

Intro:

I want to continue our study on prayer by turning to Luke 18. This passage is a second extended teaching on prayer by our Lord. The first is in Luke 11, the passage that began our series.

I want you to help me with the introduction: let's read the passage, Lk 18.1-8

Now I want you to tell me the context in which this passage occurs. In other words, what kind of prayer is the subject of our Lord's discussion here?

- Consider the preceding chapter, what is Jesus talking about?
- Consider the content of verse 8, what is Jesus talking about?
- Consider the themes of our passage, 18.1-8, what kind of prayer in relation to what time is Jesus talking about? What is the subject of the prayer?

We are talking about a prayer to be prayed with end times in view and with full faith in the heart.

We are talking about a prayer for deliverance and vindication of the saints.

Even more, we are talking about a kind of heart we ought to have when we pray this prayer.

I. The Lord's desire for disciples: persistent prayer for vindication (1)

A. The type of prayer is clear from the preceding context and the wording of v. 7: a prayer for vindication ([vengeance])

1. The message of God to OT saints (Ps 25.2-3)
2. The message of God to tribulation saints (Rev 6.9-11)
3. The answer of God in the end (Rev 10.6-7)
4. The compulsion on saints to the end: 'to the necessity' ('ought')
 - a. Long word in my lexicon: 'deontology'
 - b. Meaning 'the science of duty'

The Lord is placing a duty on us with this parable.

B. The attitude called for is persistence

1. The positive: 'always pray'
 - a. Our theme involves another long word 'theodicy', *i.e.*, God's answer to suffering

- b. Theme of Job, first book of the Bible
- c. Man's first question to God: 'Why do I suffer?'

This is not the best question to be asking God, but in our weakness, it is our first question.

- d. God's answer: 'Trust me' → which leads to this: 'always pray'
2. The negative 'not faint'
- a. Word a combination of verb 'to be evil' and preposition 'in'
 - b. Meaning: *to be evil in* something or *to behave badly in* something
 - c. Derived meaning: *to be weary in* anything, or *to lose courage*

"The **not becoming discouraged** against which a warning is here given with so much earnestness, is not the neglect of the Christian vocation generally, but especially of prayer, as sufficiently appears from the example of the Widow."¹

- In the long run up to the end, the little -faith of disciples shows itself first in flagging prayer.

II. The Lord's method of instruction: the parable of the unjust judge (2-5)

- A. The attitude of the judge: 'no fear' (2)
- 1. No fear of God
 - 2. No respect for men

"Of the two impulses which often restrain men from evil — the fear of God and respect to men — neither one is able to move him to strict righteousness. ... Thus does he stand even *below* the ungodly, who, at least, still have the latter, and what is worst, he is not even ashamed of his reckless temper in his soliloquizing."²

This judge is a Rm 1.32 man.

¹ Lange, p. 270.

² Lange, p. 270.

- B. The appeal of the widow: ‘avenge me’ (3)
1. The widow is afflicted (implication: unjustly)
 2. The widow has no means of defense: she is defenseless
 3. The widow ‘kept coming’ NAS— imperfect tense
- C. The answer of the judge: ‘I will avenge her’ (4-5)
1. The judge’s natural inclination: ignore her pleas
 - a. He would not: also imperfect tense
 - b. For a while: ‘upon a time’ – an indefinite designation, but a long time is implied
 2. The judge’s view of the woman
 - a. Put in the emphatic position in v. 5
 - b. Uses a phrase to describe her: ‘this continually-presenting-to-me-trouble widow’
 3. The judge’s motivation for action: self-interest
 - a. Lest her coming weary me
 - b. Literally: lest she beat me black and blue

“Well expressed is the proverbial character of the style of speaking in the Dutch translation: *Opdat zy niet kome en my het hoofd breke*. [That she may not come and break my head for me.]”³

- 1) How would a defenseless widow ‘beat him black and blue?’
- 2) To have one’s face blackened means to suffer shame
 - a) Our idiom: ‘to give someone a black eye’ means to damage one’s reputation
 - b) The judge is afraid for his reputation, he has no concern for the woman

These points must be emphasized in the parable:

- The prayer is for vengeance
- The judge waits long because he could care less

³ Lange, p. 271.

- The judge acts only out of self-interest

III. The Lord's vivid application: the truth of the Just Judge (6-8a)

A. The Lord contrasts the Judge with God

1. Notice: 'his own elect' — the judge had no interest in the widow, God has every interest in his elect

“In the eye of the unjust judge [the widow] is an unknown, troublesome person in whom he takes no interest and about whose fate he does not worry. But the chosen ones of God are well known to Him and loved by Him, and He takes the keenest interest in them.”⁴

2. Two questions concerning the character of God
 - a. The question of God's interest in his elect [chosen ones]
 - b. The question of God's willingness to answer their continual prayer

The fact is that God does (from our perspective) require us to wait *long* for the answer.

The Lord is asking us if we think God is like the unjust judge.

3. The answer concerning the Lord's character: God will avenge suddenly
 - a. Very emphatic declaration: “I am saying to you!” [“I'm talkin' to you!]
 - b. The Lord's vindication of his saints is a sure promise — God is not at all like the unjust judge

IV. The Lord's convicting question: will faith remain? (8b)

- A. Not, will there be people of faith in the end, but...
- B. Will you believe my promises to the end?
- C. Will you pray to the end?
- D. Will you remain constant, faithful, trusting till the end?

Conclusion:

⁴ Geldenhuys, p. 447.

“It is ... to be observed ... that ‘to pray ever’ is not exactly ‘to pray without ceasing,’ of which there is mention, 1 Th 5.17. By the latter, the uninterrupted living and breathing of the soul in communion with God is designated; here, on the other hand, the unwearied praying and calling for the same thing is meant, as to which one has attained the persuasion that it coincides with God’s will.”⁵

In other words, do you have faith to pray the same prayer, knowing it to be God’s will, year after year, waiting for an answer?

“The coming of the Saviour must not only be awaited with watching, but also with praying.”⁶

HEUBNER: “Without faith in God’s father’s heart, prayer is a grimace.”⁷

⁵ Lange, pp. 271-272.

⁶ Lange, p. 272.

⁷ Lange, p. 272.