



Table Talk

By Rev. Timothy J. Swenson • ILT Dean of Chapel

The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

October 16, 2022

LUKE 18:1-8

"Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" Vs. 8



With this verse concluding the parable, Jesus puts a completely different and unexpected spin on the entire account. The story itself is quite simple. The judge, an anonymous figure, represents the totally unrighteous. He neither "fears God" nor "respects man." Plus, his only consideration in providing the widow with justice is that she will finally quit bothering him: self-interest at its worst. Jesus then juxtaposes this unrighteous judge with the holy and righteous God who is both his Father and the heavenly father to whom the people pray. If the unrighteous will provide justice for the persistent supplicant out of self-interest, much more surely (and speedily) will the righteous Father provide justice to those whom he has chosen.

Then, with that concluding question about "finding faith," Jesus puts a twist on this straightforward parable of reassurance. Rather than emphasizing the reassurance, Jesus' question stabs the people right through their hearts. "Will he find faith on earth" (vs. 8), pierces to the affects and attitudes of those who would be the elect... those who are hearing this parable... those who are his disciples following after him on his way to Jerusalem. The question brings an accusation against his hearers. It causes them to rethink whether they can answer this question in the affirmative, especially as it

regards themselves. During the wait for the Son of Man to come in glory, will the elect have faith when that grand and glorious day arrives?

The answer for them, and for us who are the elect of this day and age, cannot be had by self-examination. Sifting through the affects and attitudes of your heart to find your faithfulness is a losing proposition. All you will ever find are those virtues and qualities that have yourself as their subject. Your "I" is inextricably bound to them. In your search of your heart, you will never get past this "I" to find the Jesus that dwells there. That faith in Jesus only comes from outside of you. You can only receive it from the Word and never find it through self-examination. Listen to your preacher deliver Jesus Christ to you... deliver your election to you. Jesus Christ comes to you in every sermon. He comes, creating the very faith for which he seeks. Receive your faith from the Word of God and not from your heart.

Table Talk: Discuss why faith comes from an external event.

Pray: Keep me persistent, Father, in both hearing and praying. Amen



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And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. ² He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. ³ And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' ⁴ For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'" ⁶ And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. ⁷ And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? ⁸ I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"



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