 hour supermarket!
- Culture
- Embarrassment
- MIDNIGHT darkest hour.

What could he do in time of need?

Friendship

- Foundational. At midnight, who did the person in need go to? His friend. In our times of need, in our dark times, we need more than just a vague wish that "the person upstairs" is looking out for us. We need a friendship to lean on, a relationship with God that we can go to Him in our need & helplessness.

End of story?

Hit a wall!

- Don't bother me!=trouble, disturb, bother.
- Ever felt like that is the response you get from God? Ever felt like your request has fallen on deaf ears?
- Jesus asleep in boat - disciples wake Him - don't you care...?

What do you do then? Did the man go off in a sulk? Did he quit? What did he do? Kept asking. In what manner?

Impudence

- v8- *I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs.*
- Illustrate - retell story.
- Impudence. Lit - without shame. "lack of sensitivity to what is proper,". Not "persistence"- why?
- Being in right relationship with God isn't sufficient to see our prayers answered! Jesus said that we need to pray with impudence/importunity. What does that involve?

Confidence

- If we are talking about coming before God without shame then it means we come with confidence. How does shame make you feel in God's presence?
- *Eph 3:12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him*
- *(free access, an unreserved approach to God with freedom and without fear). AMP*
- Do you come before God with confidence? How do you come? As His child? Your shame has been taken away (Rom 8:1)!

Freedom of Speech

- *In whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him (Eph 3:12).* Boldness=parrhesia - freedom of speech.
- Heb 4:16
- Ps 62:8 Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Selah
- 1Sam 1:15 - Hannah
- Not polite & proper prayers but those of a desperate man at midnight with no one & nowhere else to go.
- BUT - not the tantrum of a spoilt child!
- Ps 83:1 – Asaph --*O God, do not keep silence; do not hold your peace or be still, O God!*
- He is desperate so nicities go out the window! The fact is God isn't deaf, inactive, ignoring us or any of these things - but it can sometimes SEEM like, it FEELS like God has given us the cold shoulder. So what are we to do? Pray!
- David- *Ps 142:1-2 I cry aloud to the Lord; I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy. 2 I pour out my complaint before him; before him I tell my trouble. NIV*
- What is God's purpose in this? Why does He bring us to this place?
- *Zch 13:8-9 In the whole land, declares the Lord, two thirds shall be cut off and perish, and one third shall be left alive. And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call upon my name, and I will answer them. I will say, They are my people'; and they will say, the Lord is my God.'""*
- Why does God put us in the fire? Potter -clay.
- Not just stuff.
- God is after earnest prayer, heartfelt prayer, not ritual or routine but heart to heart, deep calling to deep. That's the point of importunity, that is why God commends it - it brings us to our knees in dependance and frankness before God. The masks are ripped off, the hypocrisy stops and all we have to lean on is Him. So important is our relationship to God that God will deny, turn His ear away, send fire and tribulation - all to drive us not just to Him, but to drive us to Him in openness and honesty and outpouring of heart and emotion.