

RECEIVE DELIVERANCE - PARABLE OF THE PERSISTENT
WIDOW AND THE UNJUST JUDGE LUKE 18:1-8
ASH WEDNESDAY FEB 18, 2015

¹ And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. ² He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. ³ And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' ⁴ For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.' " ⁶ And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. ⁷ And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? ⁸ I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

You know parables are picture language

helping us understand spiritual realities that are hard to see.

This Lenten season we are looking at parables

which give us pictures of what Jesus does for us
through his suffering and death on the cross.

A key to understanding the meaning of parables is realizing

all parables show us two main things: 1) God's grace

2) how we are to respond to God's grace

some include 3rd: what happens if we don't respond that way

But this parable, like a few others, is unique

If you are over 40, you can ignore next 20 seconds.

Back in the olden days, when you took picture with camera

The picture ended up on plastic film called a negative
that was used in another process to produce picture.

It was called negative because what was light in picture
was dark on negative, and what was dark was light.

By looking at negative you could see the picture
even though light and colors were reversed.

Picture of God in this parable is a negative.

Instead of picturing what God is like,
it pictures what God is not like.

But what it does picture accurately is what we are like
and what we should be like.

God is not like this judge but we are like this woman.

WE ARE DESPERATE. GOD IS NOT DISRESPECTING.
WE ARE NOT TO BE DISCOURAGED. because
GOD IS NOT DISREGARDING.
WE ARE BEING DELIVERED. GOD IS NOT DELAYING.

WE ARE DESPERATE. GOD IS NOT DISRESPECTING.
² He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God
nor respected man. ³ And there was a widow in that city who kept
coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.'

Judge who does not fear God or respects man is not like God.
God does not disrespect us but considers us
to be very valuable and precious to him.
Unlike this judge who only cares about himself
God always wants what is best for us.
But is one who neither respects God nor cares about man.
That is the devil, who in his rebellion against God
is like terrorist who cares nothing about civilians.
He wants to trick and trap us with temptations,
kidnap us as hostages, making us slaves to sin,
and make us destroy our own lives
in ways that ruin the lives of others as well.

This is the one who is our adversary so we are like this widow
who has no family to defend or help her.
She is desperate, is beaten down and defeated
and totally dependent on another for help
What can she do but plead for help.

Jesus wants us to know this is what we are like on our own.
We are vulnerable to the devils attacks of temptation
and then his attacks of shame and despair.
He wants to do with us what he did with Judas,
using him in a suicide attack on Jesus
and turning his own disciple into an adversary.

This is why Jesus warns Peter and us to watch and pray
because we desperately need help against our adversary
who is out to destroy us.

And when we pray...

WE ARE NOT TO BE DISCOURAGED.
GOD IS NOT DISREGARDING.

¹ And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to
pray and not lose heart.

⁴ For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man,⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’⁶ And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge says.⁷ And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night?⁸ ...Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

Here is this powerful judge who does whatever he wants
regardless of God or other people
and this poor helpless widow, and who is afraid of whom?
The judge is afraid he will be beaten down by her!
because she has one thing, instead of being discouraged,
she is determined.

Of course she is, she can't just go try something else
there is nothing else she can do. He has to help her or else.
So even though he tries to ignore her, he can't.

Jesus says we have all the more reason not to be discouraged
because God is not like this. He is not disregarding us
but is constantly watching for opportunity to help us
and listening day and night for us to talk to him.
and is already answering even before we pray.

This is why Jesus, despite his almighty power,
allowed himself to be arrested and brought before
an unjust judge, who already considered him guilty,
and who deliberately brought in false witnesses
as adversaries to accuse him.

This was part of his trading places with us
so that on judgment day we end up in a different court
where God is already prejudiced in our favor
because Jesus himself stands up as both our advocate
and as a witness in our defense.

So there is no question he is paying attention to our needs,
the only question, Jesus says, is will we have faith?

Will we have faith in his invitation to trust and pray
or will we ignore him instead?

Will we have faith in his power to help us
or will we just say it is no use.

Will we have faith in his promises of what he is doing for us
or will we walk away and leave his gifts sitting there?

WE ARE BEING DELIVERED. GOD IS NOT DELAYING.

⁷ And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? ⁸ I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily.

Maybe we would give up on praying
if we felt we were like Jesus in Garden of Gethsemane.
He prayed persistently over and over, with tears and sweat
but it seemed heaven was closed to him.

He did not receive justice but speedy injustice.
Before most people knew what was happening,
one that the Judge himself knew was innocent
was condemned to death on a cross
and was dead before anyone expected it.

But yet Heb. 5:7 says: In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up
prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears,
to him who was able to save him from death,
and he was heard because of his reverence.

He was heard when he prayed "Father, your will be done."
He was saved from death when he rose again.

So his experience gives us confidence instead
because it is by his death and resurrection for us
that our adversaries, death and the devil
are already defeated, even before we were born.

v. 7, God hears our prayers because even before we call to him,
he calls us his elect, chosen to be loved by him
and to receive his promise of salvation.

The reason we can pray is that we have already been delivered
from being alone, forgotten, ashamed and hopeless.

Instead of being widowed, we are chosen as bride of Christ,
with a home already prepared for us in heaven
Jesus death has paid for all of our sins so we are not
poor and trapped by debt but have God's rich grace.

Instead of ignoring our prayers,
God ignores the devil's accusations against us.

Instead of being justly punished for our failures,
we are justified and declared righteous by grace.

This is why, when Jesus comes again, as he is doing speedily,
he can find faith on earth

because we can confidently believe
all these things which are certainly true.

In the olden days a negative was used to produce a picture.
This parable, showing what God is not like,
reminds us that God has used a negative
- all the negative things that happened to Jesus-
to produce the opposite for us so we can see
the reasons for us to have trust and confidence in God.

WE ARE DESPERATE. GOD IS NOT DISRESPECTING.

We do indeed have an adversary out to destroy us
but we have an advocate who dearly loves us.

**WE ARE NOT TO BE DISCOURAGED because
GOD IS NOT DISREGARDING us.**

We can keep on praying with confident determination
because God who let Jesus suffer until he died
is watching out for us instead.

WE ARE BEING DELIVERED. GOD IS NOT DELAYING.

God has already delivered us from death and the devil
and been declared justified by grace
because Jesus has already died & risen for us

This is why, no matter what we experience,
we can have faith in him, and look forward
to his coming again to take us to heaven.

PRAYER

Just and righteous Lord, you are also gracious and compassionate. Jesus, we know that you have come from God and gone back to God. Holy Spirit, you intercede for us with groanings too deep for words.

Just and righteous Lord, deliver us speedily

Just and righteous Lord, we confess that we have been separated from you and made unrighteous by our sins. We have betrayed you by our unfaithfulness and we have not served one another as you call us to do. We turn to you in repentance, pleading for your grace and mercy.

Just and righteous Lord, deliver us speedily

Just and righteous Lord, we thank you for granting another day of salvation. Jesus, we thank you for showing us the full extent of your love. We thank you for becoming sin for us and giving us your righteousness. We thank you for your precious body and blood, given to us in your holy supper for the forgiveness of all our sins.

Just and righteous Lord, deliver us speedily

Just and righteous Lord, you see even better than we how we are oppressed by our adversary, the devil, and how we continue to need your washing to make us clean. Create in us a clean heart and renew a right spirit in us. Enable us to live free from the control of the devil. Give us courageous faith in you and your promises.

Just and righteous Lord, deliver us speedily