

## Meadowbrook Congregational Church

### “Don’t Give Up”

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#### **Jeremiah 31:27-34**

*27 The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of humans and the seed of animals. <sup>28</sup>And just as I have watched over them to pluck up and break down, to overthrow, destroy, and bring evil, so I will watch over them to build and to plant, says the LORD. <sup>29</sup>In those days they shall no longer say:*

*‘The parents have eaten sour grapes,  
and the children’s teeth are set on edge.’*

*<sup>30</sup>But all shall die for their own sins; the teeth of everyone who eats sour grapes shall be set on edge.*

*31 The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>32</sup>It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. <sup>33</sup>But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>34</sup>No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, ‘Know the LORD’, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.*

#### **Luke 18:1-8**

*18 Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. <sup>2</sup>He said, ‘In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. <sup>3</sup>In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, “Grant me justice against my opponent.” <sup>4</sup>For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, “Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, <sup>5</sup>yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.” <sup>6</sup>And the Lord said, ‘Listen to what the unjust judge says. <sup>7</sup>And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? <sup>8</sup>I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?’*

Have you ever wanted a toy or a piece of candy or a prize so much that you kept asking your parents for it over and over again until they had to give it to you? Once

there was a fourth grade boy who attended the book fair at his elementary school. There was a book there he really wanted. It was about George Washington and at that time he was a George Washington freak! He even dressed like George Washington for Halloween. The book had a hard cover when all the rest of the boy's books were paperbacks. The book had dozens of illustrations and facts about the Revolutionary War and our nation's founding fathers. It was perfect for the boy's appetite for history. He just had to have it!

Anyway, the problem was the George Washington book he wanted was also the most expensive book at the book fair. It cost around \$12-15 which in those days was a great deal of money. It was more money that the boy could ever hope to have. But he knew that he had some pretty nice parents and if he asked nicely, they just might buy him the book about George Washington.

So on the first night of the book fair he went home and asked his mother if she would buy him the book. She didn't say yes and she didn't say no. She said, "I'll think about it." Do your parents ever say something like that to you? That night he asked her again right before he went to bed. This time she said, "That's a lot of money for a book. We'll see." Every day of the book fair he asked either his mother or my father if he could have the George Washington book. He pleaded. He begged. He even offered to clean his room, make his bed, and take out the garbage. On the night before the book fair ended, his parents stopped by the school to look at the books. But when they came home, they didn't bring him the George Washington book.

The boy was very sad about not getting what he wanted. He cried. He complained. He argued. He reasoned that in some way his parents didn't love him very much, or perhaps loved his brother and sister better. They seemed to always get what they wanted. After all, didn't they understand how much how wanted that book about George Washington? It wasn't fair. And he wanted justice!

A couple of weeks later he celebrated his ninth birthday. He had almost forgotten about the George Washington book. There was cake to be eaten, candles to blow out, and presents to be opened. He opened up his birthday gifts and found some good stuff- a pair of pants, a sweater, and a real leather football. He politely thanked his parents and headed to the yard to break in the football. Suddenly his mother called him back, "You have one more present to look at." He turned around and guess what she was holding? That's right- a George Washington book! It was unbelievable!

The boy's mother explained everything to him. His parents understood he really wanted that George Washington book. They heard him each and every time he asked for it. But they didn't have enough money to buy that book and purchase more birthday presents too. So in order for him to have the book he needed to get it as a birthday present.

Jesus told a story about a woman who wanted some money that she felt she deserved. She went to a judge and asked him to give her what she was entitled to receive. He ignored her. She asked again. He sent her away saying "Don't bother me." She kept asking and asking and asking and asking until the judge finally tired of her complaints. He gave her the money she wanted.

Jesus said that our prayers to God need to be like that woman's pleas. God wants to hear our problems and our requests. God loves us and cares for us very

much. We should never stop asking God for what we really want and what we believe we need.

That doesn't mean that God will always answer our prayers quickly or in a way that makes us instantly happy. If I prayed everyday for all the potato chips I could eat, God might have Mrs. Ritter remind me that potato chips are not that healthy for me. If you prayed to get an "A" in math, God might remind you to do your homework, study harder, and get some good sleep the night before the next test. The point is that God will never say, "Go away, don't bother me!" God will listen to our prayers, God will help us find an answer, and God will be with us even when it seems there isn't an answer. God loves us and wants what is best for us in all things.

By the way, if you haven't already guessed, the fourth grader who wanted the George Washington book was really me. I've learned that God wants us to be patient but also persistent. God wants us to pray and keep praying. If we keep asking God for help, we will find the help in some way.