

Luke Series #11
“Dependents” - Luke 18:1-8

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *Revenge*

1. Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick* is considered by many to be the greatest novel of all American literature
2. A classic tale of the desire for revenge
 - a. told by Ishmael - a whaler on the ship *Pequod*
 - b. captain - Ahab
 - c. lost his leg to a great white whale named Moby Dick
 - d. Ahab has vowed revenge on the whale and sets out to kill him
 - e. from the beginning, Ishmael knows where the maniacal obsession of Ahab will lead
 - f. the whale sinks the *Pequod* and kills all the crew save Ishmael
3. Though a brilliant tale and expertly written, only 50 copies sold in Melville’s lifetime
4. Revenge can be a powerful force in a person’s life
5. Though we probably all admit that forgiveness is a virtue and revenge a vice, we all know what it means to want to get even
6. In fact, one person said, “It’s always easier to forgive after you’ve gotten even.”

B. *Vengeance*

1. In Rom 12:19 we read, “Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.”
2. While forgiveness is a virtue that we are commanded to give to those who repent of their offenses to us - God has promised that before all is said and done, He will exact perfect vengeance on evil
3. We’re going to take a look at the vengeance of God in our study today .
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II. TEXT

A. *Vs. 1-5*

1 Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,

2 saying: “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man.

3 “Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, ‘Avenge me of my adversary.’

4 “And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man,

5 ‘yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’”

1. Luke introduces this story Jesus tells by saying He meant it to illustrate our need to persevere in prayer
2. But the parable itself is disturbing
 - a. we are introduced to a what might be called a “nagging” old woman
 - b. and a crooked judge
3. Apparently, someone had done something to the widow that was illegal
4. What it was we aren’t told
5. But she told the judge, and kept pestering him with her case
6. Finally, out of the desire simply to be rid of her incessant nagging, the judge did what she asked
7. Older women who had lost their husbands had virtually no influence or power in the world at this time
 - a. they were cast offs, destitute, the poor of the poor
8. This judge, who didn’t fear God nor really care about justice, probably abused his position
 - a. catered to the powerful, influential
 - b. in fact, God had repeatedly rebuked just such abuses by the judges of Israel thru the prophets
 - c. He told them to repent of their perversion of the justice due widows and the orphans
9. In this parable, Jesus brings these two unlikely characters together to illustrate the fact that we ought to persevere in prayer
10. But how does this story illustrate that lesson?
11. Let’s look on and see.

B. Vs. 6-8

6 Then the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge said.

7 “And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?

8a “I tell you that He will avenge them speedily.

1. In the parables, Jesus often reasoned from the lesser to the greater
2. He would draw a contrast between two things = We see that here
3. The reasoning goes like this:

- a. If an unjust judge will hear a poor widow's case simply because she keeps asking him,
- b. **HOW MUCH MORE** will the Righteous Judge of all the earth hear the prayers of those He loves as His own family?

C. **Vengeance**

1. What's a bit troublesome about this passage is this . . .
 2. Luke says Jesus told this story to illustrate our need to persevere in prayer
 3. But Jesus narrows the kind of prayer to the asking of revenge
 - a. in the parable - widow asked for and got justice on her enemy
 - b. then in the application, Jesus said that God will likewise avenge His own
 4. For many bible students — this asking God for revenge on our enemies seems petty and out of character with the kind of people we are supposed to be as we follow Christ
 - a. after all, aren't we supposed to be people of charity?
 - b. mercy and kindness?
 - c. isn't grace supposed to be our mode of living?
 - d. the desire for revenge seems petty and out of character to many Christians
 5. Yet here we are told that God will hear and heed the prayers of His people who cry out for justice against their enemies
 - a. in the book of Revelation, one of the major visions is the souls of the martyrs in heaven who ask God how much longer it will be till their blood is avenged on those who killed them
 - b. Rev 6:9-11
9. "When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.
- 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"
- 11 Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.
6. How are we to understand this?
 7. Is it right for us to pray that we might be avenged on our enemies?
 8. The answer, very simply, is "YES!"
 9. You see, the problem many of us have is a distorted view of vengeance
 - a. we think of revenge as getting even with those who have hurt and offended us
 - b. we want to get back at them

- c. as John Belushi once said, “Don’t get mad. Get even.”
 - d. this kind of revenge is low, selfish, and petty.
10. That isn’t at all what is in view here
- a. biblical vengeance is this: It is God judging sin and evil.
 - b. it is the righteous sentence of justice being poured out on those who have committed evil
 - c. there is nothing selfish in biblical revenge
 - d. rather, it is the just desserts of sin
11. Recently, in previous studies, we’ve seen that the Christian’s number one priority and chief concern is the kingdom of God
- a. Matthew 6:33 “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.”
 - b. as believers, that means everything we do centers on God’s rule and God’s justice
 - c. if that is the way we live - filtering everything we see and hear through the screen of God’s righteousness, then we can’t help but be grieved and deeply troubled by the wickedness of this world
 - Rwanda
 - Bosnia, Croatia
 - Haiti
 - right here in our own state, county, cities
12. What else can our cry be but, “Lord, avenge the evil.”
13. The problem is that our prayers seem to go unanswered
- a. let’s face it - generations of Christians have been praying that prayer
 - b. centuries have passed and still God has not judged evil
 - c. in fact, things are getting worse and worse
 - d. even the secular media is beginning to call attention to the decay of morality in virtually every institution of our nation
14. And all the while, the one hope for help, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is shut out, ignored, made illegal, restricted, and otherwise opposed
15. It’s easy to get frustrated and to begin thinking that God isn’t going to answer our prayers
16. That is why Jesus gives this parable . . .
- a. no matter how bad things get —
 - b. no matter how dark the night of evil seems —
 - c. keep praying and keep believing
 - d. because eventually, in His perfect time, Jesus will come again and God will judge all sin and put it down forever
 - e. if we don’t stay vigilant in prayer, asking that God will judge sin, then we will resign ourselves to the evil around us
17. It is of this very thing that Jesus warns us at the end of v. 8 . . .

8b Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on

the earth?”

D. The End Times & Prayer

1. Jesus poses a sobering question
2. When He comes again, will He find people ready and waiting for Him?
 - a. or will they have lost their faith?
 - b. will evil have grown so great that it will pollute His own and steal away their faith?
3. The bible clearly tells us that as the return of Christ draws near, things will get worse and worse
 - a. contrary to a lot of people you hear today
 - b. things are not going to get better before Jesus comes
 - c. prophecy presents a bleak picture of moral and social decay and horrible evil
 - d. recently, Christian TV - man prophesied that evil would be ripped out of the world on June 9th
 - e. we waited - nothing happened
4. Paul even says in 2 Thess 2:3 that Jesus will not return until there is a great apostasy first = Many will depart from the faith
5. In Matthew 24:12 Jesus said that because lawlessness will abound in the end times, the love of many will grow cold
6. The reason you and I are exhorted here to persevere in the prayer that God will avenge evil is because it will help keep us mindful that Jesus Christ is coming again
7. It will keep us careful that we are staying away from the sin that God will soon judge

III. CONCLUSION

A. A Question

1. Jesus asked a question here there was no way the disciples could answer
2. And you know what, there is no way WE can answer it either
3. You see, though it surely appears that Jesus is coming soon, no one knows the day or the hour of His return
4. Jesus intends that we ask of ourselves - “If He were to return today, would He find me in the faith?”

B. Frustration

1. I don't know about you, but I get frustrated at the way it seems evil goes on unabated
2. I wonder sometimes where God is - why He doesn't set things right
3. Jury duty this week -
 - a. 3 strikes you're out

- b. this guy a career criminal
 - c. been in trouble with the law since 1962
 - d. 52 years old now
 - e. stole \$340 in cologne
 - f. but now gets 25 to life
4. Whining and crying over such a harsh sentence for stealing a few bottles of fragrance
 5. But that isn't the issue - he has spent his life victimizing people
 6. One conviction for breaking and entering an apartment and stealing Christmas presents = the lowest!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
 7. Attempted murder, drug sales, robbery, other crimes
 8. But now, sent back to prison
 9. Still, prison will be like a vacation in Hawaii compared to the judgment of God for his sin if He doesn't repent and seek forgiveness
 10. But that isn't only true for him, it's true for everyone, including the district attorney, the defense attorney, the judge, you, me!

C. *We Are To Pray For Vengeance*

1. But the sweetest revenge of all is to see the lost come to repentance
2. To see the workers of evil turn from their sin and come to Christ
3. Either a person will repent and be rescued from God's wrath, or he will experience God's wrath
4. With God, there are more than 3 strikes before you are out
5. But one day, your turn at the plate will be over
6. Rom 2:5 "In accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."