

Luke 18

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I. 18:1-8 The Widow and the Judge

A. Some parables teach by comparison, others by contrast. This one teaches by contrast.

B. Differences between our situation and the woman's:

- i. She spoke to the judge alone, we have an Advocate with the Father.

*1 John 2:1-2 (NKJV) ¹My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, **we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.** ²And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.*

- ii. We don't pray to an unjust judge, but a loving Father.

Matthew 7:11 (NKJV) If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

- iii. The Bible doesn't compare us to a widow, but to a bride.

C. What is similar? We need tenacity in prayer, just like the woman. Not because God is unjust or unwilling to answer, but because we can misinterpret His silence and His delays.

II. 18:9-14 The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

A. 18:11 The Pharisee *prayed thus with himself*. God wasn't part of this conversation with him. He was all alone – pretty much talking to himself as he prayed.

- i. His big error is that he is *self-righteous*: coming to God on the basis of his own merit.

B. 18:13 The tax collector comes to God in humility.

- i. The original is *the sinner* – as if he's the only one – while the Pharisee viewed others as sinners, but not himself.

- ii. His prayer is not based on his own merit, but on God's mercy. *Be merciful to me [the] sinner.*

III. 18:15-17 Let the Little Children Come

- A. Children are trusting. Children are totally dependent. Children are bold in asking for what they want. We can learn from them.

IV. 18:18-30 The Rich Young Ruler

A. 18:18-23 The Conversation

- i. 18:20 The law would be a way of salvation if only it could be kept. The difficulty is in keeping the law. Notice that Jesus only brings up the commandments dealing with our behavior toward people – not the ones that govern our relationship with God.
- ii. 18:21 *from my youth* Matthew tells us he was still a “young man”.
- iii. 18:22 Now Jesus nails him. His wealth was his security. He valued it above God.

B. 18:24-30 The Lesson

- i. 18:25 Some say Jesus was pointing to a certain gate in Jerusalem. More likely this was a proverbial saying used to express the impossible.
- ii. 18:26 Many people at that time equated godliness with wealth.
- iii. 18:27 Rich or poor, we can't save ourselves. It's impossible. God can do the impossible. Only God can save us.
- iv. 18:28-30 Any sacrifices we make will be more than returned to us.

V. 18:31-34 Christ's Death and Resurrection

- A. Jesus is speaking very plainly about His upcoming death and resurrection.
- B. 18:34 The disciples just didn't get it. I find that very reassuring.

VI. 18:35-43 Blind Bartimaeus

- A. Mark gives us the man's name, Bartimaeus.
- B. Mark also places this story “as He went out of Jericho” (Mark 10:46). Luke, as we see here, say it happened “as He was coming near Jericho”. The conflict is resolved by understanding that in the time of Jesus there were two cities of Jericho or two parts to the one city. The older city was nearer to the Jordan River. The newer city, built by the Romans, was a short distance away. If Jesus was between the cities at this moment, then both versions of the story are equally true.

- C. 18:38-39 *Son of David* was a Messianic title. Blind Bart is expressing his faith in Christ as the Messiah as he cries out to Him.
- D. Bart is also an example of both humility and tenacity.
- i. He's a blind beggar asking the Lord to have mercy on him. That's a pretty humble place to be.
 - ii. He also needs to be persistent, because the crowd is trying to shut him up.
 - a) There will always be people around us who try to discourage us from praying about our needs. These people are faith killers. Blind Bart does the right thing; he ignores them.
- E. 18:41 Jesus no doubt knew what the man wanted. But isn't that what prayer is like?

Matthew 6:8 (NKJV) ... your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

So why pray? The Father wants us to express those needs to Him in order to teach us that attitude of childlike complete dependence.

- F. 18:43 The people who formerly discouraged Bart from trying to get Jesus' attention are now praising God along with him.
- i. Your faith encourages others to believe.

Two lessons about prayer:

- Humility:
 - We saw it in the tax collector asking God for mercy.
 - Jesus pointed it out to us in the little children, telling us that we need to be more like them – trusting, dependent, bold in their requests.
 - We see it in Bartimaeus, the blind beggar who loudly asked the Lord for mercy.
- Tenacity
 - We saw it in the tenacious widow, who kept asking even when the unjust judge wouldn't answer. She was determined, persistent, relentless in her requests.
 - But remember: Our relationship to God is nothing like that hers to that unjust judge.
 - We saw it again in Bart the blind man, who kept crying out, even when the whole crowd around him was trying to get him to be quiet. He also was determined, persistent, relentless in his attempts to get the Lord's attention.