

“The Parable of the Persistent Widow”

Introduction – Luke 18:1-8 (MEV)

1 He told them a parable to illustrate that it is necessary always to pray and not lose heart. 2 He said: “In a city there was a judge who did not fear God or regard man. 3 And a widow was in that city. She came to him, saying, ‘Avenge me against my adversary.’ 4 “He would not for a while. Yet afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I do not fear God or respect man, 5 yet because this widow troubles me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she will weary me.’ ” 6 And the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge says. 7 And shall not God avenge His own elect and be patient with them, who cry day and night to Him? 8 I tell you, He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?”

What an appropriate passage of scripture for Mother’s Day! Oh, how we need to recognize the power of prayer!

I. THE CALL TO PRAY CONTINUALLY AND NOT GIVE UP

Luke 18:1 (MEV)

1 HE TOLD THEM A PARABLE TO ILLUSTRATE THAT IT IS NECESSARY ALWAYS TO PRAY AND NOT LOSE HEART.

When Jesus spoke this about prayer He didn’t mean that we are on our face crying out to God for His help continually although there are times where that is necessary! He is saying as Paul told the Thessalonians:

I Thessalonians 5:17 (MEV)

17 PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

This is thought of as a spirit of prayers. I can pray while at work, while driving, while I’m talking to someone! It is the attitude that I’m in communion with God in every part of my day. It’s hard to measure

how much good this attitude of prayer would accomplish and how much evil it would keep us from!

Then we are told to not lose heart. We are warned throughout scripture about becoming discouraged and losing heart. Prayer is hard work! If it was easy everyone would be praying all the time. It is amazing when you seek to pray what happens:

1. We get tired.
2. We get distracted and interrupted.
3. We recognize it is a spiritual battle.
4. Satan does everything he can to keep us from praying.

I share these passages a lot because they are so important for us to understand:

II Corinthians 10:3-5 (MEV)

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. **4** For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, **5** casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

Ephesians 6:10-18 (MEV)

10 Finally, my brothers, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. **11** Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. **12** For our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. **13** Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. **14** Stand therefore, having your waist girded with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, **15** having your feet fitted with the readiness of the gospel of peace, **16** and above all, taking the shield of

faith, with which you will be able to extinguish all the fiery arrows of the evil one. **17** Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. **18** Pray in the Spirit always with all kinds of prayer and supplication. To that end be alert with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

As we pray in the unseen eternal realm things begin to happen:

Daniel 10:11-14 (MEV)

11 He said to me, “O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have been sent to you now.” And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood trembling. **12** Then he said to me, “Do not be afraid, Daniel. For from the first day that you set your heart to understand this and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come because of your words. **13** But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me for twenty-one days. So Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. **14** Now I have come to make you understand what shall befall your people in the latter days. For the vision is yet for many days.”

How powerful is prayer? Listen to this example in Exodus with Moses:

Exodus 32:7-14 (MEV)

7 The Lord spoke to Moses, “Go, and get down, for your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. **8** They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. They have made for themselves a molded calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed to it, and said, ‘This is your god, O Israel, which has brought you up from the land of Egypt.’” **9** Then the Lord said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and certainly, it is a stiff-necked people. **10** Now therefore let Me alone, so that My wrath may burn against them and I may destroy them. And I will make

of you a great nation.” **11** But Moses sought the favor of the Lord his God, and said, “Lord, why does Your wrath burn against Your people, whom You have brought forth from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? **12** Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, ‘With evil *intent* He brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth’? Turn from Your fierce wrath and relent of this harm against Your people. **13** Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give to your descendants, and they will inherit it forever.’ ” **14 THEN THE LORD RELENTED OF THE HARM WHICH HE SAID HE WOULD DO TO HIS PEOPLE.**

Wow! A lot of theological discussions over this! 😊

Listen to this quote of Thomas Troeger: “Prayer takes us from the island of self to the continent of God”.

We see prayer is absolutely essential and yes, there is mystery!



II. THE PARABLE

Luke 18:2-7 (MEV)

2 He said: “In a city there was a judge who did not fear God or regard man. **3** And a widow was in that city. She came to him, saying, ‘Avenge me against my adversary.’ **4** “He would not for a while. Yet afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I do not fear God or respect man, **5** yet because this widow troubles me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she will weary me.’ ” **6** And the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge says. **7** And shall not God avenge His own elect and be patient with them, who cry day and night to Him?”

This parable is set in an unnamed town. Over the town presides an unjust judge who has no fear of God nor compassion for the people who come before him. In the Jewish community a judge was expected to be impartial, to judge righteously and to recognize that judgment ultimately belongs to God! Listen to:

Deuteronomy 1:16-17 (MEV)

16 I charged your judges at that time, saying, “Hear the issues between your countrymen, and judge righteously between every man and his fellow countryman, and the foreigner that is with him. **17** You shall not show partiality in judgment, but you shall hear the small as well as the great. You shall not be afraid in any man’s presence, for the judgment is God’s. The case that is too hard for you, you shall bring it to me, and I will hear it.”

So the judge in this story is incompetent and unqualified for the job. Justice was not being served.

So this widow repeatedly comes before the judge to plead her case. According to Jewish law, widows were to have special protection under the justice system (reference Deuteronomy 10:18, 24:17-21) But this judge basically ignores her. To her credit she refuses to give up! 😊

Eventually the judge states:

Luke 18:4-5 (MEV)

4 “HE WOULD NOT FOR A WHILE. YET AFTERWARD HE SAID TO HIMSELF, ‘THOUGH I DO NOT FEAR GOD OR RESPECT MAN, 5 YET BECAUSE THIS WIDOW TROUBLES ME, I WILL AVENGE HER, LEST BY HER CONTINUAL COMING SHE WILL WEARY ME.’ ”

The widow finally gets the justice she was seeking. Then Jesus makes His point: if an uncaring, unfit, ungodly judge answers with

justice in the end, how much more will a loving, caring, holy Father in heaven give what is right to His children?

III. THE APPLICATION

Luke 18:8 (MEV)

8 I TELL YOU, HE WILL AVENGE THEM SPEEDILY. NEVERTHELESS, WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMES, WILL HE FIND FAITH ON THE EARTH?"

So we are called to live a life of faith:

Hebrews 11:1-2, 6 (MEV)

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. **2** For by it the men of old obtained a good report. **6** And without faith it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to God must believe that He exists and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

We see in the faith chapter in Hebrews 11 all the examples of people who by faith persevered, believed in God when it seemed unpopular and ridiculous, some received the miracles and others didn't:

Hebrews 11:13-16, 35-40 (MEV)

13 These all died in faith not having received the promises, but having seen them from afar were assured of them, embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. **14** Those who say such things declare plainly that they are looking for a homeland. **15** And certainly, if they had been thinking of the country out of which they came, they might have had the opportunity to return. **16** But they desired a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. **35** Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured and did not accept deliverance, so that they

might obtain a better resurrection. **36** Still others had trials of mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. **37** They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered around in sheepskins and goatskins, while destitute, afflicted, and tormented. **38** The world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. **39** These all have obtained a good report through faith, but they did not receive the promise. **40** For God provided something better for us, so that with us they would be made perfect.

We have to leave with God as to why some get miracles and others do not. There are questions that on this side of eternity there are no answers as to why!

We know we live in a world of injustice, unfairness, where it seems that evil triumphs over righteousness and we have been warned and told about this sad reality:

John 16:33 (MEV)

33 “I HAVE TOLD YOU THESE THINGS SO THAT IN ME YOU MAY HAVE PEACE. IN THE WORLD YOU WILL HAVE TRIBULATION. BUT BE OF GOOD CHEER. I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD.”

John 16:1-4 (MEV)

1 “I have spoken these things to you so that you will not fall away. **2** They will put you out of the synagogues. Yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he is offering a service to God. **3** They will do these things to you, because they have not known the Father nor Me. **4** I have told you these things, so that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you about them. “I did not tell you these things at the beginning, because I was with you.

The apostle Paul was a living, full color example of the challenges we face:

II Corinthians 1:3-9, 11:23-28 (MEV)

3 Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, **4** who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble by the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. **5** As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. **6** If we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective in enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. **7** Our hope for you is steadfast, knowing that as you partake in the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation. **8** For we would not, brothers, have you ignorant of our troubles which came to us in Asia. We were pressured beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. **9** We had the sentence of death in ourselves, so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead. **23** Are they servants of Christ? I speak as a fool. I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. **24** Five times I received from the Jews forty lashes minus one. **25** Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I have been in the deep; **26** in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brothers; **27** in weariness and painfulness, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, and in cold and nakedness. **28** Beside the external things, the care of all the churches pressures me daily.

Jeremiah understood it:

Lamentations 3:1-24 (MEV)

1 I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of His wrath. **2** He has driven and brought me into darkness without any light. **3** Surely against me has He turned His hand continually, the whole day long.

4 My flesh and my skin He has made waste away; He has broken my bones; 5 He has besieged and enveloped me with gall and travail. 6 He has set me in dark places, like the dead of long ago. 7 He has hedged me in so that I cannot get out; He has made my chain heavy. 8 Even when I cry for help, He shuts out my prayer. 9 He has blocked my ways with hewn stone; He has made my paths crooked. 10 He is to me a bear lying in wait, a lion in hiding. 11 He has turned aside my ways and torn me in pieces; He has made me desolate. 12 He has bent His bow and set me as a target for the arrow. 13 He has caused the arrows of His quiver to pierce my inward parts. 14 I have become the derision of all my people, their mocking song all the day. 15 He has filled me with bitterness, He has sated me with wormwood. 16 He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and covered me with ashes. 17 My soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten prosperity. 18 So I say, “My strength and my hope from the Lord have perished.” 19 Remember my affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. 20 Surely my soul remembers and is humbled within me. 21 But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: 22 It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed; His compassions do not fail. 23 They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. 24 “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in Him.”

I could go on and on about the examples of servants of God who went through a living hell on earth and their words and stories are here in scripture to encourage us in our earthly journey! **IT’S OK TO QUESTION AND EVEN GET MAD AT GOD; BUT THE ESSENTIAL TRUTH IS DON’T GET STUCK IN THEM!**

We are called to realize one day God will wipe every tear from our eyes! He will ultimately judge fairly and we’ll be rewarded for our faith!

Listen to these passages:

Revelation 21:3-7 (MEV)

3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven, saying, “Look! The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them. They shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. **4** ‘God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. There shall be no more death.’ Neither shall there be any more sorrow nor crying nor pain, for the former things have passed away.” **5** He who was seated on the throne said, “Look! I am making all things new.” Then He said to me, “Write, for these words are faithful and true.” **6** He said to me, “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the spring of the water of life to him who thirsts. **7** He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

I Corinthians 13:12 (MEV)

12 For now we see as through a glass, dimly, but then, face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know, even as I also am known.

Conclusion

Lastly, listen to the words of Job that had no idea as to why all the troubles that came upon him and his family:

Job 19:23-27 (MEV)

23 “Oh, that my words were written! Oh, that they were inscribed in a book! **24** That they were engraved with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever! **25** For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He will stand at last on the earth; **26** and after my skin is destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God, **27** whom I will see for myself, and my eyes will behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me.