

# His Honor

## Our Father, Defender, and Judge

January 29, 2023

*Today we're talking about our Father, our Defender, and our Judge.*



So, first off: **Does your prayer life improve when you're desperate?** Well, best *not* to let God *know*, that *that's* the only way you'll grow!

Last week, Noah spoke on "Expedited Answers to Impatient Prayer"; the week *before*, I spoke on "Unexpected Answers to Persistent Prayer"; and *both* Sundays we referenced Jesus' parable of **a widow who wears down a judge – whom Jesus compares to God**. It's one of the most *misunderstood* of Jesus' *misunderstood parables* – which is *saying* something! So let's open *His Word*, and *our ears*, and *hear* what He *has* to say.

And He told them a parable [about an *unjust judge* and an *unwavering widow*] to the effect that they ought always to pray [for *justice*] and not lose heart [when it's *slow in coming*]. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God [meaning he's *nothing* like Him] nor [therefore] respected man. [Meaning he's *unloving* and *uncaring*] And there was a widow in that city who [had every reason to "lose heart" for *justice to be served*, but] kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me *justice* against my *adversary*.' For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither *fear God* nor *respect man*, yet because this widow *keeps bothering me*, I will give her *justice*, *so that she will not beat me down* by her *continual coming*.'" And the Lord said, "*Hear what the unrighteous judge says. ...* [Lk 18:1-8; to be continued]"

**And adjust the way in which you pray to our just and righteous Judge.** Jesus had warned 'em:

[Pagans] think *they* will be heard *because* of *their many words*. Do *not* be like *them*, for your *Father knows* what you *need before* you [even] ask Him. – Matthew 6:7-8 NIV

And, Jesus had *asked* them:

If *you* then, *being evil*, know how to give *good gifts* to *your children*, how much *more* will your *Father* who is in *heaven* give *good things* to those who ask *Him*! – Matthew 7:11 NKJ

... And will not God [our *loving, caring, righteous Father*] give *justice* to His *elect*, who [loyally] cry to *Him* day and night? Will He *delay long over* them? ... [to be continued]

Often times, yes. But *not* because He's anything like an *unjust judge*; but *because* there's:

The revelation awaits an *appointed time* ... [So] Though it *linger*, [don't *lose heart*!] *wait* for it; it will certainly come and will not *delay*. – Habakkuk 2:3 NIV

... I tell you, He *will* give *justice* to them *speedily*. ... [to be continued]

Doesn't this *strike* you as *odd* – when the *whole point* of this *parable* is about *continuing* to *pray* without *losing heart* in *God's heart* when your *justice* is *long in coming*? Well, let's go back to:

The revelation awaits an *appointed time* ... *Though it linger, wait for it; [and pray for it, for] it will certainly come [ASAP, at the appointed time]* and will not delay. – Habakkuk 2:3 NIV



God doesn't *delay*, but **He does wait patiently, out of wisdom and compassion and mercy and grace**; and yet, the *moment* it's *time* for *justice* to *come*, it *comes*! Think Sodom and Gomorrah, or Noah's Ark, or any *untimely, unexpected, or sudden death*. **It may not be soon, but it will be swift**, whether it's *His coming* or *our going*!

... Nevertheless, *when* the Son of Man *comes*, [to grant us justice against our adversary] will He find [this kind of unwavering] faith on earth?" – Luke 18:1-8 ESV



You know, **the kind that patiently waits on a loving Father**. Or will He find **a bunch of bothered believers who've lost heart regarding our Father's heart**; and, instead of being *unwavering*, *unwittingly* pray in a way that *treats* Him more-or-less like an *unjust Judge*? Why do you think Jesus chose a widow for this example? Well, just *open* His *Word*, and *open* your *ears*, and *hear* what our *righteous Father* the *just Judge* says!

Your rulers are rebels, companions of thieves; they all love bribes ... They do not defend the cause of the fatherless; the widow's case does not come before them. – Isaiah 1:23 NIV

Corruption was *common*, even *expected*, in Jesus' day. For instance:

[Felix, the governor] was hoping that Paul [the Apostle] would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him. – Acts 24:26 NIV

**Ever try to bribe God?** Promising to do something in return for something? **To try to bribe God is to treat Him as an unjust judge**. He *wants* to *carry* our *burdens*, not get us *off* His *back*.

For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow – Deuteronomy 10:17-18 ESV

He upholds the widow ... but the way of the wicked He brings to ruin. – Psalm 146:9 ESV

[So] "Let your widows trust in Me." – Jeremiah 49:11 NKJ

You see, **prayer flows from trust**. Which is why: **a lack of prayer indicates a lack of faith**. So ...

Sing to God, sing praise [lit. hallelu] to ... YAH, and rejoice before Him. [Because, He's] A Father of the fatherless, [and] a Defender of widows – Psalm 68:4-5 NKJ

You see *that*? He's our **"Father" "Defender"**. And *John* was *appointed* to *tell* us about it.

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will *not sin*. But if anybody *does sin*, we have One who speaks to the Father in our *defense*—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. [And *why's He have this right?*] He is the *atonement sacrifice for our sins* – 1 John 2:1-2 NIV



It reminds me of a lawyer who came to my defense when I was 17. I'd done a very dumb thing. Pop's three-car-hauler broke down, and I had to pick up cars in Seattle with our little wrecker, one car at a time. So I got an idea. An awful idea. Young Bruce got a wonderful, awful idea. I got Ken Ekle to go with me at night, to haul three cars simultaneously. From Seattle.

Ken Ekle steered the last car ... without brakes! Every time we slowed, he had a minor collision. And halfway home the battery died and his lights went out. And just outside Mount Vernon, the police pulled me over and gave me a rightfully, enormously, costly ticket. So, I went to court hoping to get it down to just a few hundred dollars. But as I sat there waiting my turn, watching a lawyer defend a handcuffed prisoner, **I realized that I had no defense whatsoever.**

So when the lawyer finished, I followed him into the hall, showed him my photo, told him what I'd done, and asked what he'd say if he were in my shoes. When he stopped *laughing*, he *thanked* me for such a good laugh – and said, **“Just tell the judge your council will speak for you.”** Which I did. To which the judge said, **“You have council? Looks pretty cut and dry.”** Then my guy stands up; and the judge *knows* him, and *laughs* and says, **“You're defending this?”** And my guy gave the most eloquent speech about a right heart with a wrong approach to saving gas and time, and working at night to reduce the risk to others – till the judge cut him off, and asked him to approach the bench, where they quietly spoke. And then judge rebuked me, told me how fortunate I was to have my defender, and reduced the fine to thirty bucks!

I was *ecstatic* ... but I'm *not* so sure our *Father* was. Because ...



The Lord despises those who *acquit the guilty* – Proverbs 17:15 NLT

Which is the very reason that ...



God presented [Jesus] as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His blood. [And] He did this to demonstrate His justice [because *righteousness doesn't overlook wickedness; that's what an unjust judge would do; and He did this*] ... so as to be just and [at the same time] the One who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. – Romans 3:25-26 NIV



Moreover, the Father [now] judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, [our Defender] that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. – John 5:22-23 NIV

Do you *get* what this *means*? **Jesus is both our Defender and Judge!** But you know what He's *not*? Our *prosecutor*. That job falls to the *accuser*. Who, sadly, doesn't even need to lie. But when it comes to the believer, he's like ol' Hamilton Burger (I like to keep my references fresh). He was the prosecutor on “Perry Mason” who was *destined* to lose *every* case.

It'd be as if I walked back into the courtroom that day, and my *defender* was sitting on the *bench* as the *judge*! **"And who will be representing you?"** "Uh ... *you*, your honor?" **"And how do you plead?"** "Guilty as sin, I'm afraid." **"Oh, that's *bad*. No two ways about it."** Then he hurries off the bench to stand *beside* me to *defend* me: **"This case has already been tried, and the little goof's record has been cleared."** And then it's back to the bench to bang the gavel: **"Not guilty! Dismissed!"** But then the *devil* – dressed as *Hamilton Burger* – jumps up and yells, **"I object!"** **"On what grounds?"** **"It isn't fair!"** **"Absolutely isn't, but it's just! Overruled!"**

So *how* can we *know* if we *know* Him as our *Judge and Defender*?

We know that we have come to know Him if we obey His commands. [In fact] The man who says, "I know Him," but does not do what He commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ... I am *not* writing you a *new* command but an *old* one ... Yet [and here's the puzzler] I am writing you a *new* command; [hint] its truth is seen in Him and you – 1 John 2:3-4, 7-8 NIV

John might be remembering the Last Supper, where he'd heard the command *first hand*.

[Jesus said] "If you love Me, you will obey what I command." – John 14:15 NIV

And *His* command is *based* on the *old* command that He had *said* sums up *all* the commands.

"Love your neighbor as yourself." – Luke 10:27 NIV

Which is from Leviticus 19:18. But *then*, at the Last Supper, He said:

A *new command* I give you: Love one another. [Which is the *old* command; but *here's* the *new twist*] As I have loved you, so you must love one another. – John 13:34 NIV



"As I have loved you" is the "truth [that's] seen in Him and you". The deep truth to actually fulfilling the old command isn't in loving others **as much as I love me**, but **as much as He loves me**. Cuz, to be honest, I can't stand *myself* half the time! It's all about washing the feet of *those* we *think* should be washing *ours*. Because, **to comprehend the love of God we gotta love others sacrificially**. And when we're doing it *right*, the *harder* it is and **the more we fail, the more we can't help but grasp and grow in gratitude for His love for us**. It's like when your *kids* have *kids*, and they come back and say, "Now I get it." Even as I *fail*, I grow in "getting it", which *increases* my *appreciation* and then *capacity* to love even *more* as He loves me. And somewhere along the way, **it's no longer an old rule that regulates the external**, but **it's a relationship that replenishes the internal**. And instead of *draining*, it's *empowering*!

You know something *obvious* about that *widow* in the *parable*? She was *desperate*. If only we could *always* pray that way! But *if* a *poor*, *powerless* *widow* can *persist* for *justice*, without *losing heart*, knowing *full well* the *cold*, *calloused heart* of her *uncaring*, *prideful judge*, **how much more should we be inspired to loyally and faithfully appeal to the merciful heart of our Father, Defender, and Judge?**