

Luke 18:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

Analysis

The widow's persistence: 'And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.' The 'widow' (χήρα, chēra) represents society's most vulnerable—without husband, social status, or legal protection. Yet she persistently 'came unto him' (ἤρχετο πρὸς αὐτόν, ērcheto pros auton, imperfect tense indicating repeated action). Her request: 'Avenge me of mine adversary' (Ἐκδίκησόν με ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀντιδίκου μου, Ekdikēson me apo tou antidikou mou)—grant me justice against my opponent. She had no leverage—no money for bribes, no connections for influence, no threats to compel action. All she had was persistence. Despite repeated refusals, she kept coming. This models persistent, faith-filled prayer that refuses to give up despite delayed answers.

Historical Context

Widows in ancient society faced extreme vulnerability. Without husbands or male relatives to advocate for them, they easily became victims of exploitation (Exodus 22:22-24, Deuteronomy 27:19, Isaiah 1:17). Biblical law repeatedly mandates protection for widows, orphans, and foreigners—society's powerless (Deuteronomy 10:18, 24:17, Psalm 68:5, 146:9, James 1:27). This widow had a legal case but no means to secure justice from a corrupt judge. Her only weapon was persistent presence and repeated plea. Jesus holds her up as a model for prayer—come repeatedly, refuse discouragement, persist until God answers.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does the widow's vulnerability and powerlessness teach about approaching God in prayer?
2. How does persistence in prayer demonstrate faith rather than doubt?
3. What situations in your life require the kind of persistent prayer this widow modeled?

Interlinear Text

χήρα δὲ ἦν ἐν τῇ πόλει ἐκείνῃ καὶ ἦρχετο
a widow And there was in ^{G3588} **city that and she came**
^{G5503 G1161 G2258 G1722 G4172 G1565 G2532 G2064}

πρὸς αὐτὸν λέγουσα Ἐκδίκησόν με ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀντιδίκου
unto him saying Avenge me of ^{G3588} **adversary**
^{G4314 G846 G3004 G1556 G3165 G575 G476}

μου
mine
^{G3450}

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 1:17 (Parallel theme): Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

Deuteronomy 27:19 (Parallel theme): Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen.

Job 29:13 (Parallel theme): The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.

Job 22:9 (Parallel theme): Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken.

Jeremiah 5:28 (Parallel theme): They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge.

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org