

Parables of Persistent Prayer and Humility

Luke 18:1-17

The Parable of the Persistent Widow

¹ Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, ² saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. ³ Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' ⁴ And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, ⁵ yet 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. ⁷ And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? 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?"

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

⁹ Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ¹⁰ "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' ¹³ And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Jesus Blesses Little Children

¹⁵ Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw *it*, they rebuked them. ¹⁶ But Jesus called them to *Him* and said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. ¹⁷ Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it."

Questions:

1. What was Jesus' purpose for the parable of the persistent widow? v 1 What kinds of things can cause us to start losing heart and cause us to stop praying persistent believing prayers?
2. What kind of man was this judge? vs 2-5 Would the duty to uphold the law make him tough? Why does Jesus call him an unjust judge in v 6?
3. What issue did the widow bring before the judge? Did he want to help her? What motivated him to do so?
4. What lesson does the parable teach? vs 6-8 How is God different from this judge in how He responds to our prayers when we call on Him for help?
5. What connection is there in our being persistent in our prayers (like the widow) and the question Jesus asked in vs 8 "when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"
6. Do YOU think Jesus will find true faith on the earth when He returns? Why.. or why not?
7. What two men are described in vs 9-14? What were they doing and where? What was the main purpose Jesus had in mind for this parable? vs 9
8. What did the Pharisee's prayer consist of? What does this tell us about him? How had his observing of the law in his daily and weekly life affected him in his attitudes?
9. In what ways do we as Christians today have a tendency to look down on others? Who are the people we look down on? How may this grieve Jesus' heart and injure the cause of His church?
10. What did the tax collector's prayer consist of? What do his prayer and his physical posture tell us about him? What lessons do you think we should take from this story?
11. What was the initial response of the disciples to the parents bringing their young children to Jesus? How did Jesus correct them?
12. What can we learn about how we should encourage children and what attitudes of children we need ourselves?