

WEEKLY SERMON

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The Lord does hear, and he does care

Luke 18:1: Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.

Last weekend Eliud Kipchoge ran the first sub two-hour marathon. By any standards it was a breathtaking display of sheer perseverance.

I've run a few marathons in my time – and for me the biggest challenge was just to keep going and not give up – even when every fibre of my body was telling me to stop.

I have to confess that the same is too often true of my prayer life: all too easily, I give up. And so the challenge of Jesus' parable is uncomfortably close to the bone.

Why do we need the Lord's encouragement to keep going in prayer? Simply because we tend to give up. We get discouraged; our pleas for justice seem to go unheard (v3), answers to prayer are delayed (v4).

Dare we say it? We are tempted to think that there's no point in prayer. Either God doesn't hear, or he doesn't care.

Jesus wants to reassure us that neither of these conclusions is true:
God does hear - and he does care.

He's not the unjust judge who neither fears God nor cares about people; the kind of judge who only responds to the widow in the story because he wants a quiet life.

As we cry out to him, he does hear. He will deliver 'justice for his chosen ones' (v7)

God's care for his people is expressed in his commitment to justice. His perfect justice will be seen 'when the Son of Man comes'. This is the Day – the day when justice will be done for God's chosen ones – the day when every wrong will be righted; when God will wipe every tear from his people's eyes.

But that day is not yet. And in the meantime, we live with prayers that go unanswered, conflicts that are unresolved and people we love seemingly untouched by the light of the gospel. At least, not yet.

And the question Jesus asks in verse 8 is a searching one:
"...when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

If we've given up on prayer, how on that day will we begin to explain to him why we ever doubted his character? So, positively keep going and don't give up! The Lord does hear, and he does care.

Rev Canon Andrew Raynes, Vicar of Blackburn Christ Church with St Matthew