**Introduction**

Being a Protestant means being bound to some type of doctrine called perspicuity. That’s a fancy word that is not very perspicuous. All it means is that the Scriptures can be understood by the typical Christian. One does not need say a Pope…or a Mormon Prophet…to tell you what the vague scriptures mean today. Now there are all kinds of caveats in there. The typical Christian has the help of the Holy Spirit for one. But you don’t need just that deus ex machina to hold this doctrine. You can hold perspicuity rather easily just by realizing that very little comes to humans without some study. The scriptures could be written at the level of a kindergartener, but if they are never read or attempted to be understood, then they won’t be. A big part of the role of the ministerium is to both be knowledgeable of the scriptures and trustworthy to teach and explain. That doesn’t take away from anybody’s base ability to understand the scriptures. It is just that people have different callings.

**Text**

I start with that short reflection because over the years I’ve observed that our gospel lesson today is one where the most likely plain reading people come up is just wrong. Most of the Bible is simply perspicuous. The plain reading is correct. Or at least correct enough that life and the Spirit will fill in the blanks. But I’m afraid that the plain reading of today’s gospel is often, I need to pester God more. If I pester God morning, noon and night he will eventually give me what I want.

The problem is not really the pestering God portion. The Father is always happy to hear from you. Even if he might not be so thrilled with the requests. “This one again? Wouldn’t be good for you. Maybe take the no for an answer.” No, it’s a parable about two things. Like all parables it is about the nature of God and our warped perception of Him. And secondly it is a parable about what we ask for, and maybe what we should be asking for. To pray and not lose heart is not about encountering the no and keep asking, but an invitation to know God in prayer and to ask for the good things.

We all have this list of stuff that we’ve asked God for and didn’t get. And not everything on that list is necessarily bad. Although most of us have our share of thing like Janis Joplin. “Oh Lord, won’t you buy me, a Mercedes Benz.” And it is purely a justice issue. “My friends all drive Porsches, I must make amends.” Or that fact that there have been at least 3 lotteries with billion dollar jackpots and I haven’t won a single one. Oh yes, I’m petty and narcissistic enough to hold that against God and chalk it up as injustice. But we could move to deeper things. Like why is my brother dead. Or why did I never get the promotion or the job that was so deserved. Or…there are a million little and big things. “Give me justice against my adversary.”

And as those things that we might file under justice pile up, they cloud our perception of God. He can become the distant judge who cares not a whit about justice. Casually cruel and distant and maybe the worst capricious about who and when He acts.

**Christological**

That’s the God of the cosmic slot machine. You’ve got to keep pulling the level. Or I guess today pressing the button and playing all the lines. With such a God you have to keep coming and wear it down until you get your moment where he grants you justice.

But Jesus’ picture is meant to disabuse us of that image of God. While we certainly can think of humans in authority like that. We’ve probably come across them. It is exceedingly wrong to think of God in those ways. “Will not God give justice to his elect? Who cry out to him day and night?” The expected answer is absolutely. If even a capricious and distant human occasionally gives justice, God the Father will certain grant justice. And unlike the human who you have to be in the right place at the right time, God is not a cosmic slot machine. “Will he delay long over them.” Again, absolutely not. “I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily.”

The God we have is not distant but close enough to be right there with us. The God we have is not capricious, but someone who knows us like a maker. He knows our every need and provides. He knows what we don’t need, what would lead us astray. And God only wishes to give us good things. Far from being cruel, the Father of Jesus is the one who cared enough about us to send his only son.

So the first affect of the parable is a correction on our understanding of God. We do not have to pester God, or keep slapping the slot machine. He knows what we need before we even ask. His mercies are new every morning, and every evening we can entrust our souls to him.

**Moral**

The problem is our definition of justice. The problem is knowing what we should be asking for.

We take justice typically as so many temporal things. And I don’t mean to casually dismiss justice concerns. But it is a fallen world full of sinners. Everyone has their story of injustice that they are nursing. Most of them are probably even true. It’s a saying that has more truth than is deserves, “be kind, everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about.” But all of these things – the stuff that we think are about pressing justice – fall under a single petition of the example prayer that Jesus taught us. “Give us this day our daily bread.” Grant us what we need for this body and life today. You know what we need today, you have already laid out our steps. Give us enough to walk in them today. And God certainly grants us our daily bread, even without our asking for it. We are just often worried and axious and burning calories on so many things beyond the day.

But what Jesus is point us at in the parable is to ask for a more cosmic justice. Like “deliver us from evil.” We do have an adversary. And it is not really the guy who is driving a Porsche, or got the promotion, or whose life appears to have been blessed by God in every meaningful way. We have an adversary who wants to bind us up in envy. And from envy turn us away from God. “See he doesn’t really care about you.” And in turning us away convince us to grab it ourselves, usually committing the bigger sins when envy moves into action. Satan wants to eat us up. “Deliver us from the evil one.”

Ask for the cosmic justice. Like “They Kingdom Come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” The world is an adversary. And it truly is one that is capricious and casually cruel. This world cares not a whit about you or anything you love. The Kingdoms of this world all have their own plans and they changes with every new prince. Any justice from them is temporal at best. Ask for the Kingdom. The eternal one. The one where the will of God is done. Ask for the day when the Kingdoms of this world become the Kingdom of our Lord.

Ask for the cosmic justice. Like “forgive us our sins, as we forgive others.” Our own flesh betrays us. The devil gets his way too easily. The offerings of world are too enticing. We like having adversaries and holding grudges and counting the debts owed. Ask for the cosmic justice. That we might today forgive. And one day be freed from sinning.

**Eschatological**

“Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

The Cosmic Justice will come. It has already come in parts. Your sins are forgiven, even if we continue to do the things we don’t want to do. The Kingdom has already invaded this old world. Christ is risen. The victory is proclaimed. Satan is a spent force. All he can do is fool you into hurting yourself. The Son of Man has come. And he will certainly come and with him will come the fulfillment of these things.

The question that Jesus leaves after this parable is the one of faith. Christians have been asking for the cosmic justice for 2000 years. As one of the great TV characters once said, “slow train, never comes.” We can get lost in temporal injustice. We can get beaten down by repeated sins – of others and those we commit ourselves. Our view of God might slip into that distant cruelty instead of the near one who hung on the cross.

Jesus told them this parable, that they ought to always pray and not lose heart. Ask for the cosmic justice. “It is not slow as you might think, but God is patient, not wishing any to perish (2 Peter 3:9).“ Ask and it will be given to you. Ask for that faith to be found.