

The Parables of Jesus

WEEK 2: THAT PESKY WIDOW (LUKE 18:1-8)

PROFESSOR: DR. GARWOOD ANDERSON



THE PARABLE OF THE PESKY WIDOW

LUKE 18:1-8

1

LUKE 18:1-8

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

He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor regarded man; and there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Vindicate me against my adversary.'

For a while he refused; but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will vindicate her, or she will wear me out by her continual coming.'"

2

LUKE 18:1-8

And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God vindicate his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will vindicate them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

3

LUKE'S INTRODUCTION (V. 1)

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

But if this is a parable about prayer . . . ?



4

THE JUDGE'S CHARACTER

Twofold Disqualification (v. 2)

- Did not **fear God**
- Did not **have regard for people**

He even admits it! (v. 5)

Unmoved by the widow's plea



5

THE WIDOW'S CHARACTER

Relentless: She "kept coming"

Bold: "Vindicate me . . ."

Virtuous? Annoying? or Desperate?



6

WHAT MOVES THE JUDGE?

This is not a Hallmark holiday movie!

He does not change. There is no reconciliation.

The general picture is that he is just being worn down.

“ . . . because this widow bothers me, I will vindicate her, or she will wear me out by her continual coming.” (v. 5, RSV)

7

“WEAR ME OUT”?

she will “wear me out by her continual coming.” (v. 5, RSV)

Other translations are more graphic!

- she will “finally come and **strike** me.” (NAB)
- she will “eventually come and **attack** me!” (NIV)

8

“WEAR ME OUT”?

Literally: “By means of her coming, in the end, she will strike me under the eye.”

hypōpiazē

- ‘strike under the eye, give a black eye to’ [BDAG];
- metaphorical: ‘bruise’ [LSJ]

“That lady’s gonna give me a black eye.”

9

“WEAR ME OUT”?

Thus, it is not that she is a bother
nor that she will literally strike him
rather that her constant coming to him
besmirches his reputation.

He doesn't care about her; he cares
about himself.



10

SO HOW IS THIS ABOUT PRAYER?

Listen to what the unrighteous judge
says.

- God is not like this.
- If someone like *that* can be moved to justice,
how much more God.

God's praying people

- are his "elect"
- they "cry to him day and night"
- those whom God will vindicate "speedily"



11

SO HOW IS THIS ABOUT PRAYER?

1. God is unlike the judge.
 - If one can "get results" from that kind of
scoundrel, how much more with a God who
listens to the cries of his chosen ones.



12

SO HOW IS THIS ABOUT PRAYER?

2. God is, paradoxically, like the judge.

- Like the judge, God is keen for his own glory and reputation.
- He hears and responds to our prayers for our good and for his glory.

13

SO HOW IS THIS ABOUT PRAYER?

3. We are to be like the widow.

- It is not by badgering that we change the mind of an unwilling God.
- It is by persistence in pursuing God's just causes in prayer that we show ourselves people of a faith like the widow's when the Son of Man returns.

14

REBELLIOUS PRAYER

David Wells: "Prayer is rebellion against the status quo."

- Not a rebellion *against* God.
- But a rebellion *in collusion with* God.

15



16
