

Luke Chapter 18

Luke 18:1 "And he spake a parable unto them [to this end], that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;"

“Ought always to pray”: A common theme in Paul’s epistles (Romans 1:9; 12:12; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:17; 2 Thess. 1:11).

Some would have us believe that praying just one time for a thing is enough, but this parable teaches just the opposite. We should be continually in an attitude of prayer. We should keep praying until we see the answer to prayer. The Bible says the fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Luke 18:2 Saying, "There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:"

Which feared not God, neither regarded man”: This man was thoroughly wicked. Christ described him as “unrighteous” (verse 6), like the manager (in 16:8). The judge is not given as a symbol of God, but rather in contrast to Him.

If such an unrighteous man would respond to persistent pleas, would not God, who is not only just, but also loving and merciful, do so more readily?

Jesus is showing in this parable, this judge who is not a believer in any sense of the word. This judge is not swayed because he has no regard for man or God. His judgment is based on pure fact and is calculated with no feeling.

Luke 18:3 "And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary."

This woman has had someone cause her problems. Possibly because she was a widow, this person thought she was helpless and took advantage of her. She comes to this worldly judge and wants him to take action against this evil person.

Luke 18:4-5 "And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;" "Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me."

“She weary me”: Literally “hit under the eye.” What the judge would not do out of compassion for the widow or reverence for God, he would do out of sheer frustration with her incessant pleading.

This woman just wouldn't give up. She came over and over again and kept bringing her petition before this judge, until she wore him down. Her perseverance caused him to finally act upon this

to get rid of her. This is also the way we should pray. We should bring our request over and over unto God until He tells us to hush or until He answers our prayer.

Luke 18:6 "And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith."

“Hear what the unjust judge saith”: I.e., listen to the point of the story, namely that God, who always does right and is filled with compassion for believers who suffer, will certainly respond to His beloved ones who cry for His help (verse 7).

Jesus is telling His disciples, of then and now, that persistence pays off. Even this man who seemingly had no heart did what she asked, because she kept on asking until he did.

Luke 18:7 "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?"

Jesus is saying here, that God with His tender heart hears our prayers and will avenge for us. The only difference here is that God is trying to give them ample time to repent, before His judgment falls upon them.

Luke 18:8 "I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

“Speedily”: He may delay long, but He does so for good reason (2 Pet. 3:8-9), and when He acts, His vengeance is swift.

“Shall he find faith”: This suggests that when He returns, the true faith will be comparatively rare, as in the days of Noah (17:26), when only 8 souls were saved. The period before His return will be marked by persecution, apostasy, and unbelief (Matt. 24:9-13, 24).

This question here to me, is saying just because God has not already answered your prayer. Have you stopped believing that He will? God's time and our time are two different things. Fifty years is nothing to Him, but with us it is half a lifetime. We must keep the faith regardless of whether it appears He has answered our prayer or not.

Our faith pleases God. Faith can move a mountain or get you to heaven. God's judgement is not slack as we read (in 2 Peter).

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Luke 18:9 "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:"

This parable is rich with truth about the doctrine of justification by faith. It illustrates perfectly how a sinner who is utterly devoid of personal righteousness may be declared righteous before

God instantaneously through an act of repentant faith. The parable is addressed to Pharisees who trusted their own righteousness (verses 10-11).

Such confidence in one's inherent righteousness is a damning hope (Rom. 10:3; Phil. 3:9), because human righteousness, even the righteousness of the most fastidious Pharisee, falls short of the divine standard (Matt. 5:48).

Scripture consistently teaches that sinners are justified when God's perfect righteousness is imputed to their account (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:4-5; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:4-9). And it was only on that basis that this tax collector (or anyone else), could be saved.

Remember, that Jesus spoke in parables, so that people who were worldly would not understand with their mind and accept Him through knowledge and not the spirit. Jesus is speaking here to self-righteous people who are down on everyone else. By speaking in parables, they could not accuse Him. This is what He said.

Luke 18:10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican."

Remember, the publican was the hated tax collector and the Pharisee was one who was strict in the keeping of the law. Both of the men in this parable went to pray at the temple. The Pharisee probably went regularly to pray at the temple twice a day to conform to the law.

Luke 18:11 "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men [are], extortionists, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican."

It appears he prayed words pleasing to himself. His conceit shows. He didn't even humble himself before God, but stood while he prayed. To me, it appears that he is saying, God take a look at how great I am. I see no repentance or humbleness at all. I see a self-centered man who is trying to prove how great he is to God.

Luke 18:12 "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess."

Here again, he is bragging to God about how wonderful he is.

Luke 18:13 "And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as [his] eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner."

The tax collector's humility is notable in everything about his posture and behavior. Here was a man who had been made to face the reality of his own sin, and his only response was abject humility and repentance. He contrasts with the Pharisee in virtually every detail.

"God be merciful": He had no hope but the mercy of God. This is the point to which the law aims to bring every sinner (Rom. 3:19-20; 7:13; Gal. 3:22-24).

We see, here, a humble man. He is in direct contrast to the Pharisee. Fear (reverence), keeps him from even looking up to heaven. He realizes he is a sinner and begs for mercy. In (1 John 1:8-10), we see that this publican is telling the truth and the Pharisee is in error.

1 John 1:8-10 "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

We must be like the publican and beg mercy.

Luke 18:14 "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified [rather] than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

“Justified”: I.e., reckoned righteous before God by means of an imputed righteousness.

"Justified" means: “just as if I had never sinned”. The justified, here, is the publican who humbled himself before God.

Moses was said to be the humblest man in the Old Testament. We know that God exalted him to the point that he led three million (approximately), Hebrews out of Egyptian bondage. The Pharaoh exalted himself, and God (through the ten plagues), brought Pharaoh down.

Luke 18:15 "And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when [his] disciples saw [it], they rebuked them."

These disciples felt that these people were wasting Jesus' time. They thought, what could Jesus touching a baby do? It could raise up a John the Baptist or someone like him, that's all. These babies, not baptized, but promised to God, would be the next generation of disciples. Listen to Jesus' answer to them.

Luke 18:16 "But Jesus called them [unto him], and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."

We are all little children to God. These children could miss many a heartache if they decide to follow Jesus at a very early age. A child raised in the church when they are little will always follow God when they are old. Sometimes in their teens or twenties, they may wander away, but when they get a little older, they always come back to their early training.

The kingdom of God is made up of people who have accepted Jesus with a humble heart like a child. We see this very thing said by Jesus (in verse 17), below.

Luke 18:17 "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein."

“As a little child”: This is how Jesus characterized conversion. Like the Beatitudes, it pictures faith as the simple, helpless trusting dependence of those who have no resources of their own. Like children, they have no achievements and no accomplishments to offer or commend themselves with.

Little children have a special humbleness and are easily taught. Most adults are not this way. When a person is converted, it means he turned from his old ways and starts out brand new. A little child is enthusiastic and eager to learn, and has a love that is forgiving. He has simple trust.

This does not mean you have to be a little child, but that you must have the humbleness and total dependence on God that the little child has. We must receive the kingdom of God as a free gift. We cannot earn it, and we certainly do not deserve it, as this Pharisee thought. We get it through the grace of God by faith.

Luke Chapter 18 Questions

1. How often should men pray?
2. What kind of prayer availeth much?
3. In verse 2, what kind of judge is this speaking of?
4. What does he (judge) base his decisions on?
5. Who came to this judge for help?
6. What did the judge reply at first?
7. Why did he finally listen to the woman?
8. What does this teach us about praying?
9. Why has God not already avenged for His own elect?
10. What question did Jesus ask in verse 9?
11. How would you answer this?
12. What do we read in 2nd Peter chapter 3, verse 9 that tells us of His love even for those who have not repented?
13. The people Jesus spoke this to, trusted in whom?
14. In verse 10, who were the two who went to the temple to pray?

15. Who was the publican?
16. Who was the Pharisee?
17. What attitude did the Pharisee have?
18. What were some of the bragging remarks the Pharisee made?
19. What does 1st John chapter 1. verses 8-10 teach us about sin?
20. Which was justified the publican or the Pharisee?
21. What does "justified" mean?
22. Which two Old Testament people did the author use to show how God exalts or brings down someone? Explain.
23. Why did they bring infants to Jesus?
24. Why did the disciples rebuke them for bringing the infants?
25. Jesus said "suffer little children to _____ and _____".
26. Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise _____.
27. What exactly is this Scripture saying?