

## Stories of Grace and Truth

Luke 18.1-8

February 11, 2024

As we've seen, the parables of Jesus are much more than stories, but we have to be careful to not to assume that they're allegories. Some of his parables are, and some are not. The trick is knowing the difference. So jump into this story from Luke 18, and let these questions guide you as you do. Oh, and remember Jesus' inviting and challenging words: "Whoever has ears to hear, let them listen."

Pastor Eric

### Opening Up:

Have you seen the Wizard of Oz? Does it seem reasonable to view it as an elaborate allegory?

Read through Luke 18.1-8. What is the point of this parable? Assuming Jesus made up the story, why do you think he spins this particular story to make this particular point? Using just three or four adjectives, describe the way the widow is feeling after being continually rebuffed by the judge. What kind of character is the judge? Why won't he grant this woman justice, and what finally makes him give in?

Is our God like this judge? Compare the judge and the God of the Bible. In what ways is God not like the judge? How does Jesus depict God in some of his other teachings?

This woman is described as crying out to the judge in verse 7, which is a common way the Bible describes prayer. Take a look at some of these passages: 1 Samuel 1.15; Psalm 27.7; 88.1; Hebrews 5.7. What is Jesus trying to assure his listeners of in verse 7 and the beginning of verse 8? The very final line is a comment about faith. Why does Jesus bring in faith at the very end? What has this parable to do with faith? What do you glean about faithful prayer from this parable?

Can you think of any other verses or stories in the Bible that urge people to pray? How do those passages help us better understand the call to prayer? What does the parable in Luke 18 tell us about how God regards our prayers? How can it be said that the invitation to cry out to God in prayer is good news about our gracious God?

"Prayer for me is about alignment between me and God. It's as much about me listening to God, and changing through that experience, as it is about God listening to me and responding in some miraculous way to my requests."

Philip Yancey

Do you agree with Yancey? How do we change by praying? Think more about how prayer changes us. Are there any ways that you can think of that prayer has changed, or is changing, you?

At the end of this study, remember Jesus' refrain, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them listen." What might it "look like" if you *really* listened to this parable?

"For my prayer is much more certainly heard by God than I am persuaded in my heart that I desire such things from him."

The Heidelberg Catechism, 4.129