

Will He Find Faith  
Luke 18:1-8

A Pastor friend of mine will often remind us that we should take great care in the way we use our words, because our “words” are so very important, both in their meanings and in our use of them. And yes, while it would seem that a word being used should have the same meaning and understanding to every person, it often does not.

Over the many years that I have spent studying these scriptures, my friend's caution to us has been a very helpful reminder, especially as I engage with other brethren in bible studies and discussions involving these scriptures.

Another important understanding that I remind myself about is that this precious Book, our Bible, has only a few words within its pages, very, very few. God has intentionally been carefully selective in the words He has chosen to be within His Book, desiring for them to wisely and prudently guide and direct the thoughts, the attitudes and the behaviors of untold millions of people over these thousands of years since they were first given to us.

Folks, simply put, these words are carefully chosen to fit every circumstance and every concern that mankind will ever encounter in life.

And because He has done that, we need to regard each word, each phrase, each nuance with the greatest of respect, carefully examining their meanings so that we can more clearly know our Lord's intent within them.

And for that reason, I sometimes cringe as I listen to a preacher or bible teacher who seems always to want to study these words in a “survey” fashion, quickly touching on various points of meaning with only a cursory understanding of them and then moving on to the next point.

For those who have followed along with me in my preaching and teaching over these many years, you might have noticed that we seldom ever study these scriptures in that manner. Yes, under some circumstances, a quick survey of a passage can be helpful, but that is seldom ever true.

Oh dear Christian, these words of our Lord are so full and so rich with meaning that if we go through them too fast, we will surely miss some of the very

important meanings within them. And we never want to do that. And that is why most often I simply study, preach and teach these precious words, verse by verse, and oftentimes, even word by word.

And may I add one additional caution. We need always to remember that these words, each one of them within this bible has been translated from another language into English, especially the Greek and Hebrew languages, giving even more reason for us to take great care in our understanding of them.

And if that isn't difficult enough, some of those ancient Greek and Hebrew words have no translatable meaning in English. And the only solution that the translators could use was to give transliterated meanings and paraphrases.

Fortunately, our Lord did not leave those solutions of translation problems solely within the abilities of men. God Himself, through the power and the presence of His Holy Spirit, gave those translators the exact meaning of each word. Those words given in 2 Peter 1,

<sup>20</sup> knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. <sup>21</sup> For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:20-21)

Because this is true, we can read and study these scriptures with complete confidence concerning their accuracy and their authenticity.

However, even with all of that being said, we, you and I still do have one last obstacle to overcome in our understanding and use of these precious words of our Lord. And that obstacle is our own personality and intellect. And even with the Holy Spirit abiding within us, we can still seem to come up with our own private interpretation of what our God is saying within these blessed words.

Why would that be so? Why will two people read the same passage of scripture and still arrive at two different interpretations of what is being said? I don't really know the full answer to that question, but for myself, too often it is simply because I want that passage to say what I want it to say. My desire fits my own purposes, but unfortunately, too often, my purposes and my desires are not the same as God intends, and I go off-course.

And yes, that is also one of the biggest reasons why we have all the many, many different denominations, and even the many varied beliefs within each denomination.

And that is why you, dear Christian, don't hear and understand the preacher's words in the same way as does the fellow Christian sitting next to you in the same pew.

With all of that being said, may I pause for a moment and read these words given to us here in Luke chapter 18. And as we read, take notice at the end of the passage of how our Lord asks a simple, but profound question involving the one thing in our relationship with Him that will either connect us closer to Him, or will separate us out from Him, the question about our "faith". Our "Faith"!

And yes, I have devoted so many, many of our recent studies to this precious word "Faith". But here, if our Lord brings it back to the foreground again in this context it seems that we should give it more attention today.

And as I read these words, pay close attention not only to the words themselves but also listen for the overtones, the nuance that is being used within the words, especially in verse 8. Listen, first beginning in verse 1,

<sup>1</sup> Then He (the Lord Jesus) spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, <sup>2</sup> saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. <sup>3</sup> Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' <sup>4</sup> And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, <sup>5</sup> yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' " <sup>6</sup> Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. <sup>7</sup> And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? <sup>8</sup> I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:1-8)

When we were last together, we considered this difficult circumstance of this struggling widow. She had been cheated in some manner or another and was in need of help. And remembering that women, especially widows, had very little standing within the social and legal processes of that Mideastern culture of that day, their cries for help would often go unanswered.

And she appeared to be using one of the few means of defense available to her, and that was to be unyieldingly persistent in her appeals to this local magistrate, even wearying him with her continued persistence.

And while that method of “persistent appeal” seems to be given some approval within the context of this parable, our Lord does add an all-important addendum to the instruction being given. And that is that “persistent faith”, “persistent faith” must always come first and “faith” must be the bedrock of our efforts. Because here next, He asks the question, “Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”

In this context, may we pause for a moment and think about some other of our Lord’s words . . . these given in John chapter 17, where, in the hours just before He was crucified, Jesus prayed a prayer for His disciples, both those disciples who were with Him in those days and also the disciples who would come afterwards . . . even you and me, today.

In verse 15 of John chapter 17, Jesus prayed . . . Father,

<sup>15</sup>I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup>They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>17</sup>Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. <sup>18</sup>As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup>And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.  
(John 17:15-19)

Oh dear Christian, these are the words of the Lord Jesus who is at every moment our Advocate who ever-lives to make intercession for us as we go about all the many of the circumstances of our daily life. And this is the prayer and the provision that goes with us.

And we need to always remember that this is taking place at every moment, especially within our worst of moments. We really do always have a trustworthy advocate who will plead our case and bring us relief from our adversaries.

Our part within all those many circumstances of our day is first and always to have “faith”, “faith” that much, much more is taking place than just those things we can see with our natural eyes, “faith” that within the hidden realms of God, He is busily at work, “working all things together for our good”.

That is part of the reason for Him asking the question in verse 8, "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" We are to "trust" that even though we may not be able to see His Hand at work and especially to see any progress taking place in our appeal, He is nevertheless busily at work. Those assuring words in verse 7,

<sup>7</sup> And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? <sup>8</sup> I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:7-8)

Our part is to patiently "wait" for His provision. We need to patiently "wait". And as we "wait" for His provision, we are to "pray". Whether we be the one who is suffering mistreatment from the hands of our adversary, or we be a witness to the mistreatment of others. As these words exhort us, "men ought always to pray and not lose heart."

Here, within the subtleness of the words of this word-picture is an example of why I mentioned that we should read and absorb these truths very slowly. Here within these words, God reveals to us reasons for our "faith", our confidence and our assurance that yes, He really is at work behind the scenes of our natural circumstances using all the means available to bring about His desired provision, to bless, to protect and to provide for us, His elect.

Here in this word-picture, our Lord is masterful in His ability to use any means available to accomplish His desired will. Here, He uses the natural impatience and corrupt personality of this unjust judge to bring about justice for this dear helpless widow.

A question . . . why did Jesus choose this particular kind of circumstance and situation? Again, here a widow, living now without her husband who probably for a lifetime had always defended her cause, is in distress from an adversary. Jesus probably used this example because this is one of the natural ways of this sin-filled world we live within, this sort of injustice taking place in and around us much more than we might be aware of. Perhaps not always in the exact manner, perhaps not within the circumstance of a judicial court of law, but still injustice and suffering and heartbreak.

Folks, as a Pastor, I was personally aware of these kinds of circumstances taking place. Women often outlive their husbands. And with families becoming more and more dysfunctional it often becomes even some of their own family members who mistreat the widows, becoming their adversaries.

Another circumstance, while it is not the same, still has similarities in the mistreatment of the helpless. While we were in the ministry to youth at French Camp, we found that more and more of our students were under the care of their elderly grandparents. And national statistics showed that there were over 23 million grandparents who were actively providing care for their grandchildren.

“Never-do-well” children, drug addicts and alcoholics abandon their children to the care of their elderly parents and grandparents. And in that circumstance both the elderly and the young are mistreated.

Whether those wayward Moms and Dads intended to be adversarial or not, their behaviors brought about the same result, their wretched habits wreaking injustice and relentless suffering upon both their children and their elderly and widowed parents.

And many, many other such injustices are taking place in the homes and in the communities all around us.

Our granddaughter’s closest friend was abandoned by her drug-addicted mother and was then adopted by her grandmother. While within that circumstance there was mistreatment taking place, we should also be careful to look for and to see God’s blessed provision of willing grandparents who stepped in and became this young girl’s surrogate parents.

Thankfully, from words such as these of this parable and other words like them, we are able to know that there truly is a provision from our Lord taking place. Our part in those circumstances is to have “faith” and to “wait” upon our Lord’s provision. And dear Christian, His provision will come!

In the Book of Psalms chapter 68, we are told that God is,

<sup>5</sup> A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows,  
(and) <sup>6</sup> God sets the lonely in families, (Psalm 68:5)

The mistreatment of widows and orphans is a serious matter to God. And as these words tell us, He, God Himself Personally, will defend them, against all forms of mistreatment and abuse.

But He also tells us here that it is our duty as His other beloved children, to make sure that we are aware of the sufferings of the widows and orphans and are to pray fervently for those dear ones.

And then thanks be to God, He graciously extends His Hand of provision on beyond His loving care for the widows and the orphans of this world with the added promise,

<sup>7</sup> And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? <sup>8</sup> I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:7-8)

Here, within the words "His own Elect", our Lord places no limits on His special loving care. His promise of help and provision extends on beyond widows and orphans to include all of us "Elect" ones, His "Chosen" ones, those who have received Him as our Savior and Lord, regardless of whether we are a widow or orphan. Though as He indicates here, we might have to wait for a while until He brings other attending matters within our circumstance to fruition, He surely will always be "a help in time of need" for all of His beloved elect chosen children.

Another thought as we consider this poor widow woman . . . Is her circumstance and her suffering simply a part of living within this corrupt and fallen world or is it a part of something bigger? Yes, it is a result of living within this corrupt world, but folks, it is not just that. It is so much, much more. It is part of that "plan" that our Lord has for us, that "plan" that Billy Graham often talked about, that "plan" that is spoken about in Jeremiah 29:11, that "plan" that our Sovereign God is working out each day as He exerts His watchcare over His beloved children. That "plan" in which He orchestrates and brings to fruition most all of those circumstances of daily life.

Look carefully at the circumstance of this scripture passage. Here, as this poor widow was suffering other people were no doubt involved, perhaps her children and her other family members, her neighbors, and yes, this "unjust judge". And God was doing what I like to call "bringing other people to the table, the

“spiritual table”, the condition and circumstance where other people are being presented with the opportunity to make choices to help this troubled one.

There at that table, God offers each person choices, choices similar to the choices He offered in Deuteronomy chapter 30 where He said,

<sup>15</sup> “See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. <sup>16</sup> If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you today, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you . . . <sup>17</sup> But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear . . . <sup>18</sup> I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. . . <sup>19</sup> I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, <sup>20</sup> loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days.” (Deuteronomy 30:15-20)

This circumstance with this helpless widow and these words about the choices we should make presents a question to each of us personally. Has God brought you to one of those “Spiritual tables” where you are being asked to make some choices, even some hard choices, choices between right and wrong, good and evil. If He has, what will be your choice?

Perhaps that choice has to do with this question that the Lord Jesus left us with here in this scripture passage, “When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”

Folks, these words are an exhortation to you and to me. Because as we are told in Colossians chapter 2, we are the “remnant” of the “Body of Christ” who have been left remaining on this earth to “fill up behind that which is still lacking in the sufferings of Christ”, left here to continue to carry out His advocacy for the suffering ones.

And He is coaching us and encouraging us with these words, “When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”

Folks, we are to always have faith. And though, at times, He might require us to suffer for a season as we wait upon His answer, He surely will, at the very best time, come to our aid.



Oh dear Christian, our God is absolutely trustworthy. Though sometimes seemingly silent, He is really, all the while, inserting His faithful and loving providential hand into every matter that is taking place with each person that He brings to that "spiritual table".

And yes, sometimes we are stubborn, and sometimes some of our loved ones are stubborn and sometimes we fight to the very last before we give up our wrongheadedness. But we must trust that God is giving us every opportunity to respond. And all the while exhorting us to pray and pray and pray.

That is part of the impetus in Jesus giving those last words in this passage. "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

Here in these words, Jesus does not ask "Will He find innocence, or some other good character quality, but rather, will He find faith"? And unfortunately, the connotation within His question is that He will find faith still lacking within some of those He examines.

But praise be to God, for us, His "elect", His "chosen ones" we have His blessed Holy Spirit abiding within our hearts. And because we do, we have every opportunity to be the faithful ones He is calling us to be.

Oh dear Christian, above all else, except for our love towards God the Father, "faith" is valued as our most important requirement. Faith, "that innate conviction that transcends all reason" is God's most treasured attribute within our souls.

And He is asking you and me personally, "when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith within us?"

More than anything else in life, I really want Him to do that, "To find faith in me".

May we pray.