

**Chapter 1 : 63 Bible verses about Kingdom Of God, Coming Of**

*Through prayer, believers offer up their desires to God, surrender their will to Him, enter into conversation with Him, practice His presence, and experience His peace. Despite our unanswered questions, we can trust that God's goodness means an answer will come in His timing.*

Published on our website with the necessary permission Lk I say to you that he will see to it that they get their justice soon. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth? The first part of the chapter illustrates OT perspectives on ideal and unjust judges, God as righteous judge and judge of widows, and just and unjust treatment of widows. The second part studies the characterizations of the judge and the widow and special problems of interpretation and translation. Of Judges and Widows The instructions for the appointment of judges in Deuteronomy and 2 Chronicles present an ideal picture of these local officials. The local judge in the parable fails to live up to the ideal on at least two counts: In addition, his lack of respect for people could mean that he has carried impartiality too far. Or he could be looking for a bribe from both parties to the dispute. Do not go to law against a judge, for the decision will favor him because of his standing Sir 8: The portrayal of two corrupt judges in the story of Susanna also illustrates the problem. It takes divine intervention to convince the court that they are perverters of justice and to save the heroine. In the passages cited and in the story of Susanna, corruption is linked to the lack of justice or righteousness: Isaiah and Jeremiah are called to remind their contemporaries of the plight of widows in an unjust world: Thus says the LORD: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place Jer God is a righteous judge, and a God who has indignation every day 7: The heavens declare his righteousness, for God himself is judge! Father of the fatherless and judge of widows is God in his holy habitation He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing Dt You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. If you do afflict them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry; and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless Ex She is at a disadvantage and in danger of losing out to a local system under the control of a corrupt and influential man. At the same time, however, the portrayal departs from the stereotypical or traditional picture of widows as poor, defenseless women who depend on God for their rights and social well-being. The widow triumphs over the judge and does so without the intervention of God the righteous judge. She sees to it that she gets her justice by coming to repeat her plea to the judge. The traditional picture suggests that the widow is in the right, but the narrator of the parable, Jesus, does not state whether she is right or wrong. Josephus appointed local courts of seven judges in first-century C. Galilee, and the Mishnah attests to local courts of three judges for noncapital cases JW 2. In inheritance disputes three local judges or one specially certified judge presided over the case. The judge in the parable could be a specially certified judge provided that this was a first-century practice, one of several judges assigned to the case but the only corrupt judge in the group, or a character selected for reasons of story-world economy: She presented the judge with a silver gift, and her opponent provided him with a gold gift. In such cases the opponents of the women could be their children or the children of their husbands from previous marriages. The judge who is supposed to be in control of the situation is an unjust judge at least as corrupt as any of those whose judgments are lamented in prophetic and sapiential literature. The parable takes an unexpected turn in its portrayal of a widow who thwarts or triumphs over a local judge on the strength of persistence and resourceful pestering. The Judge, the Widow, God, the Son of Man, and the People of God in the Parable The narrator introduces the parable of the judge and the widow by identifying its form and purpose. It is a parable instructing a third person plural group about persistent prayer. Elsewhere in Luke teaching on prayer is reserved for the disciples 6: The judge is seriously deficient in the relationships that form decent human existence. Then in the course of time they exchanged their ancestral customs for an inferior sort of lifestyle. They neither continued to accord the traditional honors to God nor to attend to justice in the human realm. He turned out to be an unjust man and an evildoer by

nature who was neither pious toward God nor reasonable in human relationships Ant. He does not model his judgeship on the righteous sovereign power of God and has no concern for the consequences or possible divine punishment. His lack of respect for people admits of two interpretations. Either he does not care about people or does not care what people think about him. The former interpretation fits the situation outlined in the parable. The judge does not care about people such as the widow but is forced to surrender to her persistent pleas. The latter interpretation relies on outside information about partiality and personal reputation in the Middle East. As someone who does not care what others think about him, the judge is completely impartial or utterly despicable from the perspective of human relationships. The source for the characterization of the judge is Greek rhetoric, not or not so much the supposedly unchanging laws and limits of social relationships in the Middle East. Moreover, the parable pays no attention to the opinions of third parties to the dispute. Its sole area of interest is the encounter of the judge and the widow. The widow is characterized as a bold and persistent pleader. She is so bold as to approach the judge and to present her unconditional demands to the corrupt and influential local official. She came on more than one occasion and over an unspecified period of time to someone who paid no attention to her plea and refused to take action. She could be insisting that the judge avenge some wrong done by her opponent, guarantee her a fair hearing and just treatment, or serve as her advocate in the trial. In terms of the limited information about the case and the parties to the case in the parable, there seems to be some truth in all three lines of interpretation. Her opponent has wronged her, and she is intent on righting the wrong through the local system. She is trying to insure that justice prevails, but in her view the cause of justice and her side of the case are identical. If the judge supports her and justly favors her side of the case, then justice will prevail. There is no reason to doubt her view, even though Jesus does not state whether she is right or wrong. It is reported that the judge is unwilling to see that she gets her justice. No reason is given for his unwillingness, and, given his character and the local system of courts, no reason needs to be given. Luke uses this technique to expose the thoughts of scheming parable characters such as the rich fool and the unjust steward. According to the judge, the widow is a pest and a possible threat to his dignity, safety, or both. The characterizations of the judge and the widow seem to call for a literal level of meaning. The widow has already annoyed the judge and he must have already earned a poor reputation. The position of the clause and the verb recommend a bold or strong conclusion, and it would be something of an anticlimax to learn that the judge expects more of the same from the widow and nothing more. Some scholars object to a literal interpretation because they cannot imagine that a widow would attack a judge. If it is imaginary and humorous, then he is poking fun at her by suggesting that her unrelenting persistence is a prelude to violence. He has changed his mind in order to rid himself of her and her pleas, and his humorous thoughts serve as a temporary remedy for personal tension. Whether his fear is imaginary or real, the quotation of his thoughts reveals that he is a representative of a local system who is looking out for himself. He intervenes because it is in his personal interest to do so. As long as he can dismiss her as a troublemaker, there is no need for him to investigate her case, his judgeship, and the local system that he represents. He belongs to the realm of injustice, not to the realm of justice presided over by God. In the interpretative conclusion the parable of the judge and the widow is the basis for an illustrative question and answer about the relationship of God and the people of God. The parable proper and this part of its interpretative conclusion are linked by a common concern for getting justice, a concern repeated four times in the short passage: In the background of the question are the OT ideas of God as the righteous judge, the people of God as a chosen or elect group, and their petitions to God as pleas in the form of cries. She comes again and again, and they are supposed to cry out day and night. Since she succeeded in pestering the judge to intervene in her case, they should continue to persuade God to intervene in their case. I understand the clause as an afterthought, as an awkward attempt to keep hearers and readers of the parable from carrying the comparison of God and the judge too far. Although God and the judge are similar in their seeing that justice is accomplished, they do so out of completely dissimilar motives. The judge attends to the widow and intervenes in her case because she is pestering him. In contrast, God is patient with the petitioners and seems to listen with unlimited tolerance. God intervenes in their case for reasons of the relationship of God and people which are not stated in the interpretative conclusion. Without the awkward aside, hearers and readers of the parable could conclude that God, like the

unjust judge, is pestered into intervention. Their arguments involve reading of the interpretative conclusion and the parable in relation to Sir. Further problems of interpretation and translation include uncertainties about the Aramaic or Greek syntax of the clause and its status as a question, statement, or conclusion in a conditional clause. The various proposals yield interpretative translations such as: Since the chosen ones are the only group included in the interpretative conclusion, a reference to their un-introduced opponents would be intrusive and unclear. The portrayal of God and the widow in Sirach 35 itself reflects the influence of the Deuteronomic portrayal of the ideal judge who tends to the needs of widows, aliens, and orphans. Several factors have formed my translation, which I consider to be no less tentative than previously proposed renderings. I prefer to stay by literal translations for troubled texts. In my reading the interpretative conclusion is not preoccupied with the delay of the parousia. I understand the question and answer as an assurance that God will intervene soon. The delay, if any, is a thing of the past; the focus of the interpretative conclusion is on preparation for the future. If God is unlike the judge, then the point is that there is really no delay at all in divine intervention.

*Parables Concerning Prayer "There was in a certain city a judge who feared not God and regarded not man. Now there was a widow in that city, who kept coming to.*

Introduction Matthew 5 & 7 contains the well-known Sermon on the Mount. The sermon is about righteousness that comes from the heart. Religion tends to be about external forms and obedience to rules, but here Jesus challenges us to evaluate ourselves by an inner standard. This contrasts with the prevailing wisdom of the time. It is obvious and visible. It is easy to condemn the murderer. But Jesus tells us to take care less we even have a seething anger against another. Our anger can be visible or invisible. And so Jesus teaches about a life lived and judged by attitudes in the heart. There is nothing here by which we can judge others. We can only take His words, and by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, judge our own lives and move to change. It also has a more immediate context expressed in the opening lines of Matthew 6: Be careful about not living righteously merely to be seen by people. Otherwise you have no reward with your Father in heaven Matthew 6: With these words, Jesus speaks of outward versus inward religious practices. Giving, prayer, and fasting are most often associated with religion and, in the following section of the sermon, Jesus speaks again of the inner heart versus outward forms. His treatment of all three topics is the same: Of course, a visible spiritual life is not of itself bad. Paul wrote to the Corinthians and said: I am not writing these things to shame you, but to correct you as my dear children. For though you may have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, because I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I encourage you, then, be imitators of me 1 Corinthians 4: What you see me do, do yourselves. I certainly benefited, over 30 years ago now, from men decades old in their faith. Now I hope to be the same to those younger than me. The difference for Paul to the Corinthians is that he did not derive his self-image from the attention. He was a bondservant of Jesus Christ and spent himself for the church and her people. Men and women like that are worth emulating. But it is different for those who give to be recognized for their giving, or who entertain with great prayers or fast in agony for the admiration of others. They have erected outward forms only. They have confused the approval of others with approval of the Father. In this lesson, we will look into what Jesus said about prayer as He discusses its outward forms and instructs concerning the inner reality. Truly I say to you, they have their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. Jesus develops two basic kinds of prayer. He wants to be known as spiritual and holy. His religion gives him status, and by public prayer, he maintains and feeds it. Jesus, for teaching purposes, draws a distinct line between the two, but we must acknowledge that most people will fall somewhere between the two extremes. It is also important to understand that no one can read the mind and intentions of another heart. What might seem to be the height of arrogance may only reflect upbringing. Or gentle, quiet prayers may come from one who has no private prayer life at all. There are, however, some warning signs to which we might want to pay attention. This may be a matter of upbringing. Nevertheless, none is needed, and such a change in voice can draw attention to the one praying unless one is in an environment that expects it, in which case not changing the voice can draw attention. Elegant words and lots of them. This may be a matter of gifting and natural oratory, but again none are needed. You pray according to what you want done and what others need to do to help it along. Help Jane resist the temptation to keep seeing that guy. Public prayer of any kind without a private prayer life. It is a given that if you are not speaking to the Father when you are alone, there is no good speaking to Him publicly. So Jesus advises us to go into our rooms and shut the door. How private do you need to be? Must we become hermits or monks to have a prayer life? Jesus simply meant that there are places and ways to pray that are between the Father and us. In such a place: We can use elegant words as a way of offering Him our best. We can have a personal agenda, because it is now between the Father and us, and He can open and close doors as He sees fit. We can pray for Jane. Since it is just between the Father and us, we are more likely to be showing genuine concern for her welfare. And, of course, we now have a basis for praying in public. We can be in our own rooms or in public and still pray privately. The private life is one measure of who we are. Too many times I have seen good public families suddenly come apart from within. It

became apparent that the life behind the closed doors of the home was far different from the public family persona. If we believe that God exists and rewards those who seek Him, it will affect our most private of lives, because we will know that He is there. We then know that there is, in fact, no private life. The rewards of relational prayer is that it can: Jesus contrasts prayer to the Father with the prayers of the Gentiles. He describes Gentile prayer as the repetitious babbling of many words. What might this mean, and how do we relate this to our prayers? The Gentiles did not worship the true God. Gentile prayer is about the manipulation of spiritual forces and entities that do not generally care about you as an individual. Repetitious babblingâ€”Praying without real content. Perhaps this would be like reciting liturgical prayers without connecting to their content. Many words to be heardâ€”Praying with an attitude that God is not listening and must be manipulated to answer. In answer to this, Jesus says that our Father knows what we need even before we ask. We are praying to our Father, which means that we are in a family relationship. We are part of His life, and He anticipates what we need. We can, therefore, come to Him as transparent people. We can come before Him glad, sad, or mad, and He will be there in full understanding. Manipulation is not required. If our Father knows what we need before we ask, why should we pray? There are two reasons. The first is because of the rewards of prayer that go beyond just meeting our needs. We do not need such things, but they should have a place in our prayers. So Jesus has given instructions about the place and manner of our prayers. We are to have a private life of prayer, and we are to pray to a real Person. This Person is interested in our needs and in us and does not need to be manipulated. Directing the Heart So what makes for a good prayer? How are we to pray? During His sermon, Jesus began a model prayer for us with these words: We owe Him our lives and our service. But Jesus is very serious about just this aspect. The entire sermon has many references to God as our Father. This relationship is our primary motivation for the lives that we should live. God as Father is a two-way relationship. As Father, He loves us, and we honor Him. He protects, and we abide. He provides, and we give thanks.

**Chapter 3 : The Word in Women's Worlds, Four Parables. The Parable of the Judge and the Widow**

*In this Lenten series, we journeyed through some of Jesus' parables, trying to place ourselves among the first century crowds, listening to and discussing Jesus' own words about the kingdom of heaven, God's love, grace, and mercy, and our destiny as God's children.*

Jesus had just told a parable about prayer. The Pharisees were self-righteous and viewed others with contempt. The teaching concerning receiving the kingdom as a child How do we approach God in prayer? The Pharisee was one of the most respected people in that society. Everyone thought the Pharisees were very righteous. His Stance He approached God with familiarity he was standing when it would seem more appropriate to kneel or something. It is a better translation of the Greek and it better represents what is going on because God certainly was not listening. His Self-importance He compared himself to others and was very condemning of others. This is very characteristic of a self-righteous person. We saw it in the parable of the lost sons. The Pharisee in our passage was depending on his works feeling that they gained him favor with God. What he did not do He was not a swindler, unjust, an adulterer and he did not commit treason like the tax-gatherer What he did do He fasted twice a week. How many fasts were dictated by the law? Only one per year - on the day of Atonement. And that is the day this man will miss. He paid tithes on his gifts. He is double tithing. If it is a gift, someone else has already paid a tithe for it. He covered all his bases. Righteousness is not the result of self-righteous activities one might perform. If you have that attitude it is legalism. If you want to be a church member you have to agree not to do the nasty nine. If you want to be a leader in the church, you have to avoid the dirty dozen. Righteousness is not the result of what you do or do not do. The publican gives us the answer. The Publican The Publican was probably the least respected member of society. He was a Jew who went to work for Rome collecting taxes. He was viewed as a traitor. His position He stood at a distance. He was afraid to approach God, knowing that he was unworthy. His posture He was unwilling to lift his eyes. This showed his humility. The day of Atonement was the day when you did this. You fasted and went around beating your breast because of the pain in your soul. His plea He asks for mercy from God. That is genuine humility. He knew that only God could help him be righteous. This word for propitiation is the word used to describe the mercy seat - the lid on the ark of the covenant. The ark contained the ten commandments. All year long the people broke the law, and then on the day of atonement, blood was spread on the mercy seat to cover the sins of the people. Jesus Christ is the propitiation for the world 1Jn 2: Justification is that gracious work of God whereby He extends mercy to the repentant sinner who comes to Him in faith. The Pharisee did not understand that only God could help him be righteous. The Pronouncement Jesus stated that the one who exalts himself will be humbled and vice versa. The Pharisee, who was socially acceptable, was not acceptable to God. The publican who was a social outcast was acceptable because of his humility. Exaltation is the future promise of present humility. Entrance into the kingdom of God is granted only to those who humbly accept the gracious satisfaction of God which HE has made for sin. The one who exalts himself will be humbled and the one who humbles himself will be exalted. The Program Of God: Jesus told a parable in which the most respected member of society went away unjustified while the most despised member of society was justified before God. In the parables Jesus deals with two groups of people - the religious and the rowdy. Jesus deals with the issues of legalism and grace throughout the parables. Religious activity is not a sign of spirituality. Just because people pray does not mean they make contact with God. External rituals, giving, etc. We need to guard against a self-righteous attitude. When we compare ourselves with others, we usually draw wrong conclusions. We need to humble ourselves now, or God will do it later. Right after Jesus tells this parable, Luke relates how people were bringing their children to Jesus. Humility comes from recognition of unimportance and in that society children were insignificant. And children are typically very trusting. So Jesus is saying one needs to come to God with humility and trust. Notice the disciples are telling people to get their children out of there. They had the same attitudes as everyone else. It is not what you do or do not do. The young ruler thought he had kept the law all his life. He thought he could get to heaven by his works, so Jesus points him to his sin. The next time it is mentioned is with Mary and the miraculous birth of Jesus. Now we

have the same phrase. Because they are all the miraculous work of God. Man can not do it. There are two attitudes that keep people from coming to Christ. The parable of the Unjust Judge and the persistent widow teaches that we should keep going to God in prayer, trusting in His justice, love and timing. He will answer in the best way for us and in the best time. This parable deals with our attitude in prayer. Instead we should go to God in humility - grateful for his mercy, expecting Him to answer but waiting on his timing - knowing that he knows best.

**Chapter 4 : Parables About Prayer (Luke ) | Werner Bible Commentary**

*parables of the Unjust Judge and the Friend at Midnight, however, are about those prayers concerning which God has promised He will say "yes." Together, they urge us to persevere.*

Background to the Parables 1. The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, and He gave them the example prayer in Lk Continuing His teaching, Jesus taught about persistence in prayer, Lk The Pharisees asked Jesus when the kingdom would come. Jesus taught about the coming of the kingdom, and about judgment on Israel, Lk Also see Mt Then Jesus taught His disciples two parables about prayer, Lk They laid stress not upon the righteousness of an action, but upon its formal correctness. Understanding the Parables 1. Jesus taught about seeking help through prayer in the parable of the persistent friend, Lk The friend had a sudden need for assistance, and went to his friend for help,: His request was reasonable, he asked for three loaves to feed someone else,: His request was heard because he woke up his friend at midnight,: If we understand how a friend would help us because of the trouble we caused , then we should know that God will answer our requests,: The judge in the parable was unjust,: The widow continually requested him to give her justice,: The unrighteous judge gave her justice to stop her from troubling him,: How much more certain is our righteous God to help us when we make a request, crying out to Him day and night,: Jesus taught about trusting God for salvation instead of trusting our own righteousness in the parable of the tax collector and the Pharisee, Lk The Pharisee bragged to God about his own righteousness,: The tax collector humbled himself before God, and begged for mercy,: God respected the prayer of the tax collector who admitted being a sinner. By implication, God did not respect the prayer of the proud Pharisee who trusted in his ability to keep the law, and considered himself righteous. The proud will be humbled, and the humble will be exalted,: Consideration and Application of the Parables 1. God Hears our requests When we understand that God will help us more readily than a close friend, we should have courage to ask God for our needed help, Heb 4: Our request should be unselfish, Js 4: What kind of requests are we making to God? Are we seeking help for others, or only for ourselves and our family? Do you have confidence that God will help you? Persist In Prayer God gives justice Just as the widow asked for help with her problem, and was rewarded for her persistence, we know that God will hear the prayers of His children and give us the needed help against our enemies. God will hear and take vengeance for His saints, Rev 6: Why should we make repeated requests to God for help? What does it mean to pray without ceasing? God Hears humble, dependent, confessing prayer Sometimes people believe that they are righteous because of their ability to do all the right things. However, this righteousness of our own through keeping law is a lie, because just one sin leaves us short of righteousness. We all are sinners, and depend on the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ for salvation, Phil 3: Jesus is able to give us complete righteousness through faith. How do you feel about your own righteousness before God? Are you doing so well spiritually that you can brag to God about your ability? Do you look down on other people because you see them as sinners? What does it mean to humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord, Js 4: Memory Verse - Lk

**Chapter 5 : IBS Courses - PARABLES OF JESUS - LESSON 15 - PARABLES ON PRAYER**

*Jesus taught about persistence in prayer, and seeking justice through prayer in the parable of the widow and the judge, Lk a. The judge in the parable was unjust*

Parables of the Kingdom Parable of the Sower Matthew A great multitude gathered, so Jesus entered a boat, using it as a platform to address the multitude on the shore. Luke tells us that the crowd was made up of people from numerous cities throughout Israel. Thus Jesus had been picking up followers as he traveled through the towns of Israel. However, the use of the phrase helps us to understand that Jesus did not waste time while he was on earth. None of the gospels record all the parables Jesus used. Luke only records two, but mentions in Luke 8: The first parable is that of a sower who scatters seed in his field. As can happen, the scattered seed does not always land in the best soil. Some fell on the path of hard-packed earth and rock near the field; others fell on unprepared, rocky ground; still others in good soil, but it was out toward the edges where the weeds easily sprouted; but the rest fell on the fertile field. The seed on the path was eaten by birds. The seed on the rocky soil grew for while, but quickly died because they did have sufficient roots. The seed on the edges also grew, but the weeds also came up and choked out the wheat. But the seed on the field grew to produce more seed, though each produced varying amounts. In other words, for those inclined and are able to understand what was said, pay attention to its meaning. It serves as a warning that there is more being said than what appears on the surface. We have heard preachers talk about these parables many times, and we have pondered them ourselves. When they could talk to Jesus private, they asked what it meant and why was he speaking in parables. Jesus stated that some things his disciples needed to know, the multitude was not to know. Therefore, he spoke in parables, stories with hidden meaning, while in public so that only those who sought understanding would understand his message. In part, the hiding of the meaning could be what Paul referred to in I Corinthians 2: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Thus, one reason for the hidden message was to teach without changing important upcoming events. The mystery Jesus refers to is discussed at length in the New Testament. A major point in the hidden message was that the kingdom was not limited to the Jews. It would be open to the Gentiles though the means of faith and not physical birth Romans Jesus also stated that he spoke in parables to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah. The parables are not difficult to understand once you get the sense of how they operate, yet the great religious minds of the day would completely miss the points while humble hearts of common people eager to learn would grasp them. The disciples were particularly blessed because the things they would understand were things prophets in the past eagerly desired to learn, but were unable to do so. Explanation of the Parable of the Sower Matthew The key to understanding parables is to identify the symbols: The seed is the word of God being spread. The ground represents the type of people receiving the word of God. Four types of people are described. What little they receive is quickly lost to sin. The stony ground represents people who gladly receive the word of God, but they have no roots in themselves. That is, their faith is shallow, often times based on the actions of others, and not a faith that comes from a deep personal conviction. Examples would be children who become Christians solely because their parents are Christians or their friends are Christians. When the going gets rough and challenges to their faith arises, these shallow-rooted Christians have nothing to draw upon to sustain them and they die away. The thorny ground represents people who receive the word, but they do not leave the world behind. While trying to hold on to both, the cares and distractions of the world eventually chokes out their faith in God Matthew 6: An example are people who convert to Christianity because life is hard and they need help, but when the strain of life eases they no longer see a need for God and they slide way. The good soil represents those who with noble and good hearts both hear the word and understand it. That is, they accept the word of God because it makes sense to them. They

have a personal conviction that it is right and they find strength in its teachings to carry them through both the good and bad times in their lives. You can see who they are because they are actively involved, bringing other people to Christ. Some will bring some to Christ, others will bring many to Christ, but the common trait is that they are winning souls.

**Parable of the Farmer Mark 4:** The farmer prepares the soil and scatters the seed, but the actual sprouting of the seed is not under his control. Exactly how it happens is not something he needs to know. The farmer plants the seed, but it is God who causes it to grow. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. The word of God is scattered and eventually some of it grows. Even then it takes time for the Christian to mature to the point that he can begin spreading the word in turn I Peter 2: Some read Mark 4: A major problem of this view is that it changes the meaning of who is the farmer. We started out stating that the kingdom, that is the church, is like a farmer. That meaning should be retained until the end. A farmer does not benefit from his crop until it is fully matured and has yielded seed of its own. The church is not able to benefit from its work until those it has taught and nurtured to maturity have in turn developed the ability to spread the word of God to others. You can see this throughout the world. Some churches grow by leaps and bound as its members produce an abundant harvest, while others dwindle away because there are not enough seed bearers. The growing churches are often the ones strongest in faith and love for God. The dying churches are consumed with internal problems.

**Parable of the Wheat and the Tares Matthew** An enemy sowed tares in his field so that when grain began to appear, the tares also sprouted. It is similar to wheat, but its seeds are black and have no food quality. In its early stages of growing, it looks just like regular wheat, thus making it difficult to remove. It is not until the plants are close to ripening that the difference is seen. The servants are confused by the appearance of plants that have not been sown, but the master explains that they had done what was right, but an enemy sabotaged their efforts. The servants wanted to know if they should removed the false wheat immediately, but the master said to do so would damage the true wheat just before the harvest. It was better to wait for the actual harvest and then separate the good from the bad. When the harvest eventually comes, the false wheat is removed and destroyed allowing the true wheat that remains to be easily harvested. The explanation of this parable comes later in the text, so we will hold off as well for a moment.

**Parable of the Mustard Seed Matthew** Notice in Mark 4: He then gives them the perfect illustration. You cannot necessarily tell by looking at the size of the seed the resulting size of the plant. For example, the mustard plant has extremely tiny seeds, but when it grows, it can become large enough for birds to roost in its branches. In the Palestine area, mustard plants can reach a height of ten feet. When teaching the word of God, you cannot tell in advance the type of Christian who will result. The seemingly smallest beginning might surprise you by becoming the strongest Christian who is able to bear and support others Proverbs 4: But here the focus is on the church. Jesus is explaining that at its beginning, the church will appear small and insignificant, but it will soon grow much larger than anyone would expect Isaiah

**Parable of the Leaven Matthew** In the making of sour dough bread, a small amount of yeast laden dough is mixed in with a fresh batch. Very quickly the yeast multiplies and the entire batch is now filled with yeast. The theme is much like that of the mustard seed, but here the focus is upon the hidden nature of the spreading of the kingdom. The result is obvious, but the actual spreading of the kingdom is not easily tracked. The growth of yeast is one that changes the nature of the medium in which it grows, much as Christians impact the nature of society around them by their influence.

**Parable of the Lamp Mark 4:** The kingdom spreads across the world in a fashion hidden from the rulers of the world “thus preventing them from stopping it, but spread is caused by each individual Christian letting his faith shine before others. A lamp is worthless if its light is kept hidden. In fact, a hidden light will shortly go out. A lamp is meant to be placed in a prominent place so that its light can reach to the dark corners.

**Chapter 6 : All the Parables From the Bible | Access Jesus**

*The parable of the Unjust Judge and the persistent widow teaches that we should keep going to God in prayer, trusting in His justice, love and timing. He will answer in the best way for us and in the best time.*

Parables on Prayer Luke Intolerable Problems The two parables which we are about to read bring with them some intolerable problems of logic. Why Am I Praying? The question has been asked in a number of ways. I propose to put it this way: You are beseeching the Lord God Almighty; to do so, you must use your brain. If you will, we can phrase this as "you were given a brain, now use it. It is therefore fitting for you to use what God has given you when you talk to him. The mere fact that you pray acknowledges him for who he is or at least should. This is fitting and proper, even if you have nothing particular to say to him tonight. He knew the answer to this question. He was a man of prayer. So, we may never get a good answer this side of heaven" but whatever the answer is, it implies that you and I should pray. Predestination The other problem concerns the matter of predestination. It is interesting that those whose particular denomination includes a belief in predestination tend to long explanations here. Right down to your shoe size? Or is it simply God stands out of time, being eternal. To see something happen is not cause it to happen. Why he would allow us requests to meddle with his Providence I do not know; I only know that he commands us to do so. Does God Hear Sinners? I sure hope so. Even the most righteous among us are sinners; and there are those among us who are prayer warriors whose lives are a living testimony to the power of prayer. Somebody out there is getting this to work" therefore we may conclude that God hears the prayers even though those of us who can admit we are sinners. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth? In that art there are certain conventions. These are shortcuts for the author to evoke your understanding. The widow is just such a figure: The result of this is that often enough the small property which was left to the widow was taken by deceit. She is not noble and righteous; she is ordinary. The Unjust Judge The judge in this case would also be a well-known figure to those listening to him. The wording of the parable suggests that this is a judge by Roman law. The Romans were very proud of the fact that when they conquered someplace they brought it law and justice. This was generally true. But any system of law is no better than the people who implement it. In this instance most Jews would have seen someone who was Jewish being hired for this job. In other words, he was a traitor on whom you had no way to apply social pressure. There was no sense talking to his mother. The widow does not approach him by supernatural means. She simply wears the man out. In short, what she did was to nag, pester, bite and bullyrag the man into doing what he was supposed to do in the first place. Christ then uses this as an example by comparison. His argument is simple; if you can get the crooked judge from the sap sucking Romans to do what he supposed to do, how much easier is it to get God to listen to your prayers? God, after all, loves you. Always Pray So we are to pray always. Just what does that mean? This is sometimes taken to an extreme point, but in general this is the first good meaning to it. Remember that "no" is an answer. The Pharisee is definitely more righteous. Fasting two times a week is far more than the once a year fasting required on the Day of Atonement. He tithes his agricultural produce, but he also tithes the little herbs from his garden. He is indeed the working definition of a righteous man in Jewish society of the time. He clearly despises the tax collector. More than that, he is also judgmental towards the man. If you want a working example of "do not judge", this is a good one" in the negative sense. But did you notice this" what, exactly, did he ask God for? To be exact, he asked for nothing. The Tax Collector In a very curious way, this tax collector is an honest man. Most of the Jews would not have agreed with that statement; tax collectors were notorious for skimming and for just plain fraud. There is no salvation until that realization sets in. Problems This Pharisee brings up two problems which are common to Christians even to this day: He puts the comparison into a sentence that nominally is about thanksgiving. The idea here is that we can do enough good work that we put God in our debt. Sometimes, we do this because it keeps our mind off of repentance. So When You Pray So when you pray, you might remember these things. Therefore, do not lie to him. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and he will lift you up. The contrite, penitent heart is heard at the throne of God.

**Chapter 7 : Parables on Prayer**

*The state of your "prayer life" reveals the true condition of your faith! b. If you do not pray "always" (cf. "without ceasing" 1Th ), your faith is waning!*

The Gospels of the New Testament provides us with the parables of Jesus. The majority of the parables of Jesus come from the books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In Matthew 13, the disciples asked Jesus why he spoke in parables. Jesus answered that those who love the truth will understand the parables, and those that do not love the truth will not understand his parables. More importantly is that we take action on our understanding of the parables. Parables of the Bible Many of the parables have similar themes. Key Bible themes include giving us an understanding of the Kingdom of Heaven. Matthew 13 has several Kingdom of Heaven parables. Another Biblical theme from the parables is dealing with loss and redemption. Example parable of this theme is the Prodigal Son. Another key theme from the parables is preparing for the day of reckoning. Example parable of this theme is The Wise and Foolish Virgins. Other parables standalone dealing with such themes as forgiveness, love, and prayer. See below for a complete listing of the parables of Jesus Christ. Parables of Jesus in Chronological Order 1. New Cloth on an Old Coat. A parable concerning salvation. The old and new cannot mix Matthew 9: New Wine in Old Wineskins. Lamp on a Stand. A parable concerning how truth and light must shine and be free of evil and darkness Matthew 5: Wise and Foolish Builders. A parable concerning the importance of doing the will of the Father. Moneylender Forgives Unequal Debts. A parable warning not to place material things above God Luke A parable concerning being faithful servant where much is given and much is required. A parable concerning the importance in being fruitful Luke Sower and Four Types of Soil. A parable comparing how people receive the word of God where some bear no fruit and others much. Wheat and Tares Kingdom of Heaven. A parable about end-time judgment of the good and evil Matthew Growing Seed Kingdom of Heaven. Mustard Seed Kingdom of Heaven. A parable describing the kingdom of heaven as having small beginning and becoming the greatest, a refuge to many Matthew Yeast Kingdom of Heaven. A parable describing the kingdom of heaven as a phenomenon that affects the whole and not just a part Matthew Hidden Treasure Kingdom of Heaven. A parable describing joy and commitment of those who find the kingdom of heaven Matthew Valuable Pearl Kingdom of Heaven. A parable describing a person that knows the value of the kingdom of heaven and seeks it above all else Matthew Fishing Net Kingdom of Heaven. Owner of a House Kingdom of Heaven. A parable about the kingdom of heaven consisting of both new and old truths from God Matthew A parable that describes Jesus as the Savior in terms of the good shepherd John Master and His Servant. Unmerciful Servant Kingdom of Heaven. A parable teaching us to forgive others as God is ready to forgive us Matthew A parable describing how God expects us to be neighborly to anyone that is in need and we have an opportunity to help Luke A parable showing the parallel of boldly asking a friend for something and being bold in bringing our prayers before God Luke Lowest Seat at the Feast. A parable concerning being humble, selfless, and giving with no thought of return in kind with avoiding pride at all costs Luke Invitation to a Great Banquet. A parable that illustrates that God will reject those who do not appreciate Him and He will seek those that appreciate Him Luke A parable that illustrates that we must understand the cost of discipleship and the impossibility of being saved unless we forsake all Luke A parable illustrating the joy of God in a lost sinner repenting and being found in God Luke A parable that illustrates to be right with God takes more than being wise and being blameless Luke Rich Man and Lazarus. A story warning us to prepare for the afterlife as it will determine how we spend eternity Luke Workers in the Vineyard Kingdom of Heaven. A parable that illustrates the need for humility before God and of being content with rewards to come Matthew Persistent Widow and Crooked Judge. A parable showing the parallel of the unjust judge granting the request of the persistent widow and we being bold in bringing our prayers before God Luke Pharisee and Tax Collector. A parable illustrating how wrong it is to trust in ourselves for our righteousness and despising others Luke A parable that illustrates sinners who first reject the truth and then repent and do the will of God versus the hypocrites who say yes to God and do not Matthew A parable concerning the responsibility of advancing the kingdom of God or all will be taken

away from the wicked Matthew Invitation to a Wedding Banquet. A parable that illustrates that God calls everyone, some reject his calling while others respond to his calling, but few are chosen by God Matthew Signs of the Future from a Fig Tree. Wise and Foolish Virgins Kingdom of Heaven. A parable illustrating the diligence we must have in waiting for the return of Christ Matthew Sheep and Goats will be Separated. A parable that illustrates the coming of the two judgments, one for the wicked and one for the righteous Matthew

**Chapter 8 : Parables of the Kingdom: The Gospel Accounts: A Chronological Harmony**

*These forms have various structures and shapes that provide a biblical witness in different styles, i.e., "forms" such as a sermon, psalm, genealogy, proverb, list, allegory, speech, prayer, and song; thus, a parable is one of these many forms.*

Introduction Bible scholar Madeline Boucher writes, The importance of the parables can hardly be overestimated. They comprise a substantial part of the recorded preaching of Jesus. The parables are generally regarded by scholars as among the sayings which we can confidently ascribe to the historical Jesus; they are, for the most part, authentic words of Jesus. They are often stories based on the agricultural life that was intimately familiar to His original first century audience. Some aspect of an unfamiliar concept, such as the kingdom of God, was compared to something from everyday life that could easily be understood. It is the lesson of a parable that is important to us. The story is not important in itself; it may or may not be literally true. Jesus was the master of teaching in parables. They are also cleverly designed to draw listeners into new ways of thinking, new attitudes and new ways of acting Getty-Sullivan, pp. It is a mistake to look for meaning in every sentence or detail of the story Lockyer, Parable. When he was alone, those who were around him along with the twelve asked him about the parables. Was He deliberately trying to hide the truth by speaking in parables? Were the mysteries of the kingdom of God to be known only by the disciples? Both experts and lay persons are puzzled, and many different explanations have been proposed. Jesus quoted from Isaiah 6: Jesus experienced the same disappointment and frustration. Barclay explains it this way: When Isaiah spoke, he spoke half in irony and half in despair and altogether in love. I might as well be speaking to a brick wall. You would think that God had shut their minds to it. But in so many eyes he saw a dull incomprehension. He saw so many people blinded by prejudice, deafened by wishful thinking, too lazy to think. He turned to his disciples and he said to them: He said it with the wistful longing of frustrated love, the poignant sorrow of a man who had a tremendous gift to give which people were too blind to take. If we read this, hearing not a tone of bitter exasperation, but a tone of regretful love, it will sound quite different. It will tell us not of a God who deliberately caused blindness and hid his truth, but of people who were so dully uncomprehending that it seemed no use even for God to try to penetrate the iron curtain of their lazy incomprehension. God save us from hearing his truth like that! Barclay, commentary on Mark 4: Jesus, Himself, supplied the interpretation for some of His parables. But in other cases, it is left to us to determine the meaning and lesson. Some of the parables are difficult to interpret, but the meaning is clear in most cases. Those of us who are far removed from that time and place need some help from historians and Bible scholars to understand the original cultural context and issues involved. Those are the interpretations we give here. Matthew speaks instead of the "kingdom of heaven. The Gospel of John mentions the kingdom only twice but refers many times to the closely related concept of eternal life. For hundreds of years, the Jews had been expecting the decisive intervention of God to restore the glory of Israel and defeat its enemies. When John the Baptist and then Jesus proclaimed that the kingdom was at hand, it was certainly understood in terms of this expectation. Marshall, Kingdom of God, Kingdom of Heaven However, the kingdom initiated by Jesus is not the earthly kingdom that was widely inferred from the Old Testament prophesies. It is a spiritual kingdom that is now growing in the hearts of men and women, and it will find its fulfillment in the eventual sovereign rule of God and defeat of all evil. The Parable of the Sower Jesus often compared the kingdom of God to a seed planted in the hearts of men and women. Each of us has the seed of the kingdom within us, but it will grow only if we give it the proper "care and feeding. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. He who has ears, let him hear. When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a

short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Some may hear it but reject it. Some may accept it but not act on it. Just as the farmer scatters seed throughout the field, God gives His word to the entire world. Just as the seed that falls on shallow soil wilts in the sun, some people have shallow faith. Then they fall away. The kingdom of God yields great results in and through these people. The Parable of the Mustard Seed [Jesus] put before them another parable: The Parable of the Yeast Matthew There are different opinions about the meaning of this parable. Most commonly, the seed is seen as representing the kingdom of God initiated in the world by Jesus. Just as the tiny seed grows into a large tree, the kingdom of God will grow into a powerful spiritual kingdom. Similarly in Matthew In both cases, great results come from tiny beginnings. Yeast is used as an evil symbol other places in the Bible Mark 8: That has led to an alternate interpretation that the seed represents evil introduced into the Church by Satan Boice pp. The evil will grow to corrupt and undermine the Church. In a similar way, the kingdom of God has more value to us than any worldly things - possessions, pleasures, prejudices or pride. It is sometimes noted that the buyer acted deceitfully in the Parable of the Hidden Treasure. He was morally obligated to inform the owner of the field about the treasure. However, we have to keep in mind that there is only one lesson in the parable; it is a mistake to look for meaning in every detail of the story. The Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds Jesus told them another parable: But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. Where then did the weeds come from? Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. There was no way to determine which was wheat and which was darnel until both had matured and it was time for the harvest. Then the poisonous darnel had to be laboriously separated from the wheat Barclay, Commentary on Matthew Just as both wheat and weeds grow together in a field, there are both good people and evil people in the world. Just as it is difficult to distinguish the darnel from the wheat, we cannot accurately determine who is truly good and who is truly evil. With our limited human understanding, an evil person may appear to be good, and a good person may appear to be evil. Just as the owner of the field prohibited his servants from pulling up the weeds, it is not our privilege to judge other people. Just as the harvesters separate the weeds from the wheat in the end, God will determine who is truly good and who is truly evil at the final judgment. Only God knows all the facts about a person. Even evil people have an opportunity to repent until the time of death. We must be tolerant of other people and leave the task of judgment to God.

**Chapter 9 : Gospel Parables – Prayer**

*A Parable 12 Children's Sermon: The Unjust Judge and the Helpless Widow Scripture: Luke 18:1-8 He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor regarded man; and there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my cruel neighbors who yell mean things and steal from me.'"*

In Luke 18, we find two parables that deal with the subject of prayer. This is not the first time Jesus used a parable to teaching concerning prayer. Remember "The Friend At Midnight"? In which Jesus taught the value of persistence in prayer? Evidently the element of persistence in prayer was very important to Jesus. For that is also the theme of the first parable in Luke 18 b. As the first verse reads: Do we appreciate the value of such persistence? One who did not fear God nor regard man. 2. An unjust judge, for which this parable is sometimes known as "The Unjust Judge" B. She has some adversary who has wronged her. 2. She seeks the aid of the judge to avenge her. C. The judge would not help her at first. 2. Repeated attempts seem to fall on deaf ears. D. Not out of any sense for what was right in the sight of God or man. 2. But only to avoid being wearied by her constant appeals. [Unlike many of the parables, we are not left on our own to determine the point of this parable. Jesus Himself makes it clear as we consider He was moved by the persistence of the widow. 2. Even when he was not moved by reverence for God or regard for man. B. This is an argument from the lesser to the greater. a. If an unjust judge will heed a persistence widow. Our assurance is even stronger when we note the following contrasts: His elect, 1Pe 2: We are many. c. At a distance. c. We can come boldly, He 4: An unjust judge. d. A righteous Father. e. On her own. e. God is for us, Ro 8: Pleads her own case. f. We have an Advocate, Ro 8: No promise of an answer. g. Promise given, Lk. Access unlimited. can pray to God anytime. i. Asking provoked judge. i. Asking delights God. 3. He may bear long with the prayers of His persecuted people. His longsuffering may be to give the persecutors time to repent - 2Pe 3: But when His vengeance comes, it will come swiftly! There is a Day coming in which God will take vengeance - cf. And when it comes, there will be "sudden destruction" with no way of escape - cf. The Lord will come, avenging His elect. 2. But His delay may prompt some to lose faith implying lack of prayer is indicative of a lack of faith! That men always ought to pray. b. Have you begun to lose heart? Has your faith weakened? The state of your "prayer life" reveals the true condition of your faith! If you do not pray "always" cf. But the Lord has given us reason to believe in the power of prayer in this parable. Especially when we are persecuted for the cause of Christ. b. For we do not serve an unjust judge, but a God who has made us His elect people!