

09102023 Luke 18 As we wait for the Return of Jesus what are we to do? In the verses just before our study today, Jesus answers a question posed to him by the religious leaders about when the

NLT Luke 17:20 One day the Pharisees asked Jesus, "When will the Kingdom of God come?"

He tells them that when it does all will see it like lightening...

He then gives his disciples a deeper briefing.... He tells the disciples that it will come at a time when they do not expect it. He also tells them those days before his second coming will be difficult days for them.

NLT Luke 17:22 Then he said to his disciples, "The time is coming when you will long to see the day when the Son of Man returns, but you won't see it.

- *First...The disciples would witness the resurrection and the Asension...they would see Jesus gloriously ascend to the Father in Heaven...but none of you will witness his glorious returning your lifetime...it will be delayed...we are still waiting for it today!*
- **And He tells his disciples... hard times await them ahead !! and when these times of trial are heaviest... they will long...greatly desire...hunger...to see the day when Jesus returns!!**

That briefing will certainly leave them alarmed! **They were being told that many troubling events and painful days lay ahead of them.**

➤ and later Jesus There will be many trials and sorrows.....

➤ **they will not have the final say**...so keep heart? What does heart mean?

NLT John 16: 33 I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth *you will have* many trials and sorrows. But take *heart*, because I have overcome the world."

Heart is the willingness/ the mind set to do whatever it takes to finish strong... to not quit... This is the quality in a Person God

can strengthen ..to keep on keeping on...finish strong in spite of trials and sorrows...committed to Jesus and his Kingdom

NLT 2 Chron.16:9 9 The eyes of the LORD search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.

Listen When I call a police man to help ...I want a man with a heart to protect...and not afraid to get out of his squad car

- **If my home is on fire...I want a Fireman who is committed ...with heart to put out the fire... not more concerned with getting soot on his clothes**
- **If someone comes into my home and tries to hurt my family...I will kill him...period**

• **Heart separates those who do from those who don't**

This is the kind of Person God can strengthen ..to keep on keeping on..

So Jesus encourages them, in the mean time when I am gone this is what you are to do.... This is what we are to do!

NLT LK 18: One day Jesus told his disciples a story to show that they should always pray and never give up.

➤ **Even before we hear the parable, the gospel writer fills us in on Jesus' purpose in telling this story.**

➤ **Two things he said to do...1). always pray and 2) to never give up**

➤ **Whenever Jesus tells us something to do ...he says that because we will be tempted to not do those things...**

- **Jesus wants us to pray always. ...which implies we will be tempted to quit praying ... “always” refers to in “all circumstances— Why? prayer connects the natural to the spiritual... it keeps us tethered to the eternal...which keeps the temporal in perspective... pray when we have good and bad days, peaceful and troubled moments” pray when I worry, when things happen that make me fearful, pray when I hear bad news or good news, pray in tragedy and triumph!**

- **He is talking about developing a habit...** Habit formation is the process by which behaviors become automatic, they are formed through repetition.... habits become routine by prioritizing them over other available options.
- **Habits often start in bad times because the bad times motivate! But they are developed in the good times. How? Because the repetition of commitment kicks in when motivation wears off...** and it most easily wanes in good times...
- **Prayer habits are foundational to spiritual strength, and greatly contribute to endurance and resilience.**

Listen If we only put things to prayer occasionally...we lose spiritual vigor and power and we fall more and more into the natural....think of going to the gym...if we only go once in a while...we never get stronger or develop endurance....whatever we gain we lose and it is so much easier to give into the temptation to no go ...

...So Why do people stop praying? There are many reasons, such as the apparent lack of results for their effort.

1. **We stop praying because no answer has come and we get tired of waiting... what's the point**
2. **we stop praying because we are disappointed by God's answers or what he allows....when he says no....or allows the unimaginable sometimes we don't pray because we are doing wrong, and we don't want to hear from God....**
3. **Some stop praying about other things because some things were not answered the way you wanted!**

- **The prayer that God honors is when you pray knowing you must abandon how you think it ought to be answered and you embrace that God will answer your prayer, in his time and in the way it will accomplish what he wants to accomplish in the subject you prayed**

about. You must choose trust regardless of the answer either positive or not! But keep praying!!

- **So he tells them a story...to illustrate the point! The reason? no doubt they will face this challenge to continue to pray about all things always when prayers are not answered the way they want them too!**

NLT LK 18:2 “There was a judge in a certain city,” he said, “who neither feared God nor cared about people. ³ A widow of that city came to him repeatedly, saying, ‘Give me justice in this dispute with my enemy.’

- **The parable revolves around two characters. The first is a judge, who “neither feared God nor cared about people** Apparently, this judge only cared about himself.
- **He didn’t care if his rulings were right in the eyes of God or and was more than willing to let injustice take its course if that benefited him..... He didn’t care what others thought about his rulings. He just did as he pleased.**
- **The other character in the parable was a poor widow...she had no money to bribe him...and buy justice ...she had no recourse except to keep pleading for justice**
- **Jesus does not tell anything more about her situation and the reason for her request. It appears her request was just**
- **The widow has had initially one request for the judge, “Give me justice in this dispute with my enemy..”**
- **What she had was persistence... she did not get justice, yet she continued to go back to the judge seeking Justice but also with varied requests.....!!**

*NLT LK 18: ⁴ The judge ignored her for a while, but finally he said to himself, ‘I don’t fear God or care about people, ⁵ but this woman is driving me crazy. I’m going to see that she gets justice, because she is wearing me out with her *constant requests!*’”*

- The phrase, which is translated “drive me crazy or some versions wear me out” beat me up...
- **In other words day by day he took a verbal barrage from her...**
- That is the kind of persistence that Jesus encourages for his disciple’s prayer life....**to not give up even if the answer is no or greatly delayed, like the case of this woman... keep on praying about other requests**

The Point!

NLT LK 18: 6 Then the Lord said, “Learn a lesson from this unjust judge. 7 Even he rendered a just decision in the end. So don’t you think God will surely give justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8 I tell you, he will grant justice to them quickly! But when the Son of Man returns, how many will he find on the earth who have faith?”

- **Is this saying that we have to pester God until we get answers to our prayers? No...he hears our prayers day and night..and they will all be answered ...in the end!**
- **And the answers will bring absolute justice and righteousness**
- **you don’t need to keep repeating a prayer over and over.. He hears you unlike the unjust Judge who must be worn out to bring Justice....**

Jesus himself said,

NLT MT 6: 7 “When you pray, don’t babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. 8 Don’t be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!

- **Well, What is he saying? He is saying that before the return of Christ his followers may be like that poor widow, suffering injustice, persecution and suffering. They will find themselves**

crying out to God night and day for justice and it may seem that there is no answer.

- So the question everyone asks..then and now.... Why does he delay? Why doesn't he stop the rot now? Why does he not bring justice immediately?
- Why doesn't he stop Corruption in government, greed in business, exploitation of the poor and vulnerable, abuse and the whole catalogue of evil from beginning to end – where is God in all this? Why does he delay?

A couple of reasons come to mind...

1. He delays answering to purify our motives...ever notice how your prayer for things changes...the longer you pray for it...our motives become clearer we want vengeance but he wants us to forgive ...we pray Justice he wants mercy
2. Our selfishness is revealed through how often we pray just for our comfort he wants us challenged to help...
3. **Sometimes delays test the sincerity and intensity of our desire....do we really want it...or is it just something that hits us now...** the intensifying of our prayers include preparing us to handle it ...taking a desire and turning it into a flame...
4. **For example praying for the hurting...with such intensity that we are moved to actually help...rather than just asking God to do something about it...**

Know this The whole point is that God is the very opposite of the unjust judge...His justice has an appointed time, and it will not be a moment late...

God does not necessarily protect us from anything in this world except his Judgment, but has promised to sustain us in everything and will get us safely home to his KINGDOM and his kingdom will be established on earth... In God's own time he will intervene quickly,

he will bring about justice for his chosen ones, he will not keep putting them off.

➤ The wrong will fail, the right prevail. That word ‘quickly’ is deceptive. It refers to God’s scale of time not ours. So keep praying about all things...he will answer

****** However the bigger question for us...is not will Jesus answer our prayers but when the Son of Man comes will he find faith on the earth?**

NLT Luke 18:8 But when the Son of Man returns, how many will he find on the earth who have faith?”

➤ So....Until that day when Jesus comes again and the Son of Man appears there will continue to be injustice and suffering and we will need faith, faith that goes on believing not because prayer has been answered but even when it seems not to have been answered, faith that trusts in God because he’s not like that unjust judge, faith that goes on praying, goes on trusting, knowing that in God’s timing right will be done.

➤ And therefore I will be about the life of Faith and good works until that time...

- continue to walk in faith or live by Faith..**you keep doing what is good and right**

ESV Micah 6:8 He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

- **And how do you know that you know this?** When you say through experience that have learned this lesson in your life...

*NLT **Philippians 4:11**.... for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have.*

Or as a saintly old woman said: I have followed the Lord so long

that I can hardly tell the difference between a blessing and a trial. I just follow the Lord.

Pray and do...is our responsibility...until that time