

I probably should only get half-wages this week, because my job's been half-done for me.

Luke told us (right up-front), the meaning **and** the application of this parable of Jesus, when he said: **And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.**

So there you go: There's the message: **we ought always to pray and not lose heart.**

But, I guess we'd better dig into it a bit.

Sometimes, when Jesus tells a parable, He uses a simile, or a comparison – God is like this. But then there's other times (like today), where He doesn't use a "simile" – He uses a "contrast" ("God is **not** like this").

But, before we get into it, let's set the scene:

Jesus has just been teaching, about the coming Kingdom of God (That's the return of Jesus & the Day of Judgment). And He said, "There's going to be times when you long for the Kingdom to come, but you won't see it.

And of course, the times when Christians most long for God's Kingdom to come, is when they're suffering persecution. They cry out, "Come, Lord Jesus – make things right!"... "Here we are, holding firm to the faith, but the world's authorities are coming down on us, and it hurts..."

And so, they pray and they pray, for Jesus to come, and back in Chapter 17, Jesus says, “You’ll long for it, but you won’t see it.”

But then He went on to teach us that when that day **does** come:

- The return of Jesus is going to be visible – you won’t miss it – there will be nothing secret about it;
- And between the return of Jesus, and the time of judgment, there is no gap. Everyday life will be proceeding (as per normal), and then instantly, Jesus returns, and the door that is currently open to salvation, will be shut.

What persecuted Christians long for, is what’s called “vindication” (Are you familiar with that word?) To be “vindicated”, is for a judge to rule in your favour. And so:

- When a false allegation is being made against you, you are vindicated when the judge says, “That, is a lie.”...
- When you are charged by ungodly world standards, the righteous judge steps in, and overturns it. You are vindicated.
- When you suffer persecution; abuse; ridicule, The righteous judge steps in, and takes action.
- And the thing with vindication, is not only that the evil are punished – probably more importantly, is that “the righteous”, are recognised as being righteous.

- Those who have been suffering, are vindicated, because it has been revealed as “un-just”

Are you with me? Everything seems haywire at the moment, but the Righteous Judge sets everything straight.

Alright, so let's turn to the parable:

**"In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man.**

Not a good person to be deciding one's fate. He doesn't care about God. He doesn't even care what people think of him. Alright, so the one who is responsible for administering justice in that jurisdiction, has no commitment to justice.

**<sup>3</sup> And there was a widow ... who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.'**

Now, we don't know what the case was – that's not really what's important. What **is** important, is “she was a widow”. It's a picture of one who is powerless/vulnerable. She cannot stand up for herself. And yet she had an adversary – someone who was standing against her. And it's evident in the parable that her adversary was unjust.

Now, we don't know what her adversary had done, or what s/he was doing... Maybe he/she was mistreating / cheating / robbing / or falsely accusing her... We don't know, but she would bring the situation before the judge, and he didn't care.

And so she would bring her case again; and again; and again:  
'Give me justice against my adversary.'

And **For a while he refused**, but after a while, he thought to himself, Oh, I don't care about God. I don't even care what people think of me, <sup>5</sup> **yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'** "

BTW, the bit that says "**beat me down**", in the Greek, literally says, "Give me a black-eye"... One feisty widow, hey??? But it simply means what it says... Even though he doesn't care, it would be easier for him to give justice, than to put up with her coming over and over and over again...

And the point of the parable is, it is a contrast. God is not like that. If even the most unrighteous judge can be swayed by continual requests, what about our righteous God?

**will not God give justice to his elect** (His people / His chosen ones) – **will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night?**

**Will he delay long over them? <sup>8</sup> I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily.**

Righto, up to this point, it's been reasonably easy to follow, but how does this now align with the context? Jesus has just said to His disciples, "You are going to long for my coming,

but you won't see it"... And the early church were fully expecting Jesus to return soon, but he hadn't yet come.

In Revelation 6, we catch a glimpse into the very throne-room of God, and under the altar, are the souls of those who have been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. (this is the persecuted church: Dead. Their souls in God's most precious place). And Revelation 6: (ESV) <sup>10</sup> They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

How long?

And now Jesus is saying:

Will He delay long?

He will give justice to them speedily

How does that add up? It doesn't seem speedy, does it? And if you have ever suffered injustice, it just seems to go on and on. And you cry out to God, "Make things right. Where's our vindication?"

Will He delay long?

He will give justice to them speedily (???)

In 2 Peter 3, Peter explains it. It seems like Jesus has been "slow" in coming...

2 Peter 3:8-10 (ESV)

<sup>8</sup> But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. <sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. <sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

God isn't slow. And if He **does** seem slow to me, guess who's concept of timeliness is out-of-wack. Mine, of course. And so, we have to accept that God doesn't work to our timetable.

Let's stick to the promise of God. His promise is, that He will give justice, speedily.

Yes, God is delaying the Day of Judgment, for now. Why? Because He's giving the unsaved time to repent. He's giving the unsaved (even those who persecute Christians) – He is giving them time to turn to Him, and be saved.

But when the Day of Judgment does come – on the day that Jesus returns, He will give justice, and it will be speedy...

- He won't umm-&-arr about it;
- He won't take the popular line;
- He won't be swayed by bribes or false motives...

He is a God of truth & Justice & love & mercy. And He will judge justly; And be in no doubt: He will bring vindication to those who suffer...

So, the word of the Lord is, “Do not lose heart. Keep on praying.” Are you crying out for justice? Don’t lose heart. Keep on praying.

Are you at your wits-end? Are you starting to feel, “I don’t think God’s hearing my prayers.” Yes, He is. And in His time, Our Lord will act. Those who are His, will be vindicated. Don’t give up. Keep on praying.

You know, it’s not an accident that the afflicted character in this parable, is a widow. In their culture, this is a person who is Powerless; and Vulnerable... We’re the same.

As Disciples of Jesus, we are sometimes powerless, against a corrupt world, that persecutes the righteous. And the way of Jesus is, that we don’t fight. We don’t stand up and fight for ourselves... We cry out to the one who is our only hope... Our Heavenly Father. Our Righteous God. The eternal just judge. – the one who does act, and when He does act, it will be decisive...

And on that day, the people of God will be vindicated...

- Those who have suffered, will be comforted;
- Those who have been slandered, will be honoured;
- Those who have been killed, will have eternal life;

- Those who have cried out to God for so long, will receive justice.

And Jesus finishes off, essentially with a reminder, Kingdom-living (patiently waiting for the return of Jesus) takes faith.

**Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"**

That's a challenge for you and I. Don't give up. Just because (by our expectations) God seems to be slow in answering our prayer, don't give up. Have faith. Keep on praying.

It's pretty much what Jesus taught us when He gave us the Lord's prayer – we pray "Your Kingdom come.

Let's pray together, the prayer that Jesus taught us now.

Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name,  
Your kingdom come,  
Your will be done,  
On earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins,  
As we forgive those who  
sin against us.



Save us from the time of trial  
And deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are Yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.