

Lessons from the Persistent Widow

“There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, ‘Get justice for me from my adversary.’ And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this woman troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’” **Luke 18:2-5**

What does Jesus want us to see in this parable? Is He telling us that by nagging God we can eventually wear Him out and get what we want if we don't lose heart? I don't think so. In Luke chapter 17 Jesus answers a question that is posed by the Pharisees. “When will the kingdom of God come?” The parable of the persistent widow is given in light of His response to their question. **Luke 18:1** says, “*Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.*” The simple point that is made with this parable is that men always ought to pray.

This is not the only verse in Scripture that tells us we should pray all of the time. **Romans 12:12** says that we should be, “*rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, and continuing steadfastly in prayer*”. **Ephesians 6:17-18** says, “*And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for the saints*”.

When we consider the parable of the persistent widow, it is important to understand that the Lord is not making a comparison between the judge of the city and God. He is making a contrast to show how important it is for us to constantly seek the Lord in prayer. The judge did not fear God or have any regard for man. He has already violated the two greatest commandments in the law (**Matthew 22:37-40**). Even though this is true, the widow knew that he had the power and the authority to get justice for her. Her request was made known the one who could help.

Consider what the Lord says in His conclusion of the parable. “*Hear what the unjust judge said. And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith in the earth?*” **Luke 18:6-8.**

Allow me to make one more observation. How is it that the Lord bears long with them and He avenges them speedily? Do you remember that in Luke chapter 17, Jesus says that the day when the Son of Man is revealed will be like the days of Noah and Lot? In all three cases, God is longsuffering in regard to judgment, but when judgment comes it will come speedily. The day that Noah entered the ark, the flood came and destroyed them all (Luke 17:26). The day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all (Luke 17:29). **2 Peter 3:9-10** says, “*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. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*” It is with this truth in mind that the Lord admonishes His disciples that men ought always to pray.

How have we been doing with this admonition from the Lord? Do we cherish this awesome gift of prayer? Do we cry out day and night to Him? *When the son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?*

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