

“Shall He Find Faith On the Earth?”

Introduction:

1. Recently we engaged in a study based on Luke 17:1-6, verses in which Jesus warned of the danger of causing “*one of these little ones*” to offend, or to sin, and in which He then stressed the need of having a forgiving attitude. In fact, he cited the scenario in which a brother sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying “*I repent.*” Jesus said “*thou shalt forgive him,*” v. 4. It was at this point that “*the apostles said unto the Lord, increase our faith,*” Luke 17:4. They recognized a need for an increase of faith.
 - a. No doubt, if we are honest with ourselves, each one of us could well afford to utter the same petition, “*increase my faith.*”
2. This Lesson is also a lesson which stresses the importance of faith. It is entitled “*shall he find faith on the earth,*” and the text is taken from Luke 18:1-8.

Discussion:

I. Consider the Parable of the Text.

A. The Purpose of the Parable, v. 1.

1. The main object of the parable was not just to teach a lesson on prayer; rather it was two-fold:
 - a. “*Men ought always to pray,*” v. 1.
 - (1) God-fearing people have always recognized the need for prayer. Cf. Dan. 6:10; James 5:16-18.
 - b. “*And not to faint,*” or “*lose heart,*” NKJV, v. 1.
2. It is likely that this parable was uttered after Jesus had related the facts in the latter part of the preceding chapter. Note Luke 17:37.
 - a. Jerusalem, in her wickedness, was like a dead body, beginning to rot, and waiting to be devoured by eagles, birds of prey.
 - b. It was a time of crisis – a time when it would have been easy to lose heart.

B. The Points in the Parable.

1. “*A Judge,*” v. 2.
 - a. He neither “*feared God*” nor “*regarded man,*” v. 2; he was “*unjust,*” v. 6.
 - b. He lacked the qualities a judge ought to have, Deut. 1:16-17.
 - (1) Judges were obligated to show special attention to widows. Isa. 1:17; Jer. 22:3.
2. “*A widow,*” v. 3.
 - a. In the east “*widow*” was virtually synonymous for helplessness and poverty. Cf. Isa. 1:23; Matt. 23:14.
 - b. This was a poor, defenseless widow, without legal counsel, before a heartless, corrupt judge.
3. The Widow’s Petition, “*Avenger me (“get justice from,” NKJV) of my adversary,*” v. 3.
 - a. No attempt at bribery (too poor for that), no threat, no appeal by proxy.
 - b. She was simply making a legal attempt for justice – which he was obligated to provide.
4. The Judge’s Response, vs. 4-5.
 - a. “*He would not for a while.*” He could have, but was disinterested.
 - b. But “*afterward he said within himself, though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenger her, lest by her continual coming she weary me,*” Luke 18:5.
 - (1) This was an oriental judge before whom the aggrieved could go without experiencing the legal red tape to which we have grown accustomed.
5. The Lesson, Luke 18:6-7.
 - a. “*Shall not God avenger His Own elect, which cry day and night unto him..?*” Luke 18:7.
 - (1) Christians are the “*elect*” of God. Eph. 1:4; I Peter 1:2-3.
 - (2) God’s “*elect*” should “*cry day and night unto Him,*” Luke 18:7; I Thess. 5:17
 - b. Unlike the “*unjust judge*” who did not regard man, **God** has demonstrated His love for us time and again. John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; Luke 12:7.
 - c. “*I tell you that He will avenger them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?*” Luke 18:8.
 - (1) As it relates to prayer, we must pray! I Thess. 5:17.
 - (2) But our prayers must be mixed with faith! James 1:5-6, 5:16.

II. “Shall He Find Faith on the Earth,” Luke 18:8.

A. Jesus was asking “Will there be religious people on the earth?” But will “He find faith?”

1. He was not asking “will there be believers on the earth; rather He was asking, would He find people who believed the Lord would avenger His Own elect. Jesus referred to a certain **quality** of faith.
 - a. Remember, the time was critical; there was apprehension as to whether some would “*lose heart.*”

2. Immediately following His resurrection, even Jesus' Own disciples did not really believe He would be raised from the dead! Luke 24:10-11, 33-37.
 3. The church in Jerusalem prayed for Peter, then did not believe the message when they were told He was alive! Acts 12:5,12-15.
- B. In many respects, ours is an age of crisis!
1. The rise of Islam – people are being driven from their homes, from their countries, mutilated, raped, killed, even beheaded – all in the name of Allah!
 2. Morally speaking, our society is largely mirrored in the language of Romans 1:20-32.
 3. We now talk about “same sex marriage,” and some in our government are trying to force schools and public places to provide “transgender” restrooms. Cf. Psalm 11:3.
 4. At such a time as this we need men and women of courage, faith, and integrity -- people who do not test the waters before they plunge in, or check to see which way the wind is blowing before they take a stand. Cf. Esther 4:14.
- C. The “*Faith*” Needed is the kind that will enable one to go against the crowd, resist the trend, buck the odds.
1. God has never changed society with majorities.
 - a. Matt. 7:13-14.
 - b. Joshua 23:10.
 - c. 2 Samuel 23:11-12.
 2. We need the faith of Isaiah, of Paul (Isaiah 33:22; Rom. 8:37).
- D. The “*Faith*” Needed is the kind which believes the church should change the world, instead of allowing the world to change the church!
1. There is always the temptation to be conformed to the world, Rom. 12:1-2.
 2. Sadly, what we see in the world we see too often in the church!
 - a. In the world we see broken homes and adulterous marriages; so often in the church we see the same.
 - b. In the world we see people dressed immodestly, using drugs, and engaging in sinful activities; too often in the church we see the same thing.
 3. But Jesus said we are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, Matt. 5:13-16.
 - a. Through our lives, people are to be impacted for good.
 - b. The church is “*the pillar and ground of the truth*,” I Tim. 3:15.
 - (1) Both individually, 2 Tim. 2:1-2, and collectively we must be sounding out the word of the Lord, I Thess. 1:7-8.
 - (2) Early Christians were accused of turning “*the world upside down*,” Acts 17:6; in reality, they were trying to turn it right side up!
 - (3) One Joseph made a tremendous impact upon his own people and the nation of Egypt. One Paul influenced people throughout the Roman Empire.
 4. In short, Christians should be people who out-think, out-live, and out-die the pagans of the world. We must be a people who insist and persist in **living** the ethics taught in God's word; Titus 2:12; Rom. 12:1-2; Phil. 2:15.
 - a. This takes faith; **heroic** faith.
 - b. If Jesus returned would He find faith in the world; would He find faith in the Seffner church; would He find faith in your home and mine; would He find faith in you and me?

Conclusion:

1. If Jesus came today, would He find faith; would He find you prepared to meet Him?
 2. He is coming, Acts 1:9-11; He will come as a thief in the night, 2 Peter 3:10.
 3. In the long ago Amos exhorted the people to “*prepare to meet thy God*,” Amos 4:12.
 4. Are **you** prepared “*to meet God*?”
- Bobby Witherington, June 5, 2016