

Introduction (Luke 18:1-17)

At our family Christmas gathering, my sister and her husband were telling Karen and I of all the emergency planning that they have been doing. They are preparing for all kinds of potential disasters. They have water filters, food packages, and other emergency supplies. They believe all of us should do some emergency planning for what they see coming.

Last week, I received an email from someone in our congregation with a link to a Nathan Leal report on Haggmann and Haggman. It was about the approaching events in 2015, and how we are gearing up for war with Russia. It is a pretty scary report. There are lots of different theories and speculations about what all is about to happen.

Two weeks ago Karen preached out of Luke 17 on the signs of the end times. In that passage, we are warned that it will be like the days of Noah. People were eating, drinking, and marrying until the day Noah entered the ark, and the people were destroyed by the flood.

(Luke 17:26-27) "And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: {27} they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all."

It was also just like the days of Lot. They were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, and building until the day that Lot went out and God destroyed them all." The coming and revealing of the Son of Man, that is Jesus Christ, will be just as sudden. People who have not heeded the gospel message will be caught off guard and unprepared just like in the days of Noah and Lot.

(Luke 17:28-30) "It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; {29} but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. {30} "It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed."

It is very clear that God judged the unrighteous in the days of Noah. It is very clear that God judged the unrighteous in the town of Sodom and Gomorrah. It is very clear that God brought out Noah and his family before He judged the unrighteous. It is very clear that God brought out Lot before He judged the wicked in Sodom and Gomorrah. I agree with Karen that God is going to judge the unrighteous, not the righteous.

At this point, those that believe in a pre-tribulation rapture believe that when the Son of Man is revealed, Christians will be caught up with Jesus. Jesus said that on that night, two will be in one bed, and one will be taken and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding, and one will be taken, and one will be left.

(Luke 17:34-37) "I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left. {35} "There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken and the other will be left. {36} ["Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left."] {37} And answering they *said to Him, "Where, Lord?" And He said to them, "Where the body is, there also the vultures will be gathered."

This corresponds with 1 Thessalonians 4, where Paul writes that he does not want us to be uninformed. He does not want us grieving about those who have died, as those who have no hope. He goes on to share that God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep when the Lord comes. Those of us who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have already died. The King James says we will not prevent, but that is Old English. Pre means before, and vent comes from a Latin word that means to come. Those of us who are still alive will not come before those who have already died. They are already with Christ, and He will bring them with Him when He comes.

(1 Thess 4:13-15) “But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. {14} For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. {15} For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.”

Paul goes on to say that the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then, those who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus, we shall always be with the Lord.

(1 Thess 4:16-18) “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. {17} Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. {18} Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

I do not claim to be an expert in eschatology, which means the study of end times. If you believe in pre-tribulation, when Jesus comes, the passage in 1 Thessalonians tells us that this is the time that we will be raptured, or caught up in the air with Jesus.

If you believe in mid-tribulation, you believe that there will be three and a half years between this part of the tribulation and when Jesus comes to gather the elect. If you believe in post tribulation, you believe that the Lord will not come until we have gone through the tribulation. I can only tell you that I see dimly. That is why I have told people that I am a pan-tribber, which means however it pans out. I do not believe that our fellowship hinges on whether we are a pre or post tribber.

No matter what you believe, according to all the passages, the last days are going to be difficult. Paul wrote that in the last days, difficult times will come. Men will be lovers of self. Selfishness is one of the leading causes of divorce and broken relationships. But, Paul did not stop there. He said that men will be lovers of money. They will have wrong priorities. They will cheat and do unethical things in order to make more money. Men will be boastful and arrogant. Did you know that boastful and arrogant people are very difficult to live with. They are always right. They are critical and judgmental. They are self-righteous. That is why God instructs us to walk in humility. Paul says that people will be unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self control, brutal, haters of good, and a host of other things. There will be a great increase in evil in the last days.

(2 Tim 3:1-5) “But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. {2} For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, {3} unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, {4} treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, {5} holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.”

When you add this to Matthew’s parallel account, it seems even worse. Matthew says there will be great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now. It says that the days are going to be cut short for the sake of the elect. There is going to be great deception. There will be false Christs and false prophets who will show great signs and wonders. Jesus told us all of that in advance so that we would not be deceived. He will come like the lightning, which comes from the east and flashes to the west. And when He comes, there will be great judgment. He ends this passage the same way as our passage in Luke ended, “wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.” There will be many people who die in the judgment. It will not be a pretty sight.

(Matt 24:21-28) “For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. {22} "Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. {23} "Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him. {24} "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. {25} "Behold, I have told you in advance. {26} "So if they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go out, or, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe them. {27} "For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. {28} "Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.)

Church, no matter which view you believe in, **there are going to be difficult times in the last days**, and we are already in the last days. Evil, corruption, immorality, and all these things that Paul wrote Timothy about are already here, and are increasing daily. There are more Christians being persecuted now than ever before. It is heating up, and God is purifying His bride.

Some might say, “how do you know that we are in the last days?” That is a good question. One way that we know we are in those last days is it started with Pentecost. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out on all mankind. People were filled and baptized in the Holy Spirit. People thought they were drunk, so Peter explains what has happened. He said this was a fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy that in the LAST DAYS God would pour forth His Spirit on all mankind. **Based on the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy at Pentecost, we are in the last days.**

(Acts 2:15-17) “For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; {16} but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: {17} 'And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'that I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;”

Why do I bring all of this up? What does this have to do with Jesus’ instructions about prayer? It has everything to do with our passage today. When Jesus gave these instructions about prayer, it was set in the backdrop of this discussion. This is the context that it was given in.

Today, we are looking at two specific exhortations about prayer. The first exhortation is that we must

remain steadfast in our prayers. We are not to lose heart in our prayers. The second exhortation is that we must pray with humility. Let's read our passage.

(Luke 18:1-8) "Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, {2} saying, "In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. {3} "There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, 'Give me legal protection from my opponent.' {4} "For a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, 'Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, {5} yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.'" {6} And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge said; {7} now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? {8} "I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"

(Luke 18:9-14) "And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: {10} "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. {11} "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. {12} 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' {13} "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' {14} "I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

(Luke 18:15-17) "And they were bringing even their babies to Him so that He would touch them, but when the disciples saw it, they began rebuking them. {16} But Jesus called for them, saying, "Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. {17} "Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all."

1. We should be steadfast in our prayers.

Jesus begins with a parable. A parable is a story that is given to illustrate a principle. **The main point of the parable is to show us that we ought to pray at all times and not lose heart.** In the midst of difficult times that we will be facing, we need to be people of prayer. We need to pray at all times, and we God does not want us to lose heart. God does not want us to give up on our prayers, but to continue steadfastly in our prayers.

(Luke 18:1) "Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart"

The Greek word for lose heart is *egkakeo* (Strong's G1457b), which means to become weary or to give in. Some scholars say that it means to become cowardly. Jesus is telling us that in the midst of all the tribulations and difficult times we will be facing, we are to keep praying steadfastly and not give up. When people mock or persecute us, we are not to become cowardly. We are to keep praying and believing.

He ends the paragraph with a question, "when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the

earth?" Are we going to become weary and give up or are we going to persevere in our faith? Are we going to keep praying steadfastly and wait for the Lord to bring about justice for us.

(Luke 18:8) "I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"

In the parable, there was an evil judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. This judge did not care what God had to say about whatever matter he was judging. That reminds me of many of the liberal judges today. They have thrown out the Scriptural base for our laws. They no longer care how the Bible defines marriage. They do not care what the Bible says about sodomy. They have tossed out the Bible and they make decisions that clearly show they do not fear God. If you are ever not sure what to pray about for the leaders and judges in our country, pray for them to have a fear of the Lord.

(Luke 18:2) "In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man."

This judge also did not respect man. The Greek word is *entrepo* (Strong's G1788), which means to put to shame. You have probably heard the expression, "shame on you" when someone did something wrong or shameful. Doing evil or shameful things was just par for the course. He was beyond shame. He had no consideration of doing shameful things before men. He had no regard for the people he was judging. He was cold, insensitive, unsympathetic towards the people he was judging. He did not care. We find out who this judge really cared about was himself. When this widow keeps coming to him for legal protection, he does not want to give her the legal protection she deserved, but because she was going to be an irritation to him, he gives her the legal protection she deserved. The term "wear me out" is not the best translation. The Greek word is *hupopiazō* (Strong's G5299) which means to strike under the eye. It is a boxing term, not a legal term. In other words, she is going to give the judge a black eye by repeatedly punching him in the eye. This judge did not want a black eye. He was selfishly motivated. He was only concerned about himself. So the judge did what was right only because it was more convenient to him, not because it was the right thing to do.

(Luke 18:2-5) "There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, 'Give me legal protection from my opponent.' {4} "For a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, 'Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, {5} yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.'"

In the parable, the widow is the believer. The evil judge is the ruler of this world. Right now, Christ is dishonored and Christ is denied His rightful place. The Word of God is unappreciated and assaulted and attacked. Christians are treated with rejection and persecution and hostility and even martyrdom. We suffer at the hands of Satan and the world. We are in a hostile environment.

When Christ came, He proclaimed that the kingdom of God is here. That is the rule and reign of Christ. It is here, but it is not here fully. In the Vineyard, we call that the now and not yet. We are proclaiming and bringing about the kingdom of God, but it will not be here in fullness until Christ returns. Until then, we cry out for justice. We pray for His kingdom to come and His will to be done. We pray for God to give us our daily bread. We cry out to God to deliver us from evil. We cry out to God for protection. We cry out to God for our loved ones. We know that this terrible judgment is coming, and want our loved ones saved. We cry out for healing to those who are suffering. There

will be no suffering and sickness in heaven. Jesus paid the price for our sins, and we are healed by His stripes, but like the widow who has rights, she has not received what was due to her.

Now the point of the parable is that even though it seems that there we are being denied justice, we are not to lose heart or become weary of praying. God is going to bring about justice for us. It has been two thousand years since the Lord left. Our timetable is not His timetable. A thousand years is like a day to the Lord. **God's delay is really a statement of His patience.** He does not want any to perish. He is giving more people the opportunity to repent and receive His forgiveness. Notice what Peter says. "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." That is why we have the delay in the Lord's coming. That is why we have the delay in Jesus coming, judging the wicked, and bringing justice to the elect.

(2 Pet 3:8-9) "But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. {9} The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

I asked myself, "Why do we lose heart?" Here are some of the reasons that I came up with.

1. **Lack of knowledge** We lose heart for lack of knowledge about God. This is what Jesus is trying to convey in this passage. Even an unrighteous judge will respond if continually asked. God is a righteous judge and will certainly listen and help His children. We need to understand who God is. We need to get to know God. We need to know His names, His character, His thoughts, and His ways.
2. **Lack of faith** We lose heart when we lack faith about what we are praying about. It is better to determine God's will about a matter before committing ourselves to praying about a matter. If you know it is God's will, it is easy to stay persistent. Jesus addresses this by asking, "However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"
3. **Unanswered prayers** We lose heart when we do not get an answer quickly. We have wrong expectations about how and when it will be answered. We need persistence and patience.
4. **Wrong comparisons** We lose heart when we compare ourselves with others. We cannot compare ourselves with others. We cannot compare what God is doing in our lives with what He is doing in others. Each shall bear his own load. (Gal 6:4-5) In high school, I compared myself with Mark Felice. I was in my second year of piano, playing in John Thompson's second grade piano book. Mark started taking lessons and within a month, he was playing the Moonlight Sonata. He had a special gift that had never been discovered. Within a few months he was playing like people that had played and studied for many years. It was a gift. I lost heart when I compared my progress to his progress. I lost heart when I saw where I was and where he was. Unfortunately, I quit my piano lessons. I regret that decision.)
5. **Lack of support** We go it alone. We need the encouragement of one another. 1 Peter 5:7 says to cast our cares upon Him because He cares for us. The casting of nets by fisherman was usually

a team effort. It would take several strong men to cast the nets over the sides of the boat. Find some strong prayer partners and ask them to pray with you about the matter.

I also asked the Lord about what are some other ways to gain heart (Courage). I found it in Psalm 27. The theme of Psalm 27 is to wait on the Lord. We find in verse fourteen that the result of waiting on the Lord is our hearts will take courage. David gives us four ways to encourage our hearts when we are facing evildoers and destruction.

1. We are to wait upon the Lord. (Ps 27:14)

(Psalm 27:14) “Wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD.

2. We are to reflect on the goodness of the Lord. (Ps 27:13)

(Ps 27:13) “I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living.”

3. We are to reflect on our past successes. (Ps 27:2) Journal what God says and does in your life. Reflect on those things. It will build your faith and give you persistence. Look at the example of David facing Goliath. He recounted to Saul how he had killed the bear and the lion, and it gave him faith to take on Goliath. I encourage you to write down some of your testimonies. I encourage you to share those testimonies with the rest of us. Rick has a sign-up sheet for those who would like to share a testimony. It will build all of our faith, and give us heart.

(Psalm 27:2) “When evildoers came upon me to devour my flesh, My adversaries and my enemies, they stumbled and fell.”

4. We are to declare what God will do for us. (Ps 27:3, 5-6).

(Ps 27:3-6) “Though a host encamp against me, my heart will not fear; though war arise against me, in spite of this I shall be confident.... {5} For in the day of trouble He will conceal me in His tabernacle; in the secret place of His tent He will hide me; He will lift me up on a rock. {6} And now my head will be lifted up above my enemies around me, and I will offer in His tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.

We do not have time to look at this in detail, but this is a good follow-up study to this message. Take some time to meditate and study Psalm 27. Your heart will be encouraged.

2. We should pray with humility.

The first encouragement that the Lord gives us is to pray at all times without losing heart. The second exhortation is to pray with humility. Jesus gives us two illustrations. The first illustration is another parable. The second illustration is a hands-on example of children. Jesus starts by giving us the main point of the parable. It was because some people were self-righteous and viewed others with contempt. They were arrogant and looked down on others. He ends the parable by saying that the humble and contrite man went away justified, but the self-righteous man will be humbled. Jesus is

telling us that when we pray and worship God, we need to come humbly before Him.

(Luke 18:9-14) “And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt... {10} Two men went up into the temple to pray... {14} ‘I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.’”

a. Example of Pharisee and tax collector

Jesus wants us to pray at all times, but He also wants us to pray with the right attitude. Notice that Jesus is not mincing words. He has been dealing with the Pharisees, Saducees, and Scribes for some time. They have accused Him of hanging out with sinners. He has confronted them about their self-righteousness and arrogance. Here, He does not speak in generalities, but specifically says that one man is a Pharisee, and the other man is a tax-collector. The Pharisee’s prayer showed his self-righteousness. He was thankful that he was not like other people, swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or like the tax collector beside him. Then, he gives his righteous deeds of fasting twice a week and tithing. The Pharisee does not see that he is a sinner and needs forgiveness for his own sins.

(Luke 18:10-12) “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. {11} “The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. {12} ‘I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.’”

Let’s take a look at a few things about the Pharisee. First, **the Pharisee prayed to himself.** Our prayers cannot be directed to ourselves, but to God. God has no regard for this self-righteousness and arrogance. God says in Psalm 51 that “the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart.” If we are going to pray to God, we must come with the right attitude.

(Ps 51:17) “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.”

Second, **the Pharisee compared himself with others.** When we compare ourselves with others, we can always find someone that is better or worse than us. If they are better, we get down, and if they are worse, we get prideful. Because he is prideful, the Pharisee judges others. Only God is the judge. Both are wrong. We have to compare ourselves with God. He is perfect and righteous. When we compare ourselves with God, we recognize that we are sinners and fall short of His glory.

(Luke 18:13-14) “But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’

Third, **the Pharisee is full of himself.** He talks about his good deeds. Fasting is to humble ourselves and to help us draw near to God. True fasting gives us more sensitivity to the things of the Spirit. Tithing is to honor God with what He has given us. The Pharisee fasted and tithed but not for those purposes. His deeds were to make himself look good.

On the other hand, the tax collector stood some distance away. He took the last seat in the house, not the front seat. From the very outset, **the tax collector has come in humility.** Second, **he comes**

with a contrite heart. He was not even willing to lift up his eyes to heaven. He recognizes that God is righteous, and that he is a sinner. He recognizes that apart from the grace of God, he should not even be allowed in the presence of God. The tax collector beats his breast, saying, “God, be merciful to me, the sinner!” He acknowledged and confessed his sins. He asked God for mercy and forgiveness.

(Luke 18:13) “But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’

The result was that **the tax collector went away justified** and the Pharisee was not forgiven of his sins and justified. The tax collector humbled himself and was exalted. The Pharisee exalted himself, and will be humbled on judgment day.

(Luke 18:1) “I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

The point of this first parable is that we are not to trust in our own righteousness and to view others with contempt. I call this having an attitude of humility. I believe that humility is not putting yourself down. I see many people put themselves down, thinking that they are being humble. We are God’s workmanship, created in Him for good works. I do not believe we should be putting down God’s workmanship. That is what I call false humility.

C.S. Lewis, in his book, *Mere Christianity*, said, “**True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less.**” There is a lot of truth in that statement. In Philippians, Even though He was part of the trinity, He humbled Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant. He humbled Himself to the point of death on a cross. Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. He did not die for His sins, but for our sins. He thought less about Himself, and more about others. **True humility is learning to serve others.**

(Phil 2:5-8) “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, {6} who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, {7} but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. {8} Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

Paul encourages us to have the same attitude. He encourages us to think less of ourselves and more about others. He says, “do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own interests, but also for the interests of others.

(Phil 2:3-4) “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; {4} do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

I believe that **true humility is seeing ourselves the way that God sees us.** True humility understands our shortcomings. God knows our weaknesses, and we need to acknowledge our

weaknesses. God also knows our strengths, and we need to know our strengths. True humility knows the source of those strengths and abilities. True humility knows that from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. True humility does not measure oneself against others. That results in boasting or depression. **True humility is having an accurate assessment of who you are in Christ.**

In Dave Kirby's book, *The Church Must Die*, he says,

"To be humble means to follow the example of Christ, laid out for us in Philippians 2, to take ourselves off the throne and serve rather than be served. Humility is laying down our rights and what is coming to us. Humility is not hating who we are; it is knowing who we are. It is choosing to serve: to serve God's ways rather than ours, and to serve man rather than our own selfishness. To be humble means we use our authority as a means to serve. To be humble means we use our power to protect and defend. To be humble means we use our resources to provide for others instead of gratifying ourselves. In humility we see our lives as existing to serve God and others instead of ourselves."

b. Example of children

The second illustration that Jesus uses involves the babies that were being brought to Him. Luke records, "and they were bringing even their babies to Him..." Jesus is exhorting His disciples to pray and not lose heart, and to pray with humility, and people were bringing their babies to Him. The disciples began rebuking the parents for interrupting His teaching on prayer. Jesus does not see this as an interruption. He takes advantage of the situation and uses it to further His discussion on humility. He says that the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. He says that whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all.

(Luke 18:15-17) "And they were bringing even their babies to Him so that He would touch them, but when the disciples saw it, they began rebuking them. {16} But Jesus called for them, saying, "Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. {17} "Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all."

A child, and in this case, a baby, is totally dependent on others. The child is not self-reliant, self-sufficient, or self-righteous. The child does not know everything. The child knows nothing and must be taught everything by others. The child is humble and teachable. The tax collector was just like this baby. He was totally dependent on God for mercy, forgiveness, and everything. The tax collector was humble and teachable. The child has been a great punctuation point at the end of the parable of the Pharisee and tax collector.

Conclusion

Church, God has called us to be a church that prays. In these last days, we must pray and we must not lose heart. We must persevere in our faith. We will receive justice and what is due to us on that day that Christ comes back. God is a loving Father, not an evil judge that does not care about us. He loves us and will bring about justice. He will make sure that we not only get the legal protection, but everything else that we need pertaining to godliness and life. We must remain steadfast in our prayers.

Church, we must also walk in humility. We must come to God in humility. In Micah 6:8, the Lord tells us what He requires of us. God requires us to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with Him.

(Micah 6:8) “He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you
But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?”

We need to come with a humble and contrite heart. We need to humble ourselves and confess our sins before God. We need to humble ourselves before others and ask for forgiveness when we have offended them. We need to humbly forgive those that offend us. We need to have that same attitude that Christ had. We are not to regard position. We are to humbly serve others and consider them more important than ourselves.

God has called us to be a house of prayer. He has called us to pray at all times, and not to lose heart. But, He has also called us to come in humility. Let’s close with a verse from 2 Chronicles 7:14.

(2 Chron 7:14) “and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

The Righteous Judge will bring about justice for His children. But, we must humble ourselves and pray, and seek His face like never before. It is going to be even more important in the days to come. For when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith here on earth?

Let’s pray.

Introduction (Luke 17:26-37, 1 Thess 4:13-18, Luke 18:1-17)

- There are going to be _____ times in the last days. (2 Tim 3:1-5, Matt 24:21-28)
- Based on the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy at Pentecost, we are in the _____. (Acts 2:15-17)

1. We should be _____ in our prayers. (Luke 18:1-8)

- The main point of the parable is to show us that we ought to _____ at all times and not _____. (Luke 18:1, 8)
- God's delay is really a statement of His _____. (2 Pet 3:8-9)

Why we lose heart

1. Lack of _____.
2. Lack of _____.
3. Unanswered _____.
4. Wrong _____. (Gal 6:4-5)
5. Lack of _____. (1 Peter 5:7)

Ways to gain heart (Courage) (Psalm 27)

1. We are to _____ upon the Lord. (Ps 27:14)
2. We are to reflect on the _____ of the Lord. (Ps 27:13)
3. We are to reflect on our past _____. (Ps 27:2)
4. We are to _____ what God will do for us. (Ps 27:3, 5-6).

2. We should pray with _____. (Luke 18:9-17)

- Jesus wants us to pray at all times, and He also wants us to pray with the right _____. (Luke 18:10-12)
- The Pharisee prayed to _____. (Luke 18:10-12, Ps 51:17)
- The Pharisee _____ himself with others. (Luke 18:13-14)
- The Pharisee is _____ of himself.
- The tax collector has come in _____. (Luke 18:13)
- The tax collector has come with a _____ heart. (Luke 18:13)
- The tax collector went away _____. (Luke 18:14)
- "True _____ is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less." C.S. Lewis, in his book, *Mere Christianity*
- True humility is learning to _____ others. (Phil 2:3-8)
- True humility is _____ ourselves the way that God sees us.
- True humility is having an accurate _____ of who you are in Christ.

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