

## **Bible Study Guide: Week of 10-10-2022**

1. Read through the passage below
2. Read my notes and commentary
3. Read the questions at the end and ponder or discuss with others

Pastor Andrew

### **Luke 18:1-8**

Then Jesus told [the disciples] a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. <sup>2</sup>He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. <sup>3</sup>In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Grant me justice against my opponent.’ <sup>4</sup>For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, ‘Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, <sup>5</sup>yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.’” <sup>6</sup>And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. <sup>7</sup>And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? <sup>8</sup>I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

**Then Jesus told [the disciples] a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart.**

This teaching of Jesus comes on the heels of one of his teachings about the coming of the Son of Man. In light of the “end of days,” Jesus shares this parable to encourage the disciple to be faithful in prayer and to avoid becoming weary.

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This parable features two characters: the unrighteous judge and the persistent widow. The effectiveness of this parable relies on the juxtaposition of two stock characters common to Jewish literature and culture. Ordinarily, judges would have been expected to be upright, having respect for God and for the people. Meanwhile, widows were often on the margins of society—members of a low social class who were powerless and in need of the protection of others, such as judges. Here, however, those expected roles are reversed. The judge is remarkably self-aware and honest about the sad fact that he neither fears God nor respects the people under his jurisdiction. The widow, meanwhile, serves as her own advocate and triumphs in court due to her persistent demands for justice. The judge ends up doing the right thing for the wrong reason. The judge decides that to ignore the widow’s persistent cries will result in great personal discomfort and, thus, agrees to grant her request. The word translated here as “bothering” literally means “to hit under the eye.” Figuratively, it means to annoy, harass, or bruise. The judge realizes that the widow’s persistence will not only cause him annoyance, but may also “blacken his eye” in the eyes of the public, causing his reputation to suffer. The judge cannot allow this, so he grants the request, again doing the right thing for the wrong reason.

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This parable serves as a parable of contrast. The sense is, “if a crummy earthly judge who has no respect for anyone or anything will do the right thing because someone is persistent and doesn’t lose hope, what more will God gladly

do for us when we ask in prayer? We need not wear God out like the widow did to the judge. Rather, we serve a loving and responsive God who will do the right thing out of sheer love for us. The question Jesus asks us to ponder in light of this mercy of God is this: When he returns, will we be living and loving faithfully, too? Will we be like the widow, persistently doing the faithful work given to us? Or will we be more like the judge, failing to do right thing?

**Discussion/Reflection Questions:**

- 1. Which is harder for you: Praying always or not losing heart? Why?**
- 2. Do you think the widow was taking a risk by repeatedly demanding justice?**
- 3. How do you think the Son of Man will gauge or measure faith on earth when he returns?**