

Prayer in Despair

“Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.” (Luke 18:4-5)

In Picasso's *Guernica*, we see a picture of prayer in despair. Painted in response to the 1937 bombing of Guernica, Picasso's canvas captures a horrific scene. The street is filled with dead animals and mutilated bodies. A woman, cradling a dead baby, raises her eyes to the sky in a silent cry. Prayer in despair! At the center of the painting, though, one can notice the all-seeing eye of God which looks like a light bulb. Yet, the only light in the painting actually comes from a lamp that a woman holds from a window above the scene. It is as if the only light we can see is the light that **we** bring to this senseless destruction, and the eye of God is not offering any light on the evil that happens on earth.

From this event back in 1937 to the terrible tragic events that hit our news feeds mid-September, Picasso offers an accurate vision of the world without the story of Jesus. Suffering is prevalent and powerful, and prayer happens in despair. But Jesus entered our suffering to bring life and hope to light. God is not found in the distance. He has come near in Christ. In fact, family, I'll repeat that sentence again: ***He (God) has come near in Christ!***

Therefore, in His death, He claimed all suffering, and in His rising to life He offers all hope. Our highlighted verse comes from the parable of the widow and the unrighteous judge, but this parable is definitely like Picasso's painting. It's filled with strange figures. And yet, through this parable, Jesus offers the promise that God hears and answers your prayers. Again, if even an unworthy judge responds to persistence, our living and loving God **WILL** certainly hear His people's faithful prayers.

And so, family, pray without ceasing! In a world of death and chaos, pray! Pray that killing and bloodshed would give way to caring and uplifting. Pray that all people would hear, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest Your Word. Pray that His Word would pass from the ear to the heart, from the heart to the lip, and from the lip to the life that, as He has promised, His Word would achieve the purpose for which He send it. And, yes, pray; pray that our church, school and child-care would not only be a place of refuge and strength, but also a home where the Good Shepherd gathers His sheep, preparing us to see Him face-to-face.

In Christ,

Pastor Seehafer