

Jesus' Parable of the Unjust Judge

Written by Dr. John E. Russell Sr -

25. The Widow and the Judge

Introduction

This parable has been called "The Unjust Judge" (Trench); "The Unrighteous Judge" (Morgan); "The Parable of the Persistent Widow" (NIV); "The Parable of the Widow and the Judge" (GNB); "The story of the godless judge" (Williams) and "God Hears" (Beck). All the titles suggest a different facet of the truth that Jesus conveyed in this parable. The Parable of the Widow and the Judge is found only in Luke 18:1-8.

The Story

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'

"For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!'"

And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

Luke 18:1-8, NIV

He [Jesus] said, In a certain city there was a judge who neither revered {and} feared God nor respected {or} considered man.

Luke 18:2, AMP

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This judge was not the type of judge we have today. He was not a Jewish judge, but rather a paid magistrate appointed by Herod or the Romans. They were notorious and took bribes (Barclay 1958, *Luke*,).

Widows did not have the care and protection then as they have today in the United States. Trench informs us that

Many writers have noticed the exceeding desolation of the state of widowhood in the East, and the consequent exposure to all manner of oppression; of this, the numerous warnings in Scripture against such oppression, are sufficient evidence (Exod. xxii. 22; Deut. xxiv. 17; Mal. iii. 5, and many more).
Trench 1948, 177-178.

With that background in mind, let us look at the story that Jesus tells.

The widow's case would seem hopeless. She had no husband for physical, legal and psychological protection. The judge that was her legal recourse, did not reverence God and he had no respect for human beings.

Yet the widow came to the corrupt judge and asked him for justice concerning the person who was taking advantage of her weak position. The judge tried to brush her aside. However, she would not take "No" for an answer.

Vincent gives the meaning of the last part of Luke 18:5,

Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

Luke 18:5, KJV

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"Lest by her continual coming she weary me (*hina mē eis telos erchomenē hupōpiazē me*)"
Luke 18:5

Eis telos, lit., "unto the end," may mean "continually"; but "weary or wear out" for *hupōpiazē* is more than doubtful. That word is from

hupōpion

, the part of the face under the eyes, and means "to strike under the eye"; "to give one a black eye." It is used only once again, by Paul, 1Co_9:27, and in its literal sense: "I buffet my body"; treat it as the boxer does his adversary. The more literal sense of this word, and of e

is telos

, "in the end," or "finally," give a sound and much livelier meaning here. "Lest at last she come and assault me."

Vincent 1886, S.v., "Luke 18:15"

The judge may have been using hyperbole, but he definitely was becoming exasperated!

The Interpretation

Jesus himself interprets his parable. Trench gives the logic of Jesus:

If a bad man will yield to the mere force of the importunity [shameless persistence or "nagging"] which he hates, how much more certainly will a righteous God be prevailed on by the faithful prayer which He loves.

Trench 1948, 177

Central Truth

God wants us to ask him for our needs

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Then he wants us to persist in faith

Until he answers prayer.

Conclusion

Jesus taught us that we "should always pray and never give up" (Luke 18:1, paraphrased). Prayer is both listening and talking to God. Even when we are doing other tasks, we can have our minds open to receive messages from our Heavenly Father.

After we have prayed in line with God's Word for our needs, we must not give up if our prayer is not answered immediately. We must persist in faith until we receive the answer.

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Taken from my ebook, *The Astonishing Parables of Jesus*.

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