

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Luke 18:1-8

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. This week, we will read Luke chapter 18. Today, we will read verses 1-8.

Here it speaks about the parable of an unjust judge. If we remember, at the beginning of chapter 16, Jesus also spoke a parable of an unjust steward: teaching every child of God the proper attitude and perspective toward wealth. Through the parable of that unjust steward, God teaches us who are willing to serve Him how to be wise and faithful. He used a contrary example to highlight that everyone who serves the Lord and works for the Lord must be faithful and wise. Then in chapter 18, He uses an unjust judge, a negative example, to highlight that our God is the righteous Judge.

Verse 1: "Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart."

The purpose of this parable about prayer is to enable us to pray continually, to pray persistently and steadfastly, to pray without ceasing for one matter, and not to lose heart. We often interpret this passage as: whatever we ask God for and He has not given, we should hold on to God and earnestly plead, and eventually God will surely give it. I dare not say there is no such meaning, but a more accurate understanding must consider the context.

At this time, Jesus was leading the disciples on their final journey to Jerusalem; there in Jerusalem He was about to suffer and be crucified on the cross. Therefore, He seized the last opportunity to give these disciples who followed Him much teaching in life and in serving. Toward the end of chapter 17, He spoke about the coming and the revealing of the kingdom of God. The coming of the kingdom of

God is public; the revealing of the kingdom of God is hidden. Although no one knows that day or that hour of the coming and revealing of the kingdom of God, there will be signs. Therefore, Jesus brought up the days of Noah and the days of Lot as signs of His coming and revealing.

God also knows that we who earnestly wait for His return live as if in the days of Noah and as if in the days of Lot. People are busy eating and drinking, marrying and being given in marriage, buying and selling, planting, and building. And we, the people of the kingdom of God who hope for the Lord's return, living in a crooked and perverse generation, can easily become unable to go on and can easily lose heart. What He emphasizes here is not that we ask God for something, but that in the last days, in a dark generation, when we live among such people, we will often become discouraged and lose heart. Therefore, Jesus here wants to encourage His disciples: always pray, always stay connected with God, and do not lose heart.

Verse 2: "saying: 'There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man.'"

Just like the unjust steward, He used a negative example to highlight God. There was a judge in a certain city who did not fear God and did not regard man; he was a judge who did whatever he wanted.

Verse 3: "Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.'"

A widow is a person with no one to depend on. In the world she had lost her husband and lost her support, and was easily bullied by others. Therefore, she came to this unjust judge and told him, I have an adversary; please get justice for me. She had received unfair and unjust treatment, and she herself had no way to handle it, so she brought the case to the court and asked this unjust judge to get justice for her.

Verses 4-5: “And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’”

This judge who did not fear God, did not love people, and did not regard man, eventually got justice for the widow because this widow kept coming again and again to trouble him until he could bear it no longer. Jesus here highlights that in the last days, we who are willing to follow the Lord faithfully are actually like this widow. We live in an unjust generation and in a dark generation; we are often bullied and often receive unfair treatment.

Why are we widows? Because the church is the bride of Christ. After Jesus died on the cross, rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, we who belong to Him on earth are like those who have lost their husband. So in the world, to the world we are like this widow. We should not rely on this world, nor rely on the wealth or the power of this world; we are as helpless as a widow. Why? Because we have an adversary who often bullies us.

Here it speaks of this adversary. In the whole Bible, Satan is often called the adversary, the opposer. Satan is the adversary of God’s children. He always uses all kinds of opportunities and all kinds of situations to torment and bully these widows who are willing to be faithful to the Lord. In this parable, the unjust judge, because he could not bear the widow’s continual troubling, eventually got justice for her.

Verse 6: “Then the Lord said, ‘Hear what the unjust judge said.’”

This person was unjust, yet he was used to highlight that God is righteous.

Verse 7: “And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?”

The unjust judge eventually got justice for the widow because he could not stand her troubling; but God is not like that. God is righteous, and He truly hears His elect, that is, these children who belong to Him, who are willing to follow Him faithfully and serve Him faithfully, people who are like widows in the world. These people cry out to Him day and night. “Though He bears long with them, shall He not avenge them?”

The unjust judge did not listen to the widow’s cry because he himself did not fear God and did not regard man; but our God is perfectly righteous. When His elect cry out to Him day and night, Jesus said, “Though He bears long with them, shall He not avenge them?” God is righteous and God is sovereign. Many times, when God’s elect cry out to Him, He allows the situation to continue and allows their suffering to continue; the purpose is for their benefit—He bears long with them.

Actually Jesus is teaching the disciples here, especially us saints in the last days: many times when God seems unjust, what should we do? What does it mean when God seems unjust? It seems as if God allows His children to be in tribulation and persecution. In Jesus’ time, it seemed John the Baptist was killed; later, Jesus’ twelve disciples were martyred one after another, and even Paul was put in prison and John was exiled. Throughout the generations, there have always been some Christians who follow the Lord faithfully being persecuted and even martyred in the end.

Jesus especially speaks for such situations to tell us that when we fall into such situations, we need to pray continually and not lose heart. God’s elect cry out to Him day and night—“Though He bears long with them, shall He not avenge them?” The answer to this is actually in Revelation 6:9-11, “When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.” Throughout the generations many martyrs were unjustly killed; their souls are under the altar, that is, in Hades. “And they cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while

longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.”

In other words, in His sovereign authority, God has a number that needs to be fulfilled. In this process, God’s elect will suffer much persecution, and He still asks them to endure a little while. Why? Because toward the people of the world, He is still full of forbearance, full of patience, and full of love. He is willing to be patient a little longer so they may have opportunity to repent and be saved, even though this generation is evil, like the days of Noah and like the days of Lot. On one hand, God loves the world and is willing to give them time and to be patient so they can repent; on the other hand, many of His beloved saints who are treated unjustly—some have been martyred and some are still in tribulation. To these people, Jesus says, you must pray continually and not lose heart.

Verse 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 time is coming; He is about to return. The original word for “faith” here is faith. To pray continually and not lose heart requires faith. Jesus’ return is to answer those who have faith and who often pray before Him without losing heart; just as Jesus said in Luke 17:6, “If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.” Faith is not a matter of size; faith is a matter of whether you have it or not. Through continual prayer we exercise our faith and let our faith become living faith. Although it may be as small as a mustard seed, once it becomes alive and produces living effect, it can enable us not to lose heart in prayer.

Often pray for this generation, pray for the situations around us, and pray for the saints who are running the heavenly race together with us.

While waiting for the days of the kingdom of God, in the end, because the generation is like the days of Noah and like the days of Lot, people will inevitably lose heart. Those who can continue to go forward and continue to run the heavenly

race are those who can often come before God by faith, pray continually, and not lose heart. When we often pray to God in faith, He will give us His word, help us, support us, and enable us to continue walking the way of the kingdom of God.

Let us pray together: Lord, yes, our position on earth is like that of a widow; in our life we also wait for You to come back soon. In this process, many times we will inevitably be disappointed and inevitably lose heart. Lord, help us learn the lesson of prayer, to be able to pray continually and not lose heart. Also through our prayer, let us once again receive living hope from You, knowing that You will not forsake us. Bless my life today. Bring every matter I encounter in my life before You in prayer. Please protect and guide my life today; we pray in the name of Jesus Christ.