## Luke 18:1-17

### Review...

- Luke 17:11-19 Giving thanks to God...
  - o Going around Samaria Jesus continued on his final journey to Jerusalem...
  - o Coming into a certain village 10 lepers called out to Jesus...
  - o Only one of the 10 lepers a Samaritan came back to thank Jesus...
- Luke 17:20-37 The Kingdom of God...
  - o 1st The Kingdom of God is within you...
    - The Pharisees asked Jesus when the Kingdom would come Conquering King...
    - Jesus told them the Kingdom of God is not a country it is in the heart...
    - Jesus did not come to conquer the world He came to conquer sin!
  - o 2<sup>nd</sup> Jesus gave three signs to the disciples rapture of the church...
    - 1<sup>st</sup> Like lightening flashing in the sky everyone will know when the rapture occurs...
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> As in the days of Noah / ark a wicked world oblivious to coming judgment...
    - Only by going through the door Jesus can you be saved from what is to come!
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> As in the days of Lot / Sodom & Gomorrah warn others of the coming judgment!
  - o  $3^{rd}$  On the day of the rapture...
    - 1st Do not be like Lot's wife do not look back to the things of this world...
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> One will be taken / the other left be ready we do not know the day or hour...
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> The birds are circling judgment is all that awaits those who are left behind!

# Coming to the Lord in Prayer... (3 things)

- 1<sup>st</sup> Persistent in prayer... vs. 1-8 (3 things)
  - o  $1^{st}$  So we do not give up... vs. 1
    - Having given His disciples the signs of the rapture of the church...
      - Jesus gave them a parable concerning prayer teaching them to not give up...
      - Jesus understood the reality of how hard it would be to wait for His return...
      - There'd be many days when they would face impossible trials and want to give up
      - How many days have you wished 'today would be a good day to come Jesus'...
      - When we owe too much money when we have nothing to eat Maranatha!
    - Do not loose heart...
      - The Apostle Paul called these trials we face light momentary problems!
        - o **II Corinthians 4:16-18** "We do not give up (same word)... For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for a... eternal weight of glory."
        - o Paul gives us a list of the 'little problems' he faced II Corinthians 11:24-28...
        - o 5 times he was beaten with 39 lashes / 3 times beaten with rods...
        - o He was stoned **Acts 14** / 3 times he was shipwrecked all night in the ocean...
        - o He had many sleepless nights / was often hungry / cold from lack of clothing...
      - This Paul calls 'little problems' if these are little mine are non-existent!
        - o So often in life we think our problems are the WORSE than anyone else's...

- o No one could possibly be going through anything more difficult...
- o I Corinthians 10:13 "The temptations in your life are no different from others."
- o It turns out they are just light little problems in the light of eternity!
- Keeping our eyes on Jesus...
  - o It is very hard for us to look beyond our circumstances like HUGE wall...
  - o We cannot see beyond them we don't know what will happen next...
  - o But what we can do is look up and trust that God has a GREAT plan...
- How do we keep our eyes on the Lord always be in prayer...
  - Often when we face problems in life our 1<sup>st</sup> response is to fret and worry...
  - It is only as a last resort when all else fails we go to the Lord in prayer...
  - Philippians 4:6 "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything..."
  - Yet when we praise God we find whatever burden brought us to prayer is gone...
  - Our perspective changes we see our circumstances in a new light...
  - We no longer see our problems instead our God who is greater than any problem!
  - Our problems swallowed up in the praise of our incredible Lord!
- o 2<sup>nd</sup> The parable of the unrighteous judge... vs. 2-5
  - There was a judge who did not fear God or man...
    - He was in a position of great power and authority and he knew it...
    - A widow came to the judge DAILY asking for revenge against her adversary...
    - Why a widow it suggests she was old and poor she could not help herself...
    - She was looking for justice and only the judge could give it to her...
  - But the judge would not listen to her he did not care about her problems...
    - If you have ever tried to get paperwork from the government you understand...
    - 'Fill out this paperwork' 'go to this office' after a full day you still have nothing!
    - After a while he thought 'I do not fear God or man' but this widow keeps coming!
    - She was 'driving him crazy' with her constant requests so he gave in...
    - The widow's relentless persistence wore down the stubborn unrighteous judge!
  - Jesus' point do not stop praying until you get an answer from the Lord...
    - So often when we pray we give up after a week or a month or a year...
    - But God does not call us just to pray God calls us to be a people of prayer...
    - I Thessalonians 5:17 "Pray without ceasing..."
    - Like a child who asks OVER and OVER until we give them what they want...
    - We need to be persistent in seeking the Lord don't give up!
    - I imagine we will be amazed at how much God wanted to do in our lives...
    - But it never happened simply because we gave up asking too quickly...
- o 3<sup>rd</sup> God is our righteous judge... vs. 6-8
  - If an evil judge was willing to help out how much more our Father in Heaven...
    - As we pray to Him day and night He will grant us justice quickly!
    - Yet sometimes it feels like God is not answering our prayers...
    - We want Jesus to take us out of the trials of life we want the easy way out...
  - But more often than not God does not take away the problems/trials...
    - Instead He gives us the grace to endure go through the valleys of life...
    - The reason it is in the midst of the trials we cling onto Jesus!

- If life is easy we tend not to think about God or take the time to talk to Him...
- It is in the midst of the trial when we hit our knees pray constantly!
- When Jesus returns will He find faith on the earth...
  - Jesus never leaves us in our alone in our trials He is always right beside us...
  - **Psalms 23:4** "Even when I walk through the dark valley of death, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me..."
  - Even so Jesus asks His disciples will He find any faith when He returns...
  - There are many who will not endure many who will walk away...
  - They fall away stop coming to church / stop reading the Bible / give up on Jesus...
  - Because their focus was not on the eternal they did not continue in prayer to Jesus

### • $2^{ND}$ - Humble in prayer... vs. 9-13

- o Jesus gave His disciples a second parable about prayer...
  - Two men went up to the temple to pray a Pharisee and Tax collector...
    - The Pharisees were the most 'religious' of groups in Israel...
    - They saw themselves as the self appointed spiritual guides of the people...
  - The Tax collectors were considered the greatest sinners in Israel...
    - A profession that was hated and despised by the Jews (*Traitor for Rome*)
    - To be a Tax Collector meant money was your god you did not care about others!
- o The Pharisee prayed with himself...
  - He began his prayer by thanking God he was NOT like other men...
    - He wasn't a robber / unrighteous / adulterer / or EVEN a Tax Collector (worst of all)
    - The assumption was he was better than other men less of a sinner...
    - Most people assume they are good because they compare themselves to others...
    - Because they are not a bank robber / or murderer they are a good person...
    - But that is their standard of good God standard is perfection Matthew 5:48...
    - There are no levels of sinners with God you are either perfect or a sinner...
  - He went on to list all his good deeds...
    - He had 'two' he fasted twice a week / gave a tithe of everything he possessed...
    - The Law only required Jews to fast once a year Yom Kippur **Leviticus 16:29**
    - Meaning he went beyond the law in this one area making him feel self-righteous!
    - This Pharisee thought he fulfilled the Law because he kept these two commands...
    - But the question is not which laws he kept but how many did he brake...
    - A lot of people think they are 'super Christians' because they keep certain laws...
    - They think because they never miss a church service / give money every week...
    - Because they do not eat certain foods / or listen to certain music they are better...
    - What they tend not to talk about at all is the areas where they make mistakes...
    - It only takes one sin to make us a sinner James 2:10 / Romans 3:10
  - The Pharisee prayed with himself...
    - The Pharisee assumed he was righteous but he could not have been more wrong...
    - He was having a conversation with himself God was not listening...
    - Since he did not acknowledge his sin God could not deal with it...
    - Instead it acted like a wall between him and the Lord separating him from God!

- People who think they are holier than others only fool themselves...
- If we are not honest with the Lord admit our sin God can not take it away...
- Our prayers hit the ceiling of our sin and we end up talking to ourselves!
- o The Tax Collector stood far away...
  - He would not even look up but beating his chest 'God have mercy on me the sinner'...
    - The Pharisee saw others as sinners the Tax Collector saw himself as THE sinner!
    - It is easy to look at others and see their flaws but how about ours...
    - **II Corinthians 13:5** "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you."
    - It is not nearly as easy to admit to our own flaws look at our sin...
    - But when we see we are THE sinner then the Lord can forgive us!
  - This man went away justified...
    - If you exalt yourself you will be humbled / humble yourself God will exalt you...
    - James 4:6 "God resists the proud and only pours out His grace on the humble..."
    - If we are willing to examine our own hearts correct the sin that is there...
    - Then in humility we can come before the Lord with our prayers and be heard!

### • 3<sup>rd</sup> - Childlike in prayer... vs. 14-17

- o Many people brought their babies to Jesus so He could touch them...
  - The idea was they wanted Jesus to pray for their children to bless/dedicate them...
  - But the disciples rebuked the people told them to leave Jesus alone...
  - They did not think the children were worthy of Jesus attention...
- o Do not forbid the little children...
  - Jesus rebuked the disciples the children were INCREDIBLY important!
    - It is sad that many churches today still do not understand how important kids are...
    - Perhaps because children are not seen as having anything to 'give' to the church...
    - But by ignoring the children we sacrifice the next generation...
    - Rather than teach them about Jesus we ignore them and let the world have them!
    - Then we wonder why there are no youth in the church no growth in the body!
  - We need to invest in our children take the time to teach them...
    - We send the kids upstairs every Sunday not just so that we can listen to the Word
    - We have children's church to teach the kids about Jesus at their age level...
    - We have VBS / summer camps / values education in the High School
    - Children between the ages of 4-14 are the most likely to accept Jesus as their savior
    - 75% of those who receive Jesus as their savior do so before their 21st birthday!
    - Jesus said it best the Kingdom of God belongs to the little kids!
- o We are to receive the Kingdom like children...
  - The way we are to pray to God is like a little child...
  - Not in the sense that we are immature but simple in trust and faith...
  - If you ever listen to a little child pray it is the simplest of conversations...
  - They do not try to impress anyone / they do not use big fancy words...
  - They just share their heart openly with God saying what is on their mind...
  - Having simple faith that God is listening and that He will answer!

- o So while we are waiting for the soon return of Jesus facing the challenges of life...
  - We are to be in constant prayer so we keep our eyes on Jesus...
  - We are to examine ourselves not leave sin in our heart so we are heard...
  - And we are to be like little kids in simplicity coming to our Father in heaven!