

When Is It Time?

Luke 18:1-8

18 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:

3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;

5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

8 I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

I. Introduction

1. I'm sure you have had this happen with small kids. I picked up a couple of our granddaughters and was driving them to our house for a sleepover. The younger one asked a few times if we were there yet. Or how close are we? How long is going to take to get there? This is taking a long time.
2. I assure her, "Don't worry. We'll get there in time."
3. The question came back, "When is it time? What time will we get there?"
4. Just as we are about to arrive, I like to say, "We're almost there. We should be there in only three hours."
5. Then we pull into the driveway and I say, "Here we are."

6. But when we are on the journey of life and cannot see our destination ahead, we tend to get discouraged as well at how long the journey is taking.
7. Set backs take a toll on our faith.
8. You could be asking, why are we still where we are having to deal with coronavirus sickness and restrictions after all this time?
9. Why do my dreams keep getting put on hold?
10. We tend to cry out to God in our discouragement sounding a lot like the children with their questions.
11. **“God, why is this taking so long?” “Why haven’t you answered my prayer?” “Are we there yet?” “When is it time?”**
12. *Prov 13:12 Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.*
13. There is hope for the sick heart that has seen their hopes deferred.

14. We will find that hope in the scriptures from the story of the unjust judge. I want to preach to you this morning: “When is it time?”
 - II. Pray don't faint
 - A. Setbacks of the adversary
 1. The **characters** in this parable are the judge, a widow woman, and her adversary.
 2. In the society of the first century, Jesus chose a contrast between a high-ranking judicial official with authority, and one who appears as a powerless individual lacking resources and dependent on the mercy of others.
 3. But with that in view, keep in mind the point of the story:
*Luke 18:1 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, **that men ought always to pray, and not to faint** [lose heart];*
Luke 18:8 I tell you that he will avenge them

speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

4. Jesus wants us to always pray and not to faint (lose heart).
5. That means **in order not to lose heart, we need to pray always.**
6. That is especially needed at a time described in this story, because the woman was suffering as a result of oppression from the adversary.

*Luke 18:3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, **Avenge me of mine adversary.***

7. The verb, “she came,” is in the **iterative imperfect tense**, which means it refers to **repeated action** in the past.
8. She did not just come to him once, but many times. The judge noted her strategy in verse 5: “her continual coming.”
9. But notice her plea, “**Avenge me of mine adversary.**”

10. That is a plea for legal protection from, or justice against the adversary.
11. Perhaps Jesus had in mind actions of the adversary the devil:
1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:
12. There is an adversary who wants to devour you, and keeps roaring, walking, and seeking you.
13. And if he could, he would wear you out to the point you just say, “What’s the point? I ought to just give up. It’s not worth it.”
14. The power of the adversary is his ability to interject thoughts of defeat, trying to highlight every discouraging thing going on around us, hoping to weary us to the point of fainting, or giving up.
15. Recently I heard the voice of the adversary whisper such a give up message by

highlighting some recent discouraging events.

16. A good friend experienced a difficult setback; another friend is in a hurtful situation; and the recent spread of sickness looks like a setback.
 17. But I also heard Jesus whisper, that **Luke 18:1 “men ought always to pray, and not to faint.”**
 18. It is the adversary’s business to use facts, half-truths, and outright deceptions, to make us feel like giving up.
 19. But instead of **giving up** or **giving in**, we need to **stand up** and **lean in**, and cry out to our Lord, **“avenge me of mine adversary!”**
 20. You see, the Judge we are appearing before, has the authority over the adversary. And if our relationship with Jesus is right, so do we.
- B. Power of persistence

1. The judge in this parable obviously had the authority to put the widow's adversary in his place, but it was going to depend on her ability to convince the judge to act on her behalf.
2. And the judge was "**bearing long**" in answering her request. In his case, it was because he had little regard for this widow woman. He had more regard for eliminating her as an annoyance.
3. The judge was not her friend and did not intend to be her friend. Jesus said the judge lacked the fear of God, which means he had little regard for God's Word or pure justice for this widow woman.
4. Perhaps he was the type who could have been bought out if you paid his price. But the widow did not have money as her bargaining tool.
5. All it seems that she had was bold persistence. And her persistence was based on faith that the judge had the influence

and authority to grant the thing she needed.

6. The judge just needed to be convinced to see the matter her way, so she did all that a person in such a position of weakness could do—be persistent and wear him out.

*Luke 18:5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming **she weary me.***

7. **She weary me comes from one Greek word, Hupo-piadzo: a term used with regard to fist fighting and refers to a continual blow to the part of the face under the eyes, to beat black and blue, bruise, a boxer buffeting his opponent, wearing them down until they are out.**
8. Don't lose sight of the purpose of this parable. Jesus is talking about the need to pray always and not to give up despite adversity.
9. Prayer is like a persistent attack at something.

10. She kept boxing the judge by continually asking, “**When is it time?**”
- c. Asking for bread at midnight
1. Jesus told another parable on this same subject in Luke 11:1-13.
2. In teaching on prayer, Jesus used this story to illustrate:

Luke 11:5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

3. Notice, “at midnight,” the man knocked on his neighbor’s door asking to borrow some bread.
4. The sleepy neighbor initially refused his request since it was past bedtime, but because of his persistence...

*Luke 11:8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his **importunity** he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.*

5. **Importunity** refers to a person's boldness that persists over time. We also use the word audacity.
 6. Perhaps the next day, the neighbor told someone what had happened the night before saying, "Can you imagine the audacity of that guy coming at midnight and banging on my door over and over?"
 7. The friend got what he asked for due to his audacity, his persistent boldness that continued over time.
 8. Have you suffered a setback? Did the judge refuse your request? Did your neighbor refuse to help?
- D. Faith is about understanding authority
1. The gospels tell of two Gentiles who received miracles from Jesus before the time prescribed for Gentiles. All because of their great faith.
 2. First a Roman soldier who saw faith was nothing except realizing who was in

authority:

Luke 7:7-9

7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

*9 When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, **I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.***

3. His understanding of authority got his miracle when Jesus was not even focusing ministry on Gentiles.
4. **When is it time? When we realize that Jesus has the authority over the situation.**

- E. Faith is about not taking no answer for the answer
- 1. Next was a woman of Canaan, identified as Syrophoenician, meaning from the area called Phoenicia along the Syrian coast.
- 2. Her understanding of faith led her **not to take no answer as the answer** when Jesus initially ignored her request.

Matt 15:24-28

24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.

27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee

even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

3. When is it time? **When we don't take no answer for the answer.**
4. Be boldly persistent.
- F. Learning His will
1. Importunity—bold persistence—never fainting—always praying.
2. These are the keys to receiving an answer at times when the Lord “bears long” in providing an answer to our prayer.
3. What comes out of our persistent prayer is not that we force an unjust judge to see things our way.
4. No. Often we experience a delay in prayer for the purpose of causing us to pray longer. And that delay forces us to begin to see things God's way.
5. Our view is short-term. God's view is long term.

6. And if we get the thing we want when we want it, we will likely cease to pursue what God wants.
7. Delay tends to modify how we pursue our wants, so rather than taking a short cut, we end up going the route that God has sent many others on—through a wilderness of learning experiences.
8. But that is why importunity is required to faint not. Just keep asking, seeking and knocking. You will learn as you journey by faith.
9. In fact, that is exactly what Jesus said in the next verse:

Luke 11:9-10

9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

10. **Importunity, bold persistence, audacity.
That is the answer to delay.**

11. It is not that we are trying to get God to see our perspective. The delay is more about God getting us to see His perspective.

12. **When is it time? When we begin to see God's perspective:**

1 John 5:14-15

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

13. Asking leads to seeking the right thing. And as you get closer, you knock and the door opens.

14. **When is it time?**

G. The power of again with delay

1. Ultimately the judge decided in the woman's favor because he was annoyed by her persistence.
2. Years ago I wrote a note in my Bible from when someone taught on this verse, "The Power of Again."
3. In the case of the unjust judge, which is used as a compare/contrast to how God operates, the unjust judge decided to answer the widow's request simply because he was getting beat black and blue by the woman's continual punching on him.
4. Persistence helped the woman get what she needed from an unjust judge.
5. The contrast with God, though, is God has a good reputation with supplying what He promised, not like the unjust judge who had a reputation of not caring:
2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing

that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

6. God is patient with us. That is what it means “but is longsuffering to us-ward.” He wants everyone to come to repentance. His promise is that He will forgive those who take Him up on His promise.
7. God is not a slacker! He will keep His promises.
8. However, **since God is patient with us, He also asks us, and expects us, to be patient** with our requests when he bears long.
*Luke 18:7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, **though he bear long with them?***
9. In other words, there are times that God delays the answer while we cry out to him day and night.
10. But that is **the power of again**. When we find ourselves waiting, just keep asking.
11. Our response may be to question, “When is it time?”

12. While God bears long, we are to continue to cry out day and night.
13. We gain much benefit from crying out to God day and night.
14. Much prayer leads to much change. Not in God, but in us.
15. The Bible speaks of being conformed to His image from glory to glory.
2 Cor 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.
16. The more we pray, those glorious encounters of prayer **change us** more and more into His image **by the Spirit of the Lord** working inside of us.
17. So though He bear long with us, keep crying day and night. It is working to our advantage.

III. Conclusion

1. However, there is a surprising irony found in this parable. Although He bear long in answering, when He answers, “he will avenge them speedily.”

Luke 18:7-8

*7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, **though he bear long with them?***

*8 I tell you that **he will avenge them speedily.** Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*

2. When is it time? When He comes and finds faith.

3. God responds to bold faith at His throne of grace. Importunity gets an answer:

Heb 4:15-16

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

*16 Let us therefore **come boldly unto the throne of grace** [not an unjust judge who*

cares nothing for you], *that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

4. Don't be discouraged by delay. Let it lead you to pray more. Day and night, even though He bear long.
5. Because when he avenges, He will avenge speedily.
6. All it takes is a bread crumb. Don't take no answer for the answer.
7. All it takes is a Word from the One in authority. Jesus has authority over your adversary who is troubling you.
8. All it takes is see His perspective. His plan is going to be fulfilled.
9. So keep up your day and night, boldly persistent request.
10. Delay is not about a lack of care or love from God.
11. Jesus wants us to pray and not faint. The more prayer, the more the strength to fight off fainting spells.