

The Parable of the Unjust Judge

Luke 18:1-8 | Persistence in Prayer

Jesus, the Master Teacher

Parables. Jesus was the master teacher. John 7:46: No one ever spoke like this man.

Matthew 7:28-29. Exasia - Essence, substance. Jesus' words carried weight and substance, not frivolity. He taught with the authority of God Himself. John 12:49.

The rabbis and Pharisees used parables to explain Mosaic law and oral traditions. The prophet Nathan used a parable to confront David with his sin. Jesus used parables to give new revelation.

Parables can clarify the meaning of what is being said. Parables can be thrown alongside other teaching in order to illustrate a concept or clarify meaning. Jesus' use of parables reflects His two-fold mission of salvation and judgment.

Persistence in Prayer

**Psalm 55:16-17 • James 5:14-16 • Matthew 7:7-11
Matthew 21:22 • 1 John 5:14-15**

The Context: His Coming and Our Praying

Luke 18. Jesus is speaking with His closest disciples. Luke 17:22.

Luke 17 closes with a short discourse on the Second Coming, warning of sudden disaster to those who reject the Son of Man.

Luke 18:1 begins with men ought always to pray and not faint. Faint is to lose heart. No matter how bleak or how bad current times are, we must be persistent in our prayers and have confidence that God will hear and answer His people.

As in the days of Noah and Lot, the days are evil. We may feel alone in these evil days, but we must be persistent in our prayers and not grow weary.

The Setting: A Certain City

Luke 18:2 - Certain City. Widows and corrupt judges were familiar to the people throughout the land.

The Courts and Judges

The high court in Israel was the Great Sanhedrin: 71 judges deemed experts in Old Testament law and oral traditions.

There was also another ruling body known as the lesser Sanhedrin, consisting of 23 judges in each city. These ruling bodies were influenced by Pharisee doctrine and the Sadducees' politics.

In addition to all these judges, Rome had appointed local magistrates and village judges. These were municipal authorities who judged criminal cases and looked after the interests of Caesar.

They were the worst of all and were lacking in morals. They were paid large salaries out of the temple treasury even though they were typically Gentiles and unbelievers. Their official title was Prohibition Judges, but the Jews referred to them as Robber Judges.

The Character of the Unjust Judge

From Jesus' description of this judge, it appears he was one of the Roman appointees. This man did not fear God nor regard man. By his own confession, he lived in open defiance to the first and second great commandments, Matthew 22:37-40.

By referring to the "Unjust Judge," the man was totally disregarding the duties of his office. He was supposed to dispense justice according to the law of God and the needs of the people. This man did not care about either.

He was a wicked man, but this parable is told to teach a positive lesson about God and how He answers our prayer.

The Widow: Helpless, Yet Persistent

The other character in this parable was the widow. She was the victim of some injustice or oppression. Someone had defrauded her. She was apparently destitute and alone. There was no man in her life to appeal to the judge and plead her cause.

She represents those who are in poverty, powerless, helpless, deprived, lowly, unknown, unloved, uncared for, or otherwise desperate.

Her Plea for Justice

Regardless of the legal merits of her claim, the judge should have heard her on legal grounds alone. She was pleading for justice, not for special treatment. He should have shown her mercy.

Moses' law was explicit on this point. Exodus 22: You shall not afflict the widow or fatherless. Isaiah 1:17. Deuteronomy 24:17.

She Did Not Give Up

The widow was relentless. She was persistent. She kept coming. Vindicate me.

Winston Churchill during WWII kept reminding his people in the middle of their worst times to Never EVER give up! This widow had nothing to lose. This judge was cold and callous. She did not give up!

The Judge Finally Responds

Luke 18:4-5. "By her continually coming." This word was similar to forever. The judge thought she would keep coming forever and she would wear him out with exhaustion. Her persistence caused him exhaustion and discomfort.

This judge had no regard for God or for her. He was looking out for his OWN self-interest. He needed to get rid of her, so he finally ruled in her favor.

The Point: Pray and Do Not Lose Heart

Men ought always to pray and not lose heart. Remember, Luke 17 - the days of Noah and Lot. Wicked times, but Christ will come and avenge His own. He will come with a rod of iron. Christ will destroy His enemies.

While we wait for His return, the times will become more wicked, but He wants His elect to keep praying and NOT lose heart. Pray the Lord will come. Pray for strength to endure to the end. Luke 21:36.

It is a wicked time. The Word of God is mocked, vilified, and censored. Around the world, Christians are persecuted and oppressed. We must continue to pray "Thy kingdom come," and not lose heart.

Do Not Faint

The word for faint, "lose heart," is found here in its only occurrence outside of the Pauline epistles. Paul uses it five times.

**2 Corinthians 4:1, 16 • Galatians 6:9
Ephesians 3:13 • 2 Thessalonians 3:13**

Jesus' Argument: From Lesser to Greater

If a wicked, depraved magistrate can be coaxed by sheer perseverance to grant justice for a widow for whom he had no regard or compassion whatsoever, shall not God avenge His elect?

God's vengeance may seem delayed because He is merciful. 2 Peter 3:8-9. He will not shorten time until every last one of His elect is saved. Revelation 7:9.

Will He Find Us Faithful?

Luke 18:8. Will He find His people persevering in prayer and expectation, or will we lose heart and grow weary? This parable is an encouragement to hold fast and to keep praying.

1 Corinthians 15:58 • James 5:7-8