

When is Help from God Coming?

KSBC 11/09/08

Luke 18:1-8

INTRO So . . . when is God going to step into this world, make everything right and do away with pain and suffering?

The answer to this question is both now and not yet. God has intervened into our present through Jesus and the gospel of grace. God will complete his agenda of rescuing a people for his name in the future when he sends Jesus a second time to judge and save. The question from Jesus for our eternal good is about our faith expressed in the mean time. The days between his comings are marked by both significant power to change lives and significant opposition to destroy lives. Some day, when Jesus comes, all that will change. But, until then, what is the kind of living faith that Jesus is looking to find when he comes?

The follower of Christ lives the life of faith now with a severe orientation to the future. We live, serve and obey as those who look forward to the completion of our hope. We are pilgrims. We have the goal in sight but have not attained it. We refuse to be satisfied by worldly reward because we long for the promise of a greater one coming. Our hope and faith is in a faithful God who has given us promises. Our faith is challenged to hold on to God's words of promise when these promises are called into question by circumstances, delay, change and opposition. We have a heritage of those who have gone before us that defines faithfulness as actually dying for what you have not seen, the promises of God.

Our desire before God and by the aid of his Spirit is to evaluate and change our faith in response to Jesus' probing question recorded in Luke 18:8, will he find faith on the earth when he comes?

This past week we replaced our computer at home and in the process of getting the new one set up learned to deal with tutorials and wizards. A 'wizard' in computer-speak, is a tool that leads you through the appropriate steps to arrive at a desired objective. As you complete one step, you are then led on to successive steps to achieve everything that you ever dreamed of your computer being able to do for a while before it breaks☺.

This morning let's work through a series of steps that will lead us through a careful and biblical evaluation and response to the question of our faith being pleasing to Christ. You and I live in a window of incredible opportunity in world history between the first and second comings of Jesus Christ. Is Jesus pleased with your faith? Is your faith ready for Jesus to come?

Read Luke 18:1-8

Setting and theme.	8:1
Parable	8:2-5
Jesus teaching	8:6-8

So . . . when is God going to step into this world, make everything right and do away with pain and suffering?

The three answers in this extended passage are . . .

1. He already has, Jesus powerfully delivers from sin now. 21
2. He will in the future, Jesus will come and establish his Kingdom. 22-37
3. In the mean time, work hard for the kingdom and persevere. 8:1-8

When he comes, will Jesus find faith on the earth?

The message of the parable could be expressed in this way . . . if your goals, ambitions, dreams and commitments do not drive you to God in dependent prayer and stir up a frequent desire to give up, then you are not prepared to meet Jesus at his coming. You must think, believe and act according to God's promises in greater ways. Your faith is weak and unidentifiable.

Follow this 'grow your faith' wizard . . .

1. Lock on to 3 promises from God that build radical, risk taking, persistent, Jesus pleasing faith. 18:6-8

The parable is a story of contrast from lesser to greater. The point is not that you get what you want from God if you just harass him enough. The point is that if a wicked judge can be moved to respond to the requests of a person he does not care about, just think of how much more a caring and good God will do for his children in times of great suffering and opposition.

- God is greater than the judge – he cares about you. 7
Psalm 121 1Peter 5:7
- You are greater than the widow – you are chosen by God. 7
Rom. 8:33 Mark 13:20
- God's reliability is greater than the judge's – God is dependable. 8a
Psalm 9:7-10

2. Answer 2 questions about your current faith levels of risk and persistence. 18:1

Jesus introduces the parable by telling us the desired outcome in the hearer's life of understanding this story. Whatever faith that pleases Jesus is, it must include dependent prayer and untiring persistence. Always pray, don't give up. There is no faith without dependent prayer and untiring persistence. Courageous evaluation then must include answering the following questions . . .

- What are you currently crying out to God for? 18:1, 7
Honestly measure your praying . . . frequency, fervency, themes, significance
- Why do you want to give up and quit? 18:1
Candidly assess the things you have quit or given up on and why.

What are you involved with that causes you to cry out to God?
What are you doing for God and his kingdom that you often feel like quitting?

3. Select from these 4 faith responses that Jesus is looking for when he comes that most of us do not do because they expose our weakness and cause us to give up and quit.
18:3, 5, 7 (justice)

There are several admonitions in the scriptures that exhort you to not give up, quit, lose heart or become discouraged. Jesus pleasing faith that thrives between his comings is dependently and persistently involved in specific expressions that are often accompanied by the warning label . . . remember, this form of obedient faith comes with frequent episodes of fear, weakness and desire to stop. Jesus teaches us that until he comes, pray for sustaining help and do not quit. Here are the 4 major faith responses that are so challenging they require dependent prayer and cause most people to quit.

- Boldly share the gospel. 2Cor. 3:12; 4:1, 16
- Sacrificially bear others burdens. Galatians 6:9-10
- Joyfully accept suffering and testing. Hebrews 12:1-3; Eph.3:13
- Lovingly help others to obey God. 2Thessalonians 3:13

4. If Jesus came today, would he find this kind of faith in your life?

Yes

No

Here it is!

1. Do something that indicates you have heard and understood God's words today.
2. See number 1.
3. Begin today to stop wasting your life by preparing for Jesus return.
4. Cry out to God.
5. Don't quit.

Study Questions

1. What questions, observations or impressions do you have from the study on Luke 18:1-8?
2. Read Luke 18:1-8. Review and explain the main point or contrast in the parable. Why isn't the lesson or theme to harass God until he gives you what you want?
3. In what ways is the wicked judge compared or contrasted with God? In what ways is the widow compared or contrasted with you/the follower of Christ? How is the justice God brings compared or contrasted to the justice the wicked judge brings?
4. Support or explain the truths developed from question 3 by reference to other scriptures that teach about God's loving care, his choice of people and his dependability to follow through on his judgments. How are these truths connected to a life of faith for those living in between his comings?
5. Read, review and share your answers to the questions raised in point number 2 of the sermon. What do your answers reveal about your faith?
6. Review the 4 responses mentioned in point 3. What makes these so difficult? Why do we get discouraged and quit these kinds of things? Share examples from your life of prayer and persistence in these areas.
7. Share your answer to question/point number 4 with the group. Why? What's next? How can the group encourage/help you?
8. What do you want to do, use or remember from today's study?