



World Christian Fellowship

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Pray Persistently for Lords return

Luke 18:1-8

Luke 18:1-8, *Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, ²saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. ³Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' ⁴And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, ⁵yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' "* ⁶*Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. ⁷And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? ⁸I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"*

A judge like this would be a part of would be a civil court. In towns and villages, or in large cities, these civil courts were in a lot of locations. Every little town had to have one and a place like Jerusalem would have many of these civil courts.

This is not a position of national responsibility in a religious court where they were interpreting the religious things, or the

traditions, or the law of the Old Testament. This is a civil court, but nonetheless the judge would have a very serious responsibility before God to uphold the law of God and to uphold sympathy and compassion toward people.

Any judge in Israel would be very familiar with Old Testament instruction regarding being a judge.

2 Chronicles 19:4-7, *So Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem; and he went out again among the people from Beersheba to the mountains of Ephraim, and brought them back to the Lord God of their fathers. ⁵ Then he set judges in the land throughout all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city, ⁶ and said to the judges, "Take heed to what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment. ⁷ Now therefore, let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take care and do it, for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes."*

Everyone who was ever appointed to any judicial responsibility in Israel would know that passage very, very well. But even in the Old Testament, in spite of the clear instruction of God, judges were corrupt.

Amos 5:10-12, *They hate the one who rebukes in the gate, And they abhor the one who speaks uprightly. ¹¹ Therefore, because you tread down the poor And take grain taxes from him, Though you have built houses of hewn stone, Yet you shall not*

dwell in them; You have planted pleasant vineyards, But you shall not drink wine from them. ¹² For I know your manifold transgressions And your mighty sins: Afflicting the just and taking bribes; Diverting the poor from justice at the gate.

The gate is normally where the civil law was adjudicated. These judges that Amos mentions are corrupt and will know the judgment of God.

But this kind of judicial corruption was not limited just to the Old Testament. It was also true in the time of our Lord Jesus.

The judges in Jerusalem as being so corrupt that the people changed their title during the time of Jesus.

They were known as ***dayyaney gezeroth***. That was the term used to describe a judge and his responsibility to deal with the prohibitions of the law.

The people called them ***dayyaney gezeloth***.

They changed one letter in the Hebrew which turned the meaning completely different.

dayyaney gezeroth meaning “a judge dealing with the law”

dayyaney gezeloth meaning “a judge who is a robber.” “Robber judges”

Because they were so corrupt.

They did just exactly what the Bible said not to do, what God said not to do.

They showed partiality.

They were unjust and they took bribes.

The Talmud said they were so perverted on some occasions that they would pervert justice for one meal!

Illustration of the Parable

V 2, saying: *“There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man.*

Lord says this is an unrighteous judge means dishonest and corrupt. He did not fear God and he did not respect man.

This is simply a city that Jesus fabricates in the story. But we can assume that since He's talking to people in the land of Israel, it would be typical of a city in Israel.

Israel had much experience with widows and much experience with unjust judges.

The most wicked person, someone who has absolutely no reverence for God and no interest in people. No concerns regarding the law of God, the will of God and completely

indifferent to the needs of people and their just causes. This man is ultimately and finally wicked.

- He is not moved by reverence or worship.
- He is not moved by compassion or sympathy.
- He has no interest in the first commandment, loving God.
- He has no interest in the second commandment, loving his neighbour.
- He is the most wicked man.

The word “unrighteous” would mean dishonest, corrupt, unjust. Not only is he this evil but he knows it and he is comfortable with it.

Here is the worst possible human being in a very important position of responsibility whose disregard for God and man has massive implications regarding all the people who come into his court.

The Middle Eastern culture then and even now is a shame-honour culture. You do what brings you honour at all cost and you avoid all things that produce shame.

That was typically the way life was lived. So, the way to understand that expression "did not respect man" would be to understand it this way: He is not ashamed before people, he has no shame. He cannot be put to shame.

He had no shame. He could not be shamed no matter what he did. Good social behaviour in those cultures basically was encouraged by an appeal to shame.

V 3, *Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.'*

Someone has defrauded this widow.

Someone has so seriously defrauded her that she is destitute.

Not only is she destitute by she keeps coming and keeps coming, which is our Lord's way of pointing out that she really was in a situation where she had to have what was rightfully hers.

Her destitution goes beyond the financial, she apparently has no man in her life, no man in her family, not a brother, not a brother-in-law, not a father, not a son, not a cousin, not a nephew, not any man who could come to plead her case, because courts belonged to men.

They did not belong to women, they belonged exclusively to men. Men came to court. Women did not come to court. The courts belonged to the men.

The only time a woman would come to court was when there was no man to plead her case.

This woman is alone.

She represents the destitute, the powerless, the helpless, the deprived, the lowly, the unknown, the unloved, the uncared for, and the desperate.

Wonderful to use the illustration of a widow because her case is clear-cut, as far as the Old Testament goes purely based on mercy that he should have done something to care for her.

Exodus 22: 22- 24, *“You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. ²³ If you afflict them in any way, and they cry at all to Me, I will surely hear their cry; ²⁴ and My wrath will become hot, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.*

Deuteronomy 24:17-18, *“You shall not pervert justice due the stranger or the fatherless, nor take a widow’s garment as a pledge. ¹⁸ But you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this thing.*

Isaiah 1:16-17, *“Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, ¹⁷ Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.*

Many scriptures clearly command us that widows were to be cared for.

Their needs were to be met. This judge is utterly indifferent to her on a sympathetic side, on the side of compassion.

Apparently, she had the law on her side as well because she is asking for legal protection. She has been defrauded. Property, money which was life to her has been taken from her.

Luke focuses on both in his gospel and in the book of Acts covers several widows.

They were an important part of the ancient world. Corrupt judges and there were even more needy widows.

She is relentless.

She is there every day.

Asking, "Give me legal protection," give me what is mine. "Vindicate me," justify my complaint, render it a righteous complaint and give me what is mine.

Consistent with his utter disdain for the commandments of God and any sense of justice and his utter disinterest in showing compassion to anyone, even a lowly widow.

V 4, *And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man*

He was just outright indifferent.

He is the worst kind of human being who is then the worst judge imaginable.

Just as the prodigal son was the worst possible profligate sinner and the older brother was the worst possible hypocrite.

Jesus is into painting these extreme pictures in his stories with just a minimum of language.

Like the monologue of the prodigal son who came to his senses and talked to himself. So, this man speaks to himself, "Even though I do not fear God nor respect man."

He is a self-confessed wretch.

He has no noble motive.

He is first to admit he has no noble motive whatsoever.

V 5, *yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' "*

She causes me trouble and she is irritating me.

Every day she is there.

Every day she is pleading her case.

It is becoming very troublesome. I will give her legal protection.

She will come forever if I do not get rid of her and she will wear me out.

He has no regard for God.
He has no regard for man.
But he has regard for himself.

He cares not for what pleases God.
He cares not for what pleases men.
But he cares a lot for what pleases him.
This does not please him!

This is an irritating that he hears out of this widow every single day that is intrusive and interruptive.

This woman is not just troublesome but painful. So, the powerful and impervious judge is defeated by the weak widow through her persistence.

The Middle Eastern culture.

Women were really powerless. They were powerless in the male-dominated culture still largely true in Middle Eastern culture today. But they were respected, and they were honoured.

While they had no power, they did have honour and they could get away with things that men could not get away with.

A woman could scream and complain at the top of her voice relentlessly and get away with it because women are to be honoured and respected.

If a man did the same thing, he would lose his life.

Even today sometimes you see pictures in the Arabic world of women who are pleading their case by screaming and yelling and this would be the crying day and night kind of relentless approach of this woman that is characterized here.

The crying day and night comes in the explanation in verse 7.

So, she is driving this man to destruction in his own mind.

He has got to get rid of her.

He rules in her favour.

"I will give her legal protection."

- I will vindicate her.
- I will execute justice, righteousness on her behalf.
- I will do justice to her because I cannot tolerate her tirade any longer.

So that is the story.

Intention of the Parable:

What is the intention of this story?

V 1, *Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,*

This is a parable designed by our Lord to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart.

Jesus was telling them.

Who is that?

Luke 17:22, *Then He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it.*

Jesus was talking to those who are His followers. Those who belong to Him, those who have secured their place with Him now at the end of His life and His ministry. He has just been giving them this great discourse on the Second Coming.

- He has been talking about the fact that the Son of Man is going to come.
- He is going to come in a way that is visible and the whole world will see His coming.
- It will flash across the sky like lightning from one end to the other.
- He is going to come in horrific judgment as it was in the days of Noah, as it was in the days of Lot.
- He is going to come in a way that is going to divide marriages and families, one taken, another left.
- He is going to come in a way that is going to create death and devastation and carcasses all over the earth so that vultures will gather.

He has been talking about His Second Coming in judgment.

- He is coming to set up the kingdom.
- He is coming to glorify Himself.
- He is coming to establish His rule of righteousness and peace in the world.

But before that, there is going to be this great judgment. Then will come the glory of the kingdom, then will come the Son of Man establishing His kingdom.

In verse 22, the days shall come when you shall long to see one of the days of the Son of Man.

We long to see Him come, not only to judge, but we long to see Him come to judge and then to establish His glory and His kingdom.

He has been talking about the Second Coming. He has been talking about the fact that there is a return for the establishment of the kingdom.

We must understand Jesus is saying to His disciples there will be two comings.

Once He comes to die and pay the penalty for sin, and He comes again later to establish His glorious kingdom and to judge the ungodly as well.

So that is what He is talking about. He has been talking about the future, eschatology, the Second Coming.

Along that line, nothing changes, you notice in verse 1, no scene change, no audience change.

“Now He was telling them” takes you right back to the same people He was talking to in verse 22, “that they” the disciples “ought to pray and not lose heart.”

What do you mean?

In the time between the first and Second Coming we are not to lose heart but rather we are to pray.

We are living in that period of time now.

There is the invisible kingdom the Lord is building through salvation as He comes to take up His royal throne in the hearts of those who put their trust in Christ. There is that invisible kingdom being built.

But the visible kingdom,

- the kingdom of righteousness,
- the destruction of the ungodly,
- the binding of Satan,
- the end of the reign of Satan and sin,
- the establishment of the glorious kingdom of righteousness, joy, peace, and

- finally, the establishment of the new heavens and the new earth are all associated with His Second Coming,
- which will be triggered by the rapture of the church.

That is all in the future. So, Jesus is saying you need to view that event with prayer and not to lose heart.

That is the key to unlocking the meaning of the story.

The Lord knew then that a long time would go by. A day with Him is 1,000 years, 1,000 years is a day because He is eternal. But for us it is a long time.

Christ is dishonoured and denied His rightful place continually. The Word of God is unappreciated and assaulted and attacked. Christians are treated with rejection, persecution, hostility, and even martyrdom through these two millenniums.

We suffer at the hands of Satan, the world, the persecution of a hostile environment.

We long for Christ to come back to destroy the

- ungodly,
- destroy sin,
- the reign of Satan, and
- set up His kingdom.

We want all that. We long for all of that.

But in the intervening time the message is very clear from our Lord.

Do not lose heart!

Keep praying to that end.

This is instruction for us that it is unmistakable! At all times!!

All the events and all the seasons and all the eras and all the sweeping years that go by, we are to pray and not lose heart.

Do not give up hope that Jesus is coming!

Mockers will come, as Peter says. Where is the promise of His coming?

2 Peter 3:3-4, *knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,⁴ and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."*

Do not lose heart.

Do not become cowardly.

Matthew 24:13, *But he who endures to the end shall be saved.*

It is that enduring faith that marks the true believer.

So, this is not a call to prayer in general like, "Pray without ceasing."

This is a call to eschatological praying.

Luke 21:36, *Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."*

You need to pray that Christ will come.

You need to pray that you will have the strength to endure to the end.

The end of your life and the end until the Lord Himself comes, should you live until we are gathered to Him.

How do we know this is a Second Coming section?

V 8, *I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"*

Will He find this kind of persevering faith?

Will He find this kind of persevering prayer?

Will He find this kind of enduring confidence?

This is eschatological praying. No one of us knows the time of the rapture.

We do not know when the events that the Second Coming are will be launched.

We do not know when the day of the Lord is going to come, but 2,000 years have passed by.

Believers have been waiting and waiting and suffering at the hand of sinners. Sin escalates. Evil men grow worse and worse and worse.

We see the pollution inside and outside Christendom.

False teachers abound everywhere.

We are endeavouring to endure true and faithful, trusting in the Word of God. We have been promised that He will come. We believe that He will come.

Jesus says, "Keep praying for that event." He will come but part of the means of His coming is our prayer life.

Prayer moves God to accomplish His work and therefore having accomplished His work, bringing it to its great culmination in His Second Coming.

- ✓ He will come.
- ✓ He promises He will come.
- ✓ He will be faithful to His elect.
- ✓ He will bring judgment to the ungodly.
- ✓ He will vindicate the saints.

- ✓ He will exalt Himself.
- ✓ He will establish His throne on earth.
- ✓ He will reign in a kingdom on earth and
- ✓ He will establish the new heaven and the new earth.

That is what we are to pray for relentlessly.

Matthew 6:10, *Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.*

Luke 11:2, *So He said to them, "When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.*

This is kingdom praying.

This is praying for the kingdom to come, for the Lord to punish the ungodly, reclaim the earth, mete out righteous judgment, vindicate His elect, establish His glory on the earth, vanquish Satan, take His throne, and establish the glorious fulfilment of all His promises.

John says, "He that has this hope in Him purifies himself." It is a purifying hope as well.

Paul says, "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." We evangelize because we know the Lord is coming.

We are comforted because we know He is coming.

We are purified because we know He is coming.

It has implications about how we view everything we own.

Everything we possess,

- what we do with our time,
- what we do with our money,
- what we invest into the lives of our children and our acquaintances,
- how we live our lives should all be powerfully influenced by a strong and constant prevailing,
- persistent prayer that Jesus come.

When you pray that way constantly, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," that defines your life. That defines your life.

Interpretation of the Parable

V 6-7, Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. ⁷And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?"

Let the Lord explain the story in the context of His return.

Think about the wicked judge in the story.

He was cruelly indifferent to God.

He was cruelly indifferent to people.

But he finally did what was right for purely selfish reasons.

He did what was right for a woman for whom he had no feeling, no emotion, and to whom he had no attachment.

That is what we are going to start with as we hear the interpretation of the Lord.

V 7, shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?

This is a “much more than” kind of comparison, this is a “lesser and greater” kind of comparison.

This is extreme.

You have the most wicked, impervious, impenetrable, indifferent human being doing what is right for someone about whom he has no feeling or interest.

If a judge who is like that will do what is right for someone for whom he has no affection, do you think God will not do what is right for those who are His eternal elect, who are loved by Him before the foundation of the world?

Who cry out to Him day and night pleading for His glory to come and for them to be glorified with Him?

Widow:

We the Christians!

The elect are represented by the widow. We are helpless. We are at the mercy of our judge.

Judge:

But this judge is not like God.

This judge is the opposite of God.

He is as unlike God as you can get.

God always does what is right by His own law.

God is always compassionate, merciful, gracious, tender-hearted, and kind.

God will do what He says He will do to bring about the glorious manifestation of His own children who are loved by Him from before the foundation of the world.

The wicked, unjust, unloving judge will do what is right.

What will a righteous, loving, holy God do?

The answer

V 7, "*Now shall not God bring about justice for His elect?*"

Will God not justify?

Will He not vindicate His elect, those whom He has chosen for salvation?

1 Peter 2:23, *who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;*

Romans 12:19, *Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.*

Revelation 19:2, *For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her."*

He will do what He has promised for His elect because His Word is at stake and He's faithful to His Word, He's faithful to His law, because He's merciful, because He's compassionate, and because He loves those whom He has eternally chosen.

V 7, *"Who cry to Him day and night."*

That is us.

Luke 17:22, *Then He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it.*

We are longing for Christ to come. We are living with the blessed hope and glorious appearing of that great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

We cannot remove the Second Coming out of the constant discourse of the church, out of our vocabulary or the theology

of the Second Coming, out of our life with having without having massive implications on how we view everything.

Thessalonian Church:

If we were to go to a brand-new place where the gospel had never been and we were going to teach and preach there, what would be our message?

There is a Jewish synagogue there so there is some knowledge of the Old Testament, but predominantly you are going to a pagan city.

Acts 17 tells the story about the apostle Paul going there.

What did Paul do for these people?

Acts 17, Paul was there three Sabbaths and he was teaching. Little deeper study and some conclusions drawn from these epistles would say that maybe he actually stayed beyond those initial three Sabbaths.

Maybe he stayed a little longer but somewhere between four and six months, absolutely the terminus point, so somewhere in there.

If you only had a few weeks with a group of people, what would you teach them?

What would be the theology that you would give them?

1 Thessalonians 1:3, *remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,*

Right away in the salutation he introduces the hope that we have: our future hope.

What is that hope?

1 Thessalonians 1:10, *and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

1 Thessalonians 2:12, *that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.*

We know that he is talking in terms that they understand.

They understand the hope of the return of Christ.

They understand that they are waiting for Him to come back from heaven.

They understand also that He is going to bring a kingdom and establish His glory.

1 Thessalonians 2:19, *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?*

We can see this emphasis throughout this entire letter.

1 Thessalonians 3:11-13, *Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you.¹² And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you,¹³ so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.*

You must live in the light of the Second Coming of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, *But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

The Lord is going to descend from heaven with a shout, the voice of the archangel, the trumpet of God. The dead in Christ rise first. The rest are caught up, going to meet the Lord in the air, always be with the Lord. Comfort one another with these words. This is a lot of eschatology for a baby church.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-2, *But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ²For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.*

He told them about the suddenness of the Second Coming. When people are saying peace and safety, they will not find that.

They were also told in verse 5 that they were sons of light and sons of the day and will not get caught in the night and the darkness.

They were also told in verse 9 that God has not destined them for wrath but for obtaining salvation. You know because I taught you.

2 Thessalonians 2:5, *Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?*

If you only had a few weeks or a few months with a brand-new congregation, a few Jews and assorted pagans who knew nothing about the Bible, would you give them a full-orbed eschatology?

That is what he did.

He told them in verse 7 that the Lord would be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing retribution out to those who do not know God.

He told them also that after that judgment, verse 10, He would be coming to be glorified in His saints on that day and to be marvelled at among all who have believed.

They have got a theology of judgment.

They have got a theology of the Second Coming glory, the establishment of the kingdom, the judgment of sinners.

2 Thessalonians 2:3, *Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,*

Apostasy comes first, the man of lawlessness is revealed.

They also knew about Antichrist, they knew about escalating lawlessness.

They knew about the apostasy and they knew it all.

They knew that he would establish himself, this Antichrist, as a god, as an object of worship.

God has a right to judge, but He also has a right to be merciful. God will judge in His own time.

2 Peter 3:9, *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward [us](#), not*

willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

2 Peter 3:15, and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,

What's He waiting for?

He is waiting for the salvation of His elect.

He is waiting until they are all gathered in.

V 8, *I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"*

God will make the vindication of the elect speedily!

Quickly,

Suddenly.

Conclusion:

Lord's inquisition.

He closes with a question,

V 8, *"However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"*

What does that mean?

Jesus is just thoughtfully asking the question that when He does come, given that it is going to be a long time, will there be anybody left persistent like this widow?

When He does come, and He will, will He find people praying for His return?

If Jesus were to come now He would find a whole lot of people who call themselves Christians with very little interest in that.

Genuine Christianity never loses its grip on God, never loses its trust in Christ, never loses its hope.

But we get easily distracted.

The Lord is trying to nail this down in a practical way.

When He comes, will He find His people still crying day and night eagerly waiting for His return?

Will we love His appearing?

Will we be crying out "Maranatha"?

We live in hope, beloved, we live in hope.