

Luke 18:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

Analysis

Luke introduces the parable: Jesus spoke 'unto them a parable to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.' The phrase 'ought always to pray' (Greek 'dei pantote proseuchesthai,' δεῖ πάντοτε προσεύχεσθαι) indicates necessity and constancy—continuous, persistent prayer, not occasional requests. 'Not to faint' (Greek 'mē enkakein,' μὴ ἐνκακεῖν) means not lose heart, grow weary, or give up. The parable of the persistent widow (vv. 2-8) illustrates this principle—persistent prayer eventually prevails. Prayer requires endurance, faith, and refusal to quit despite delayed answers.

Historical Context

Jewish tradition valued regular prayer (Daniel prayed three times daily, Daniel 6:10). However, Jesus taught more than scheduled prayers—constant communion with God, persistent intercession, enduring faith despite unanswered prayers. The parable's judge who 'feared not God, neither regarded man' (v. 2) represents the opposite of God—if even an unjust judge eventually responds to persistence, how much more will a loving heavenly Father answer His children's prayers? Jesus concludes by questioning whether He'll find faith on earth when He returns (v. 8), suggesting maintaining persistent prayer requires faith and endurance many lack.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What does the command to 'always pray, and not faint' teach about prayer as enduring spiritual discipline rather than occasional crisis response?
2. How does the parable of the persistent widow encourage believers to continue praying even when answers seem delayed?

Interlinear Text

Ἐλεγεν δὲ καὶ παραβολὴν αὐτοῖς πρὸς τὸ
he spake And and a parable unto them G4314 G3588
G3004 G1161 G2532 G3850 G846

δεῖν πάντοτε προσεύχεσθαι καὶ μὴ
to this end that men ought always to pray and not
G1163 G3842 G4336 G2532 G3361

ἐκκακεῖν,
to faint
G1573

Additional Cross-References

Colossians 4:2 (Prayer): Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

Romans 12:12 (Prayer): Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

1 Thessalonians 5:17 (Prayer): Pray without ceasing.

Philippians 4:6 (Prayer): Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Ephesians 6:18 (Prayer): Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Jeremiah 29:12 (Prayer): Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.

Luke 21:36 (Prayer): Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

Galatians 6:9 (Parallel theme): And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Psalms 86:3 (Parallel theme): Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily.

Psalms 102:17 (Prayer): He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.