

Stories

The Widow and the Judge

Luke 18:1-8

July 30, 2023

HDBC

This morning we are looking at another story told by Jesus. It's about a widow who had been wronged and the judge she final wore down through her persistent appeals. There is some humor to be seen. This woman was like a bulldog. She refused to take no for an answer. She refused to give in or give up. The judge thought he had all the power, but eventually learned that this energizer bunny widow would get the best of him. So, let's take a look. Read the text.

1. The Purpose (1)

This is an illustration used to teach an important truth. What is it that Jesus wants to teach? Luke tells us. We are to pray and not lose heart. In other words, don't give up on prayer. Some people give up in prayer because it seems like it is not making a difference. **Like the little boy John Brown told me about. He asked the boy if he had ever prayed. The boy said yes. John asked him what happened. The little boy said *it didn't work.***

Sometimes people pray and it seems that nothing happens and so they grow weary of praying. Because of some past experience when their prayers seemed to do nothing, they quit praying. This parable is designed to show the importance of persistence in our praying. Even when it seems that God is not listening or not responding, we should continue to pray. But we will see that there is more to learn than just that.

2. The Story (2-5)

Note three things.

1) The Judge (2)

First thing to note about him is he does not fear God or respect people. This man is in a position of power and influence but is wicked. He could use his position to do great good. But he does not. This man is not moved by the law of God or by the needs of people.

There was no fear of God in him and no sympathy for people. He has no interest in the first commandment, *loving God* and he has no interest in the 2nd commandment, *loving others*. He is a sorry person, thinking only of himself. He is selfish & hard-hearted. His wickedness is compounded because he is in the role of a judge. Jesus characterizes him as an unrighteous judge.

The word *unrighteous* would mean dishonest, corrupt, unjust. Not only is he evil but **he knows it and he's comfortable with it.** In verse 4 he said to himself, *even though I do not fear God nor respect men.* This is not simply a description that has been placed upon him by those that know him, **he agrees with it.**

Here is a selfish, conceited, wicked human being in a very important position of responsibility whose disregard for God and man had massive implications in regard to all the people who come into his court. **This was a civil court** found in towns and villages throughout the land. Every little town had to have one and a place like Jerusalem would have many of these civil courts.

Alfred Edersheim describes the judges in Jerusalem as being so corrupt that the people changed their title. They were known as **Dayyaney Gezeloth**. The people called them **Dayyaney Gezeroth**, they changed one letter which changed the meaning from **a judge dealing with the law to a judge who is a robber.**

They showed partiality. They took bribes. The Talmud said they were so perverted in some cases that they would actually pervert justice for one meal. And so, when our Lord says this is an unrighteous judge, He is defining what everybody would know.

2) The Widow

She's been defrauded. So, she does the right thing and goes to the judge for help. But he offers none. So she comes again and again and again. The fact that she continued to do so is an indication of how serious her situation was. She **could not afford to** simply write it off as a loss.

She is alone. She had **no man in her life** to help and defend her. She was a widow. And there is no son, cousin, uncle, father or brother to step in and speak for her. If there were, he would be approaching the judge.

She is desperate. Her **only** source of relief was that judge. She had no plan B or plan C. So, day after day, she shows up at his court, pleading her case.

3) The Win (5)

Finally, he gives in. But it is not because of a noble motive. It was simply because she was bugging him. She was an irritation. Her persistence wore him down. The word translated **continually** also means **eternally**. Ultimately, he did the right thing but for the wrong reason.

The phrase **wear me out**, is an interesting phrase. **It is a boxing term.** It means to strike someone with a full blow in the eye. ***She was punching him silly with her persistence.*** She was beating him up.

There is something else interesting about that culture. Women were powerless. It was a male-dominated culture and women had no real power or leverage. Yet, she was getting the best of him, and he knew it.

He has no regard for God. He has no regard for man. But he has regard for himself. He cares not for what pleases God, or for what pleases men. But he cares a lot to what pleases him, and this does not please him. This is irritating and troubling. He's got to get rid of her. And so, he rules in her favor. Go back to verse 5, ***I will give her legal protection.*** He gave in because of her persistence. And that's the story.

3. The Point (6-8)

Remember verse 1. Don't quit praying. But not because you need to wear God down, but because He loves you and will respond. A careless look at this parable may lead you to have a distorted view of God. That's why Jesus makes something crystal clear. The judge **does not represent God!** In fact, the judge is meant to be seen **in contrast with God.** The judge was unloving, ungracious, selfish, evil, merciless and unjust. God is loving, gracious, good, merciful and just.

The widow's actions must be seen in light of **her context**. She was forced to bug him, plead with him, wear him down to make him respond. This is **not true of God**. We don't have to convince God to change His mind. Prayer is not changing the mind of God as much as it is communing with God so that we might understand His mind, His purpose, His will.

It is an argument **from the lesser to the greater**. If an unrighteous man (the lesser) is willing to give in to a persistent person, how much more will God (the greater) respond to His children when they pray to Him. Therefore, we can and should remain faithful to pray. Even at the end of the age, when He comes again, His desire is to find us faithful. (vs 8)

Takeaways:

1- Injustice happens to us

What happened to this woman is a picture of what happens to us all.

2- Justice is often delayed

The delayed justice is a picture of what happens in this broken world.

3- Tell God about your problems

When bad things happen, tell the one who can fix it. God.

4- Don't stop praying and trusting

When there is a delay in answer, keep praying. We have a loving Father who will answer. Any delay is not because He is uncaring or unkind but because He knows much more than we.

5- Trust God to bring justice in His time

As you pray, remain confident that God hears, God cares, and God will bring justice for you. Never assume evil people are getting away with their wickedness. They are not. The ultimate judge sees, knows and will bring them into His court one day and justice will be swift, sure and complete.