

Parables: Showing the Way of Jesus

The Way of Dependence

Luke 18:1-8

We've seen that the way of Jesus is a Way of Receptivity, Obedience, Mercy, Forgiveness, Humility, Grace and Stewardship. Today we will look at another parable that describes the Way of Jesus as the **Way of Dependence**.

Dependence: Originates from a Latin word (*dependere*) which literally means to *hang down*. Defined as a State of reliance on trust. Very different from our usual ways of independence.

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, & he will make straight your paths." **Prov. 3:5-6**

Let's learn from Jesus about the Way of Dependence as it is displayed in his parable about the persistent widow.

Main Idea: The Way of Jesus is Dependence on God by Persisting in Prayer

"And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. 2 He said, 'In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. 3 And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' 4 For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.' 6 And the Lord said, 'Hear what the unrighteous judge says. 7 And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? 8 I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?'"

Luke 18:1-8

Three Contrasts to Illuminate the Way of Dependence from Luke 18:1-8

I. Contrast One: Praying vs. Giving Up – Vs. 1

Question: Who hasn't experienced this? There is something you want or need, so you pray about it with no noticeable change. You may pray harder, possibly even fast and ask other believers to pray with you about it but...nothing. So you give up, stop praying, and just learn to deal with the issue. Who's been there? The financial need, the physical illness, the wayward child/brother/sister/grandchild, the salvation of a friend/spouse/family member, the bliss of marriage, the joy of pregnancy, or some other thing that matters deeply to you. Maybe you stopped praying and took matters into your own hands (how did that work out) or just assumed it wasn't God's will.

"Now he told them a parable on the need for them to pray always and not give up." **Luke 18:1 (CSB)**

Prayer: It's not only those moments when you bow your head, close your eyes, fold your hands, start with Dear God & close with In Jesus Name, Amen. Prayer is simply direct communication & relational fellowship between you and The Lord.

"Pray without ceasing." **1 Thessalonians 5:17**

"It means to make prayer as natural to us as our regular breathing. Unless we are sick or smothering, we rarely think about our breathing; we just do it. Likewise with prayer – it should be the natural habit of our lives, the 'atmosphere' in which we constantly live." **Warren Wiersbe**

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, as it will be opened to you." **Matthew 7:7**

But wait, I asked and it wasn't given. Did God not answer my prayer? God Always Answers Prayer with 1) Yes, 2) No, 3) Wait, & 4) You're kidding, right?

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II. Contrast Two: Helpless Widow vs. People of God – Vs. 3-5

Luke mentions widows more than all other gospel writers, combined. This parable of Jesus is another example. This widow had three major obstacles to getting justice: 1) Women had little standing in the law, 2) Without a father/husband/son to stand with her, her rights were even less respected, & 3) Bribes were common, but she was poor and unable to buy justice. **Persistent Petition was her ONLY HOPE!**

*"And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'" **Luke 18:3-5***

Put yourself in the crowd, understanding that judges/courtrooms at that time were not buildings made of stones, but tents made of fabric so they could be moved around from village to village. While only those approved could have their cases considered, the courtrooms were open for anyone to come to see. This woman, no doubt, came every day to petition the judge for justice (in front of the whole town).

"The surest way to get justice in this world for God's people is not by marching, though marching may have its place. The surest way to achieve justice in this world is not by protest signs, though those also may be appropriate. The surest way to find justice is never by rioting and burning down your own neighborhood. Justice comes most surely by falling on our knees with our heads bowed. When God's justice comes, it will be perfect, proportionate, and balanced." **Thabiti Anyabwile**

Remember, these are contrasts NOT comparison from Jesus! In prayer, we are not the crying, begging, widow woman, we're the children of the most high God!

"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." **Hebrews 4:16**

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III. Contrast Three: Unjust Judge vs. Righteous God – Vs. 2, 6-8

Exp: Jesus involves an unjust judge in his parable, and his response to persistence.

*“He said, ‘In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man...For a while he refused (*justice to the widow), but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’”* **Luke 18:2, 4-5**

Note: Remember, these are contrasts NOT comparisons. Jesus here is employing a technique that was common in ancient times called a *fortiori* (Latin - *from the greater*) which reasons that an extreme example being true proves a lesser secondary point to be even MORE true.

“And the Lord said, ‘Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily.’” **Luke 18:6-8a**

“And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” **Heb 11:6**

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This parable is set in the context of the second coming of Jesus (Luke 17) and people wondering when that would happen, why it was delayed, and how much suffering would God’s people endure before the Kingdom of God comes into power. Jesus assures us that God always keeps his promises, but doesn’t always work on our timelines. His instructions deal more with ‘how’ we wait, rather than ‘when’ it’s over.

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

Luke 18:1-8

Because of Jesus, his vicarious death and victorious resurrection, his people do not face a COURT OF LAW, but a THRONE OF GRACE!!! So, if you have not yet been saved then that is the invitation to you today. Find God’s grace to be sufficient for your sin and mistakes. He’s not an unjust judge and you don’t have to be a helpless widow! **For believers**, what is your lost cause prayer request that you’ve given up on? It’s time to dust it off, and pray to your Father with others to help!

Sources and Further Reading Opportunities

- **CSB Study Bible** – Trevin Wax, Ed. (2017)
- **Exalting Jesus in Luke** – Thabiti Anyabwile (2018)
- **Bible Exposition Commentary** – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- **New American Commentary: Luke** – Robert H. Stein (1992)
- **The Gospel of Luke** – William Barclay (1976)
- **Spurgeon Study Bible** – C.H. Spurgeon (2017)
- **Tony Evans Study Bible** – Tony Evans (2019)
- **Holeman NT Commentary: Luke** – Trent C. Butler (2000)
- **The Savior of the World: Luke’s Gospel** – Marshall Wilcock (1979)