

Cycle C

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary #III

Reading I: Genesis 18: 20-32

In this passage from Genesis we encounter a conversation between Abraham and God. God has heard the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah. The sin of Sodom and Gomorrah has been that they have not offered hospitality to the stranger and in fact have done just the opposite: they have been abusive to the stranger. In the ancient world it was essential to offer hospitality to the stranger traveling through your land. To not do so was an offense against God, and in fact, may mean that stranger may not survive. Since life is the very image of God, to preserve it is essential to living a moral life. Abraham pleads with God over and over again to spare the cities if there are even a few just people found there. This becomes one of the first examples of **persistence in prayer**.

Reading 2: 2 Colossians 2: 12 - 14

Common to so many of Saint Paul's letters to the various communities he established, this letter is one of encouragement to the community of faith. He encourages the community to recall their baptism and all that they have learned and all that has been part of their foundation of their faith in Jesus Christ. He entreats them to **persevere** in their faith journey. From Saint Paul's words it may be believed that there were those among and amidst the community that may have been preaching something very different from the message that Saint Paul shared with them. He encourages them and us to remain solid in the faith we received, with Jesus Christ as the center of that faith.

Gospel: Luke 12:49-53

The disciples approach Jesus and ask him to teach them to pray and so begins the long tradition of praying what is known as The Lord's Prayer. Notice that this prayer gives us a framework for our own personal prayer. The first part of the prayer is to give praise and honor to God, then to seek God's will in our lives, then forgiveness and our daily needs. Jesus encourages the disciples to remain **persistent in prayer** by telling the story of one friend seeking the aid of another friend at an inconvenient hour and even though the friend does not want to respond, he does so because of the person's persistence.



build. plant. grow.
the word this week



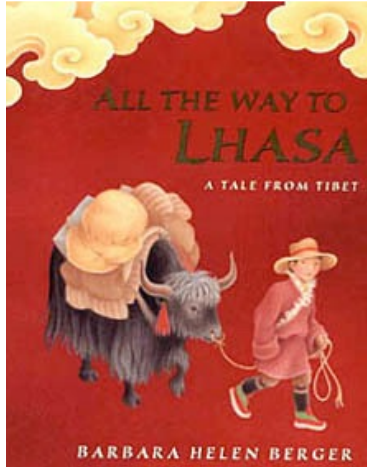
ordinary
time



lectionary
reading



children's
story



All the Way to Lhasa

Written by Barbara Helen Berger
Illustrated by Barbara Helen Berger
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character
education
activity

Persistence is refusing to give up, most especially when there are obstacles or opposition. To be persistent is to remain constant.

All the Way to Lhasa

This is a retelling of a Tibetan parable and it features two people on their way to the holy city of Lhasa. An old woman sitting alongside the road of Lhasa (dressed in burgundy and yellow, the holy colors in the Tibetan tradition) tells an impatient man on a speedy horse who asks how far it is to Lhasa, “very far, you’ll never make it there for night fall.” Meanwhile, in answer to the same question from a boy leading a steady yak, the woman replies, “Very far... but you can make it there before nightfall.” The boy is **persistent** as he deals with all kinds of obstacles and continues to place one foot in front of the other, thus completing his journey. The boy actually passes up the fallen horse and rider on their way to Lhasa.

Think of the many things that you have learned to do that took **persistence**. Maybe it was learning to tie your shoe, or ride a bicycle without training wheels, or learning to swim. **Persistence** is one of the traits that helps us to learn and do new things. Jesus tells the disciples and us that we need to be **persistent in our prayer**. It is always essential to remember that God does answer our persistent prayers, however we must also remember that God’s answer may not be the one we are seeking. God answers our prayers in three ways: Yes, Not Yet, or I have something better in mind.

In the first reading Abraham is persistent with his prayer to God. After teaching his disciples how to pray Jesus tells a story that illustrates being **persistent in prayer**.

Persisting with Prayers

Step One: Remembering that God answers our prayers in what God knows is best for us, write a prayer of petition. Take a piece of binder paper and at the top of the paper write the petitionary prayer (where you are asking for something you believe you **NEED**, not want). Fold the paper with the prayer written on it and place it in a safe place. Take the paper out each day and read the prayer. This would show that you are being **persistent** in your prayer.

Step Two: Remember that God answers our prayers in three ways: Yes, not Yet, or I have a better idea. Wait and see how God answers the prayer, which of the three ways? Be patient in waiting for the answer for it will come, and be open to one of the three ways God will answer your prayer.

Being persistent in prayer means remaining faithful to the prayer and trusting that God will answer the prayer in God's time and for our greatest good!



case study

**Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.**

What could you do today?

Interview an adult about a prayer that they were persistent in praying and ask them the following:

1. What was their prayer?
2. What was their hope in God's answer to the prayer?
3. What time period did they remain faithful in waiting for the answer?
4. Did the answer from God come as Yes, not yet, or I have a better idea?

Look Feel Know Act

Being persistent and persevering takes patience, and patience in itself is a virtue. Waiting for things is not always easy but it can be fruitful if we enter into the waiting in an active manner. The waiting period can also be a preparation period. The season of Advent is one such example. In that season we are waiting and preparing for the event of Christmas (the birth of the Lord). We make advent wreaths and light candles marking the time of waiting and preparing. Advent calendars are another way to patiently prepare as we wait for the event. The season of Lent is also very much a preparing and waiting period for the great feast of Easter. As we wait for things we must ask ourselves if we wait in a passive way, meaning that we just let the time pass without doing anything, or do we actively involve ourselves in preparing for the event? Think of something that is coming up in your life and ask yourself, "how can I prepare myself for the event so that the waiting is active and not passive?" Once you have decided what the event is, make a list of the things you can do to prepare for the event.

Both Abraham and Jesus seek to be persistent in their prayer. This could be one of the very active ways that we prepare for an event or seek a solution. Like Jesus and Abraham we are called to be persistent in our prayer and open to whatever answer God gives. Decide that there will be an openness to each of the three answers God gives to our prayer: yes, not yet, or I have a better idea.

In *All the Way to Lhasa* we see the persistence of the young man in making his trek to the city of Lhasa. Life is very much a journey and prayer is one of those great companions in life's journey. See prayer and **persistence in prayer** as a close friend to accompany you on the journey since traveling with a trusted companion can help keep us on the road, moving, and make the journey enjoyable.



**closing
tool**

Pray that you will always seek to be persistent in your prayer. Seek to make your prayer, your time with God, a constant companion on life's journey. Amen



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