

## The Persistent Widow

### Introduction

1. Jesus was a man of prayer.

- a. Though He was Deity in the flesh He still frequently called upon God in prayer. (Matt. 26:39; Mk. 14:32; Lk. 6:12; Lk. 9:28).

MAT 26:39 And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

MAR 14:32 And they came to a place named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here until I have prayed."

LUK 6:12 And it was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.

LUK 9:28 And some eight days after these sayings, it came about that He took along Peter and John and James, and went up to the mountain to pray.

- b. He always prayed that God's will be done in His life and in the lives of His followers. (Jn. 4:34; 5:30; 6:38).

2. He gave instructions to His disciples on how to pray. (Matt. 7:7-11; Lk. 11:1-13).

3. The aim of this parable is to teach the disciples the importance of persistence in prayer.

- a. Many believe that God always answers prayers immediately.
- b. They give up if God does not immediately give them what they want.
- c. Some believe God did not hear them.
  - 1) Some believe God did not have time for them or is indifferent to them.
  - 2) Some believe that what they asked for was not meant to be and give up.

4. This parable is very similar to the one He uttered in Luke 11:5-8.

LUK 11:5 And He said to them, "Suppose one of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves;

LUK 11:6 for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him';

LUK 11:7 and from inside he shall answer and say, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.'

LUK 11:8 "I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

These words were preceded and followed by a discourse on prayer. (Lk. 11:1-4; 11:9-13).

18:1 **Now He [Jesus] was telling them [ His disciples] a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart,**

1. Jesus relates this parable to reveal that we must never lose heart (give up, become discouraged) in our prayer lives.
  - a. It is important to note said “that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart.”
  - b. Christian should pray in good times and bad times, when things look optimistic and when they look bleak, when most have given up.
2. We must be persistent in prayer. (Col. 4:2; Rom. 12:12; 1 Thess. 5:17; Matt. 7:7-11).
  - a. He is not commanding non-stop prayer. There is no evidence that Jesus or the apostles or the early Christians literally prayed without ceasing.
  - b. The idea is of continual prayer, that is, a person who prays often in faith to God.
  - c. Early Christians continued steadfastly in prayer. (Act 2:42).
3. The Greek has “ekkakeo” [ek kah **keh** oh] meaning "not to faint, to turn coward, to lose heart.”
  - a. This word is used in 2 Corinthians 4:1,16.

2CO 4:1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, **we do not lose heart,**

2CO 4:16 Therefore **we do not lose heart,** but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

- b. It means that a Christian should not to grow weary, tired in asking God for things he/she believes in right and good.

## **The Judge**

18:2 **saying, "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God, and did not respect man.**

1. This was a "hard-boiled" judge who knew no one as his superior.
2. This judge had little concern for poor and unimportant people.
  - a. They could not help him financially in any significant way. They could not add to his power and prestige.
  - b. He might gain some money by taking bribes from them.
3. This judge did not "fear God" nor did he fear man. This suggests he made no pretension of being a godly man.
  - a. He was one who ignored the two great commandments. (Matt. 22:37-39).
  - b. He was ignoring the most important thing in the world. (Eccles. 12:13).
  - c. He did not “fear man.” This is not likely absolute.

- 1) He would have a fear of his superiors especially the Roman emperor and its governors.
  - 2) The idea is that he believed he could do as he pleased. He was above the law in his own mind. He was the law.
  - 3) On top of all this he was a wicked man and could care less about real justice.
4. He was probably a Roman because one man could not constitute a Jewish court.
  5. He was certainly a foolish judge. (Prov. 1:7; 9:10).

PRO 1:7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

PRO 9:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

- a. All should take notice that no one has real knowledge without reverence for God.
  - b. All should take notice that no one has real wisdom without reverence for God.
6. He did not realize that one day he would stand before the greatest Judge of all - the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. 5:10).

### **The Widow**

18:3 **"And there was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying [pleading], 'Give me legal protection from my opponent.'**

- Lit. "saying" used in the sense of "pleading, begging."
  - The name of the city or the name of the widow is not given.
  - This is a hypothetical parable and these details were unimportant.
  - "ekdikeo" [ek dee keh oh] - "vindicate, avenge, execute right and justice." It is not used here to mean 'avenge' as it is in Romans 12:18, but means to execute justice by doing right to the innocent and punishing those oppressing them.
  - NIV "Grant me justice" has the idea of rendering justice by upholding the innocent and punishing the guilty.
1. The widow wanted to be preserved or protected from her adversary's attacks and injustices.
  2. She kept coming to the judge over and over again seeking protection from her opponent.
  3. It was not uncommon then and now for people to take advantage of widows. (Lk. 20:47).

LUK 20:47 who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater condemnation. "

- a. Most widows were very poor. They were helpless and were easy prey for the wicked.
- b. God had severe warnings against those who abused and neglected widows. (Exod. 22:22; Deut. 27:19; Jas. 1:27).

EXO 22:22 "You shall not afflict any widow or orphan.

DEU 27:19 'Cursed is he who distorts the justice due an alien, orphan, and widow.' And all the people shall say,' Amen.'

JAM 1:27 This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world. Harming or neglecting these is foul and totally unacceptable to God.

c. God would bless those who took care of widows. (Deut. 10:18).

DEU 10:18 "He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing.

d. Luke had great concern for widows in his writings. (Lk. 2:37; 4:26-26; 7:12; 20:47; 21:2-4; Acts 6:1; 9:39, 41).

18:4 **"And for a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, 'Even though I do not fear God nor respect man,**

- "fear" is from "phobeomai" [ fah **beh** ah mi] - "fear, revere."
- "entrepo" [en **treh** poh] - "regard, reverence, respect"

1. He kept giving this widow a deaf ear.
2. He may have been expecting a bribe. See Felix. Acts 24:26.

ACT 24:26 At the same time too, he was hoping **that money would be given him by Paul**; therefore he also used to send for him quite often and converse with him.

18:5 **yet because this widow bothers [pesters] me, I will give her legal protection, lest by continually coming she wear me out. "**

- Lit. "hit me under the eye" - The Greek is "hupopiazō" [hoo poh pee **ah** zoh] refers to 'the part of the face below the eyes. It was used to mean "to strike or hit one upon the parts below the eyes. He could have the meaning of "to beat black and blue."
- It could also be used metaphorical. It is a metaphorical use of the words meaning she will wear me out by her continual coming to pester me/
- Some hold to a literal meaning of the word and believe he was afraid she would attack him and blacken his eyes.
- It is very unlikely that it has a literal meaning. It most improbable that he feared she would attacked him and do bodily harm to him. Hardly any widow would pose a physical threat to a judge or any one else.

1. She had become a pain, a nuisance, a pest to him.
2. He was tired of dealing with her.

18:6 **And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous [unjust] judge \*said;**

1. The words "and the Lord said" appear to be the words of Luke.
2. Luke injected the words to emphasize the meaning of this parable.

3. Up to this point readers would not see the point of the parable.

**18:7 now shall not God bring about justice for His elect [chosen ones], who cry to Him day and night [continually], and will He delay long over them?**

- “will he not be patient with them” - McCord.
- “eklektos” [ek lek **tahs**] - “elect, chose.”
- It is used of Christ (Lk. 23:35; 1 Pet. 2:4,6), of angels (1 Tim. 5:21), of Christians (Rom. 8:33; Col. 3:12).

1. If an unrighteous (heathen) judge would answer the persistent petitions of an insignificant widow, how much more would a loving God answer the continuous cries of His elect.

2. Yes, God answers prayers. (1 Pet. 3:12; 1 Jn. 5:14,16; Eph. 3:20; Jas. 5:16).

3. The “elect” [chosen] are those who accept the gospel. (2 Thess. 2:13, 14).

2TH 2:13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.

2TH 2:14 And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

a. Men are saved by obeying the gospel. (Rom. 1:16).

b. See James 1:18, 21; 1 Pet. 1:22-25.

4. God justifies His elect. (Rom. 8:33).

ROM 8:33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;

a. God's elect have been born again. (Jn. 3:-15; Gal. 3:26, 27).

a. God's elect walk in the light. (1 Jn. 1:7).

b. God's elect confess their sins to God. (1 Jn. 1:9).

- It has no reference to God arbitrarily choosing some to be saved and others to be lost.
- God is not a "respector of persons" and He wants all men to be saved. (Acts 10:34,35; Rom. 2:11; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9)
- Predestination is a false doctrine of men and must be rejected by faithful Christians.
- This doctrine discourages many from coming to Christ.
- Many associate predestination with God arbitrarily choosing those who will be saved and lost.
- Others falsely associate it with a certain race or class of men.

**18:8 "I tell you that He will bring about justice for them speedily [quickly]. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find [the] faith on the earth?"**

- The Greek literally has “the faith.” “will He find the faith on the earth?”
- The words “the faith” often refer to the gospel and the Christian religion. (Acts 6:7; Gal. 1:23; Jude 3).
- “Son of man” is used of Christ in the New Testament. (Matt. 8:20; 9:6; 12:8; 13:41; 16:27).

MAT 8:20 And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

MAT 9:6 "But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"-- then He said to the paralytic-- "Rise, take up your bed, and go home."

MAT 12:8 "For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

MAT 13:41 "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness,

MAT 16:27 "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds.

- “Son of man” is used of the Son of God who was very interested in man and gave up His life that men might be saved. (Matt. 20:28). Jesus served mankind, and gave “his life as a ransom for many.”
- The “many” [Matt. 20:28] defines all those who obey Him. (Heb. 5:9).
- It is not a reference to His humanity though Jesus did come in the flesh. (Jn. 1:14; 1 Tim. 3:16).
- Jesus was not telling everyone He was human. This is what most people believed about Him.
- Persistent prayer and perseverance are necessary in order for God’s chosen ones to remain true to the faith until the Son of man returns.

2. “...will He find (lit. the) faith on the earth?”

- a. That is will Christ find those who have the persistent faith of the widow when He comes again?
- b. The answer is “yes” (1 Thess. 4:13-17; 2 Pet. 3:11-15).

1TH 4:13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope.

1TH 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

1TH 4:15 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, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep.

1TH 4:16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

**1TH 4:17 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.**

2PE 3:11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

2PE 3:12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

2PE 3:13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

2PE 3:14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,

2PE 3:15 and regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you,

- Only righteous people would be “looking for and hastening of the day of God.”
- Only righteous people would “look for these things” and “be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless.”
- This most often is done even when they have been reviled and persecuted.

REV 1:7 Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Even so. Amen.

- The word “every eye” includes those who have lived faithfully for Christ. These words are not limited to the wicked, but they were certainly included.
- There will be faithful righteous people alive when Christ comes again. (Lk. 17:30, 31, 34-36).

## **Conclusion**

1. May each of us pray continuously to God.
2. We must be persistent in prayer, and never give up.
  - a. God answers our prayers.
  - b. He answered them when the time is right according to His will.
3. The Lord is teaching His disciples the proper response to the delay of His coming. (Lk. 17:22-37).
  - a. Jesus knew there would be a time, perhaps even a long time between death, burial and ascension and the time He would come again.
  - b. It was vital that Christians persevere in faith and not lose heart.
  - c. Prayer is a vital part of this perseverance.
  - d. Prayer gives the power and strength that Christians need to endure until Christ came again.

