

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2025
NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST
LUKE 18:1-8 "NOT TO LOSE HEART"



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(NCH) New Century Hymnal - CCLI LICENSE #11164431

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture texts
are from the **Common English Bible (CEB)**

*Please stand if comfortably able
and respond with words in **bold** print

SUMMARY OF SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Jeremiah 31:27-34 After all the gloom the prophet offers the hopeful promise of a new covenant.

2 Timothy 3:14-4:5 The apostle Paul encourages Timothy to continue in his studies of the Holy Scripture and remain faithful to its teaching in the face of opposition.

Luke 18:1-8 Perseverance in prayer is urged by a story of a persistent widow seeking justice before an ungodly judge.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS:

THE BELL IS RUNG:

PRELUDE: "Don't Forget to Pray" Roger C. Wilson

PENNIES FOR MISSION: Neighbors in Need

***RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP:**

(Inspired by Psalm 121)

One: As the sun sets behind the hills,

Many: We celebrate hope in our Creator.

One: Even as the sun strikes the earth in daytime

Many: We celebrate peace in our Creator.

One: As we move about this earth from day to day

Many: We celebrate the love of our Creator.

***INVOCATION:**

Holy One, Holder of our Hearts,

From time to time, we notice our souls are heavy from injustices. From the ways our community members are treated to the lack of compassion towards folks in faraway places, we attempt to embrace hope and often feel defeated. Yet you continue to be the bearer of dreams, God of Love. May we feel your Spirit's peace even when struggles accumulate. May we be baptized by your glimmers even as we journey through a world filled with ashes. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN: 519**

"Not My Brother, nor My Sister"

***UNISON PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE:**

Beloved God of All,

We often feel deserted by Divine Justice and Peace, especially after absorbing the news each day. We allow ourselves to fully walk away from spreading Good News of your love and grace after feeling the lack of mercy in our world. We would rather be silent in places of comfort instead of shining your light in our pain-

present reality. Our hearts can not bear knowing of any further wrongdoings. Open our souls to your healing. Embolden us to be persistent in our quest to do justice and love kindness. May we follow your light when the shadows attempt to swallow our resolve. Amen.

***WORDS OF GRACE:**

Our souls continue to open to the healing and hope of God. May we embrace the glow of God's grace as we seek ways to care for our neighbors.

***GLORIA: Glory to the Creator,**

and the Christ and the Spirit so near.

As it was from the start so it shall be forever,

One God always here. (Repeat two more times.)

(end) One God always here. One God always here.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS: Jeremiah 31:27-34

From the "Message"

²⁷⁻²⁸ "Be ready. The time's coming"—God's Decree—

"when I will plant people and animals in Israel and Judah, just as a farmer plants seed. And in the same way that earlier I relentlessly pulled up and tore down, took apart and demolished, so now I am sticking with them as they start over, building and planting.

²⁹ "When that time comes you won't hear the old proverb anymore,

Parents ate the green apples,
their children got the stomachache.

³⁰ “No, each person will pay for his own sin. You eat green apples, you’re the one who gets sick.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 119:97-104 Page 701

EPISTLE LESSON: 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

¹⁴ But you must continue with the things you have learned and found convincing. You know who taught you. ¹⁵ Since childhood you have known the holy scriptures that help you to be wise in a way that leads to salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ Every scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for showing mistakes, for correcting, and for training character, ¹⁷ so that the person who belongs to God can be equipped to do everything that is good.

Timothy’s commission and Paul’s departure

⁴ I’m giving you this commission in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is coming to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearance and his kingdom. ² Preach the word. Be ready to do it whether it is convenient or inconvenient. Correct, confront, and encourage with patience and instruction. ³ There will come a time when people will not tolerate sound teaching. They will collect teachers who say what they want to hear because they are self-centered. ⁴ They will turn their back on the truth and turn to myths. ⁵ But you

must keep control of yourself in all circumstances. Endure suffering, do the work of a preacher of the good news, and carry out your service fully.

***GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 18:1-8**

Justice for the faithful

¹⁸ Jesus was telling them a parable about their need to pray continuously and not to be discouraged. ² He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected people. ³ In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him, asking, ‘Give me justice in this case against my adversary.’ ⁴ For a while he refused but finally said to himself, I don’t fear God or respect people, ⁵ but I will give this widow justice because she keeps bothering me. Otherwise, there will be no end to her coming here and embarrassing me.” ⁶ The Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ Won’t God provide justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night? Will he be slow to help them? ⁸ I tell you, he will give them justice quickly. But when the Human One comes, will he find faithfulness on earth?”

MESSAGE: “What are you praying for?”

As members of the animal species, humans are the most curious. We have questions about everything. Even as toddlers we ask our parents “why?” over and over. Why

do I have to eat my vegetables? Why isn't Christmas tomorrow?

Today's lesson is all about questions. In Luke 17:20-37, which we did not read, contains a big question from the Pharisees to Jesus. "When is this kingdom of God coming?" This question from the Pharisees seems to imply that Jesus has a timetable in mind, in which certain things would happen in a particular order so that one could tick them off and get ready for the final drama. Jesus answers the Pharisees that it won't be like that. Life will go on as normal until the last moment; but there is something else to be said as well. God's kingdom, Jesus says, is within your grasp.

The phrase Jesus uses in verse 21 of Luke 17 is "God's kingdom isn't the sort of thing you can watch for and see coming. People won't say 'Look, here it is,' or 'Look, over there!' No: God's kingdom is within your grasp." According to scholar Rev. N.T. Wright, that phrase has sometimes been translated "within you," and people have often thought it meant that the kingdom is purely spiritual, a private, interior relationship with God. But Jesus never used "God's kingdom" in that sense. God's kingdom always refers to things that happen in the public world, not to private experience. Others have suggested that the phrase "within you" means "in our midst"; God's kingdom, in other words, is present but

secret, hidden, waiting for us to discover it. That's closer, but still not quite there.

The phrase is more active. It doesn't just tell you where the kingdom is; it tells you that you've got to do something about it. It is "within your grasp"; it is confronting you with a decision, the decision to believe, trust and follow Jesus. It isn't the sort of thing that's just going to happen, so that you can sit back and watch. God's sovereign plan to put the world right is waiting for you to sign on. Rev. Wright says, "That is the force of what Jesus is saying." This "kingdom" will be sudden and destructive.

The passage holds out an invitation, to this day, to those who are anxious about the future: God's sovereign rule of the world, God's healing love, are not only ours for the grasping, but are waiting for your help.

Whew! That's all about the passage we did not read, but I thought it was important to mention these important words to put everything in the correct context. I think we have been looking in the wrong place to understand this passage. So, what does everything I just said have to do with a persistent widow and prayer? I promise to put it together. Honest. There's more to this parable than you think. Remember the Pharisees asked Jesus when God's kingdom is coming. This includes what is called the Parousia; the second coming of Jesus; some call it the end of the world. The parable Jesus tells in

Luke 18 is about a persistent widow who needed vindication from her enemy. After nagging the judge for quite a while, the judge agrees to hear her case. The bottom line of this parable is if an insensitive and hardened judge will hear the pleas of a widow, how much more can we trust that God will hear the prayers of those who day and night cry for VINDICATION.

At first glance it seems that Jesus is teaching the disciples that they ought always to pray and not lose heart as a valid and important lesson in constancy, BUT the point in our text concerns NOT PRAYER IN GENERAL BUT A SPECIFIC PRAYER. We should not be praying for a Rolls Royce. Discerning the specific problem being addressed demands that we look at the context and at the interpretive comments at the conclusion of the parable. The context for today's lection begins with the question concerning when the kingdom of God is to come. The parable of the unjust Judge is to be interpreted in that context; the coming of the Son of Man.

With this understanding, verse 1 should be interpreted as a word to the disciples who have been taught to pray "thy kingdom come," but who now have grown weary and are losing heart. Their discouragement is probably due in part to the passing of time and to what is usually referred to as the delay of the Parousia, Jesus's second coming. You may recall that Paul thought

the Parousia was coming soon and in his lifetime. But, of course, we're still waiting. We're all waiting for vindication, justice. When will it happen?

Actually, curious human creatures, that is the wrong question to ask. The question, how long shall we continue to pray? is doubly answered in the parable and the comments that follow. But the really crucial question is the one asked by Jesus. The Son of Man is coming to vindicate his people, BUT WHO ARE HIS PEOPLE? Will those apparently so interested in the end of times and the reversal of the fortunes of the evil and the good be faithfully committed to Christ up until the end? Will the Son of Man actually find faith among us? As stated by Christ elsewhere, "The one who endures to the end will be saved." Amen.

CHANCEL CHOIR ANTHEM: "Knowing You"

Graham Kendrick and Richard Kingsmore

PASTORAL PRAYER:

Almighty God, we humbly pray for your church throughout the world. Give all pastors the boldness of inspired apostles, giving them the spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind. May the leaders of the church in congregations, regional assemblies, and denominational bodies fulfill their vocation with zeal and our Lord's serving spirit. Grant to all of us who have

known your forgiveness a forgiving disposition that we may forgive others.

Bless and inspire with wisdom our national leaders and their advisors, that their words and actions may honor you and respect the dignity of all people.

Great Physician, heal and relieve those who are sick or anxious for the health of family and friends. Grant encouragement to the depressed and sorrowful, courage to the fearful, and peace of mind to the overwrought.

Remember all those on our prayer list.

We pray in the name of your Son, Jesus, as we pray together. . .

OUR LORD'S PRAYER:

PRAYER RESPONSE: 769

**Here Our Prayer, O God, hear our prayer, O God;
Incline your ear to us, and grant us your peace..**

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY:

God our Creator looks for us to celebrate hope, peace, and love through the ways we give from our spirits. May we find our hearts become full of light as we share our treasures, talents, and time with our communities.

**OFFERTORY: "Prayer Is the Key to Heaven, Faith
Unlocks the Door" Samuel Scott and Robert Sande**

***DOXOLOGY:**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above you heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen**

***UNISON PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION
Divine Connector of our Souls,
With much gratitude, we share our gifts with you today.
We continue to search for your dreams and fulfill your
visions as we create your Realm here on earth. Energize
us to utilize our gifts for the strength of all humanity.
Empower us to share our time, talents, and treasures as
we seek to never lose hope and heart. Amen.**

***CLOSING HYMN: 455 "I Am Yours"**

***BENEDICTION:**

May the God of Hope stir us to awaken to Divine dreams.
May the Christ of Light embolden us to use our voices
May the Spirit of Peace fill us with the resolve to
transform our world.
With help from the Holy One, we will never lose heart!

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE:**

"Let There Be Peace on Earth"

THE BELL IS RUNG:

***POSTLUDE: "Finale" C.L. Koch**