

Tuesdays

in Classroom 5 Taught by Don Hooton

#### **Overview**

- It begins with the introduction of a judge who neither fears God nor respects people. The judge certainly parallels the experiences thus far with the religious leadership. The dishonored widow must connect to the people who have been dishonored by them and the people's unmet needs in their religious life with Yahweh. But it will be Yahweh who will, by the end of the parable, eclipse the judge who does not fear Him. Further, these first two parables connect because of the previous conversions Jesus has had leaders in this portion of His later Judean (10:1-13:21) and Perean ministry (13:22-19:28) back with His call for childlike faith from disciples (10:21-24) and His disgust of self-justification evidenced in religious leaders (10:29; 11:45,52; 14:1-4,23-24; 15:1-2,28; 16:14).
  - So, the first parable, *Parable of Widow and the Judge*, is collected to show Jesus' will, as Luke says, "that **at all times** they ought to pray and not to lose heart" (18:1) manifesting this childlike faith.
  - The next parable, Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, is to show, Luke says, what Jesus considered about "those who trusted in themselves and their righteousness and viewed others in contempt" (18:9) a reprehensible character flaw.
  - And then Jesus calls children to Himself and calls follower to model how people should receive the Kingdom (18:17).
  - And then, when the certain ruler asks for eternal life, who must have trusted himself in his riches (18:23), making the listeners exclaim who could ever be saved. And Jesus returns that with the faith of a child, God can make the impossible – possible.
  - Last, the blind man who trusted the impossible with the King was made well through his faith (18:42).

### 18:1-8 | The Parable of Widow and the Judge.

- While we may instinctively pray (Eccl 3:11), we clearly do not pray as we should since Jesus both taught and here encouraged followers to *pray always* (c.f. 1Thes 5:17). Paul commended Ephaphras because of his diligent praying (Col 4:12) but Jesus says we are still prone to be **discouraged**. Maybe, it is our disbelief in the power of prayer (Jam 5:17); Maybe, it is our failures to live as we should (1Pet 3:7); Maybe it is our lack of just communicating (Rom 8:26).
- Widows, a most vunerable group, ostracized and often neglected, is the perfect character to tell the story to one who does not fear God or men (4) but could be moved by annoyance.
- In the application, Jesus asks them to consider **God**, who is nothing like the Judge, and what He will do for the elect justice for them.
  - God is a just God. He fairly punishes but He graciously saves. But the justice her is probably more connected to the judgment due the leaders who had ravaged the purpose of God with their own hypocrisy and greed.
  - The elect here includes disciples in the future (Christians) but He meant the people
    of God whose faith was in the promises of Yahweh whose hope had been stripped
    away by the religiosity of the day. Unlike the judge, God has a deep interest in their
    welfare and love for them will, therefore, be ready to come to their aid.

#### When the Son of Man comes...

For Christians today, we think it is our future – but it is their future, namely the
destruction that generation will feel when He comes which He has discussed and
will discuss again shortly (17:30-37; 21:20-28).

#### Will He really find faith on the earth?

Tied to the coming Jesus said mentioned in the last chapter (17:5), Jesus says we
must know who God really is (not like the unjust judge) and a reward of those who
seek Him (like the widow), we like faith He wants to see in us when He returns.

#### 18:9-14 | The Parable of the Pharisee and the Widow.

As already noted, this parable is for the self-righteous, showing contempt for others (9), and by that connection – lacking humility (14).

- Two men went up to the temple to pray: Both prayed (like the widow) but they did not approach God with the same heart.
  - The **Pharisee** "prayed" but spoke with himself, not with God (11) in which five times he said, "I". Do we pray with submission to the Divine or trying to bring the Divine to the submission of "I"?
    - He praised himself (11a) and disdained others (11b).
    - **He gloried in his righteousness, "I fast twice a week":** "Those who wished to gain special merit fasted also on Mondays and Thursdays. It is noteworthy that these were the market days when Jerusalem was full of country people... and those days gave their piety the biggest possible audience." (Barclay)
  - The tax collector,
    - standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, The idea is that by striking his chest (again and again, Morris), it was to strike where sin abode and brought corruption to their lives: the heart.
    - "God, be merciful to me the\* sinner!" While the Pharisee thought he was not like others but better. This man thought that he was not like others but that he was worse than them, "the sinner par excellence." (Barclay).
  - Went down to his house justified: It was immediate with no probationary period because he humbly prayed for mercy.
    - We gain nothing by approaching God in a façade of humility to cover the lying heart of pride. The principle *God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble* is so important God repeated it three times (Prov 3:34; Jam 4:6; 1Peter 5:5).

#### 18:15-17 | The Kingdom Belongs to Such as These.

- They also bringing "even the babies" (15, NASB) Luke says in addition to children (16) which indicates how welcoming Jesus must have appeared to common people in contrast to the skeptical establishment. If the children did not repel from Jesus, that tells us He was no mean, unpleasant grouch. His "touch" had more to do with communicating to children how they understand just as He does to us. Matthew's account said he prayed with the children (Matt 19:13) not play games. If this touching is comparable to the "laying on of hands," it was an act to bestow blessing (Acts 6:6, 8:17, 9:17; 1Tim 5:22; 2Tim 1:6) but what this blessing was is not disclosed except the mere blessing of His acceptance.
- For the kingdom of God belongs to such as these: Children didn't pretend they had His blessing (i.e. Pharisees) but instead, they come to Him and received it. Without pretense, without merit but in simple trusting faith these children (and their parents, since babies don't traverse the Judean landscape alone) came and asked (c.f. 11:9-13). They receive for what they ask (11:17).
- Not only did Jesus welcome these little human beings as members of the kingdom of God; He said that members of the Messiah's Kingdom had to receive the kingdom like they did – in simple, trusting faith.
- Why the disciples **rebuked** the parents in bringing the children illustrates that they too have much to learn. It may have been they came rudely or disorderly, noisily and needily; or that they came and would have made trouble in Jesus' day to waste his efforts on children. However, from Jesus' rebuke and prohibition, we should note first Jesus said, **"Permit them to come"** which means that no one should be excluded. And second, He wanted the disciples to see the comparative of *how* they came not that children should be baptized. Sins would need forgiving if children "came into the kingdom" like Nicodemus (John 3:3,5). Instead, Jesus rebukes the disciples for not manifesting the same Divine compassion and welcoming that Jesus manifested nor the humble faith the children (and their parents) manifested.

#### 18:18-30 | The Kingdom of the Impossible.

- Now a certain ruler commonly called the *rich young ruler*, because he is described as *rich* (<u>Luke 18:23</u>) and *young* (<u>Matthew 19:22</u>) but Luke only identifies his status. The blind man (18:35-43) will see his need the ruler will be blind.
- Calling him Good Teacher, he gave a credit not even given in Jewish culture, and Jesus, saw this unique title and responded without denying His won goodness but manifesting that only God is truly good. If the man really knew who Jesus was, he would have humbled himself like the publican.
- Jesus asks the ruler about himself. **You know the commandments** (20-21): This *ruler* must have been an educated Jew and He appeal on this common knowledge.
  - These commandments came from the Ten of the Mosaic covenant which were to be taught by parents to their children and the ruler said, "All these things I have kept from my youth," thus claiming to fulfill all of God's commands regarding how we must treat other people.
  - While it is fair to ask if this man had truly kept these commandments, he was one
    who saw this keeping from the way men look at it not in the way Jesus said God
    looks at it as He spoke of in the Sermon on the Mount.
- Jesus instructs the ruler (22-23): So when Jesus heard, He spoke from what He felt, according to Mark (10:21), which was love for him. Though rich, Jesus still said to him, "You still lack one thing." The man who wanted eternal life but had the world's treasures needed to treasure Heaven's treasures (12:32-34) but had one thing to do: "Sell." Jesus challenged him to love God more than money and material things and he failed this challenge because "he was sad" but Jesus, knowing him, still said, "Follow Me." (22).
- How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! (24-27). Riches satisfy in this life but offer nothing for *eternal life*. We think *poverty* is a hindrance when in fact, riches are the hindrance to the kingdom because of people's attitude toward them. Albert Schweitzer rightly said, "If you have something you can't live without, you don't own it; it owns you."

#### 18:18-30 | The Kingdom of the Impossible.

- For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter
  the kingdom of God: With this humorous image Jesus wanted to make clear what He was
  saying with a little humor because immediately, we think of this as impossible; and He
  meant a literal needle because it's impossible, not merely difficult.
  - "Attempts have been made to explain Jesus' words about the camel and the eye of a needle in terms of a camel shuffling through a small gate, or by reading kamilon 'cable' for kamelon 'camel'. Such 'explanations' are misguided. They miss the point that Jesus is using a humourous illustration" (Morris).
  - According to John MacArthur, "There is no evidence that such a gate ever existed. Nor would any person with common sense have attempted to force a camel through such a small gate even if one had existed; they would simply have brought their camel into the city through a larger gate. [MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 41]. Instead he says, "The Persians expressed impossibility by using a familiar proverb stating that it would be easier for an elephant to go through the eye of a needle. The Jews picked up the proverb, substituting a camel for an elephant, since camels were the largest animals in Palestine." (ibid).
  - The hyperbole here makes it clear that a rich man in his own righteousness will never make a choice for the kingdom.
- Who then can be saved? Those listening retorted with unbelief in who could be saved.
  - "In a culture where wealth was regarded as a sign of God's blessing and where a religious teacher was therefore expected to be at least moderately wealthy, the lifestyle of Jesus and his disciples was conspicuously different." (France)
  - The things which are impossible with men are possible with God: It is possible for the rich man to be saved. God's grace is enough to save the rich man, like Zacchaeus, Joseph of Arimathea, and Barnabas.
- The disciples reward who would love God more than anything or anyone.
  - We have left all and followed You: Jesus does not question but promises them the blessing of people – in the age to come – and eternal life.

18:31-43 | The March to Jerusalem and The Blind See.

- Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem. Jesus had already told them this. And now with Passover ahead of them, to be in Jerusalem was not a surprise to the disciples. But the revelation was that All things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished: The Son of Man (Messiah) will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon and They will scourge Him: This sharp and brutal whipping was a particular agony and humiliation to endure... And kill Him: The suffering would not end with humiliation and a severe beating. It would continue to the death of Jesus. The irony is that the "justice from God" He has come to bring will come at the injustices of humanity (note it is Gentiles, not just Jews).
- And the third day He will rise again: Jesus triumphantly told His disciples that the story would not end with His suffering, humiliation, and death. He would rise again in resurrected glory. And that becomes the recurring them of preaching the gospel (c.f. 1Corinthians 15).
- The blind man sees. As He was coming near Jericho: One of the most traveled roads from Galilee to Jerusalem went through Jericho. When Jesus came to this ancient city, He was not far from Jerusalem and the fate waiting for Him there. Mark 10:46 says the blind man's name was Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, who couldn't see Jesus, but heard Him so, hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. Instead of giving up because he could not seek Jesus by sight, he sought Jesus the way that he could by hearing.
  - In Matthew (20:29) and Mark (10:46), this miracle is said to happen as they were leaving Jericho. The seeming contradiction in Luke is understood in the light of archaeology, which has discovered that by Jesus' time there were two cities of Jericho: the ancient city, and the newer Roman city. The miracle happened inbetween these two cities of Jericho, leaving one and entering the other.
- He knew that Jesus was the Son of David, meaning the Messiah, and kept shouting for His mercy. Nothing could stop Jesus on His journey to Jerusalem; yet He stood still to answer a persistent plea for mercy and He healed him because he had faith.

# The Reading Schedule:

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1/7 | The Revelation of the Cross (9:18-50)
1/14 | Public Challenge and Mission of the 70 (9:51-10:24)
1/21 | Teaching the Kingdom (10:25-11:13)
1/28 | Teaching the Kingdom (11:14-11:54)
2/4 & 11 | Teaching the Kingdom (12:1-12:59)
2/18 | Teaching the Kingdom (13:1-35)
2/25 | Conflict and Crises (14:1-32)
3/3 | Parables of the Lost (15:1-32)
3/10 | Challenges to the King (16:1-31)
3/17 | Teaching Discipleship in the Kingdom (17:1-37)
3/24 | More Teaching of the Kingdom (18:1-43)
3/31 | The March to Jerusalem (18:31-19:27)
4/7 | The Passion Begins (19:28-44)
4/14 | Conflict in Jerusalem (19:45-21:4)
4/21 | Predictions about Jerusalem (21:5-38)
4/28 | The Last Supper and Betrayal (22:1-53)
5/5 | The Arrest and Trial (22:54-23:25)
5/12 | The Crucifixion (23:26-56)
5/19 | The Resurrection (24:1-53)
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