

LUKE 18:1-17

REVIEW...

- **LUKE 17:11-19 - GIVING THANKS TO GOD...**
 - Going around Samaria - Jesus continued on his final journey to Jerusalem...
 - Coming into a certain village 10 lepers called out to Jesus...
 - Only one of the 10 lepers - a Samaritan - came back to thank Jesus...
- **LUKE 17:20-37 - THE KINGDOM OF GOD...**
 - 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!
 - 2nd - Jesus gave three signs to the disciples - rapture of the church...
 - 1st - Like lightning flashing in the sky - everyone will know when the rapture occurs...
 - 2nd - 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!
 - 3rd - As in the days of Lot / Sodom & Gomorrah - warn others of the coming judgment!
 - 3rd - On the day of the rapture...
 - 1st - Do not be like Lot's wife - do not look back to the things of this world...
 - 2nd - One will be taken / the other left - be ready we do not know the day or hour...
 - 3rd - The birds are circling - judgment is all that awaits those who are left behind!

COMING TO THE LORD IN PRAYER... (3 THINGS)

- **1ST - PERSISTENT IN PRAYER... VS. 1-8 (3 THINGS)**
 - 1st - 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!
 - **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."
 - Paul gives us a list of the 'little problems' he faced - **II Corinthians 11:24-28**...
 - 5 times he was beaten with 39 lashes / 3 times beaten with rods...
 - He was stoned - **Acts 14** / 3 times he was shipwrecked - all night in the ocean...
 - 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!
 - 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 1st 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 2nd - 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 3rd - 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
- **2ND - 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!
- **3RD - 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!