

To Speak in Parables

Proclamation of the Gospel in the Parables of Jesus

If You Can't Beat Them, Join Them

The Parable of the Unjust Judge

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On Widows:

from B. B. Scott, *Hear Then...*, p. 180

According to the customs of the day, a marriage contract stated a husband's obligations to his wife, and on his death she had a right to be supported out of his estate as specified in the contract. The widow had no legal right to inherit. Normally a husband's estate would take care of a widow's needs. But the normal condition was by no means universal. Many widows and their children were left destitute. So common was this state of affairs that "widow" came to mean not simply a woman whose husband was dead but also one who had no means of financial support and thus needed special protection.

On Widows:

Psalms 68.5

Father of orphans and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.

On Widows: Sirach 35:13-22

¹³ For the Lord is the one who repays, and he will repay you sevenfold. ¹⁴ Do not offer him a bribe, for he will not accept it; ¹⁵ and do not rely on a dishonest sacrifice; for the Lord is the judge, and with him there is no partiality. ¹⁶ He will not show partiality to the poor; but he will listen to the prayer of one who is wronged. ¹⁷ He will not ignore the supplication of the orphan, or the widow when she pours out her complaint. ¹⁸ Do not let the tears of the widow run down her cheek ¹⁹ as she cries out against the one who causes them to fall? ²⁰ The one whose service is pleasing to the Lord will be accepted, and his prayer will reach to the clouds. ²¹ The prayer of the humble pierces the clouds, and it will not rest until it reaches its goal; it will not desist until the Most High responds ²² and does justice for the righteous, and executes judgment.

On Judges:

Leviticus 19.15

You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor.

Deuteronomy 1.16-17

I [Moses] charged your judges at that time: "Give the members of your community a fair hearing, and judge rightly between one person and another, whether citizen or resident alien. You must not be partial in judging: hear out the small and the great alike; you shall not be intimidated by anyone, for the judgment is God's."

On Judges:

2 Chronicles 19.6-7

Jehoshaphat said to the judges, "Consider what you are doing, for you judge not on behalf of human beings but on the Lord's behalf; he is with you in giving judgment. Now, let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take care what you do, for there is no perversion of justice with the LORD our God, or partiality, or taking of bribes."

Psalms 7.11

God is a righteous judge.

On Judges:

Deuteronomy 10.17-18

For the LORD your God is ... not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow.

Zechariah 7.9-10

Thus says the LORD of hosts:

Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another; do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the alien, or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another.

Luke 18.2-5

² "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people.

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'Grant me justice against my opponent.'

Luke 18.2-5

² "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people.

³ In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying,

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⁴ For a while he refused;

Luke 18.2-5

² "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people.

³ In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying,

'Grant me justice against my opponent.'

⁴ For a while he refused; but later he said to himself,

'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone,

⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.'"

Luke 18.2-5

² λέγων, Κριτῆς τις ἦν ἐν τινὶ πόλει τὸν θεὸν μὴ φοβούμενος καὶ ἄνθρωπον μὴ ἐντρέπόμενος.
³ χήρα δὲ ἦν ἐν τῇ πόλει ἐκείνῃ καὶ ἤρχετο πρὸς αὐτὸν λέγουσα, Ἐκδίκησόν με ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀντιδίκου μου.
⁴ καὶ οὐκ ἤθελεν ἐπὶ χρόνον. μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα εἶπεν ἐν ἑαυτῷ, Εἰ καὶ τὸν θεὸν οὐ φοβοῦμαι οὐδὲ ἄνθρωπον ἐντρέπομαι,
⁵ διὰ γε τὸ παρέχειν μοι κόπον τὴν χήραν ταύτην ἐκδικήσω αὐτήν, ἵνα μὴ εἰς τέλος ἐρχομένη ὑπωπιάζῃ με.

Luke 18.2-5

Where is the focus of this parable?

With what other parables does the experience of this one resonate?

If an unjust judge ultimately grants justice...

On Judgment Day, do you want God to be a 'just' or 'unjust' judge with regard to your case?

What did the widow DO to win her case?

Luke 18.1-8a

¹ Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart.

² He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. ³ In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my opponent.'⁴ For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.'"

⁶ And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge (ὁ κριτῆς τῆς ἀδικίας) says. ⁷ And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them?
⁸ I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them.

Luke 18.1-8

Parable (vv. 2–5)	Allegorical Correlation (Frame: vv. 1, 6–8)
1a. A widow seeking justice (v. 3)	1b. The elect waiting for vindication (vv. 7, 8)
2a. A judge refusing to give vindication (v. 4)	2b. Implied adversity to the elect (vv. 1, 7, 8)
3a. Perseverance of the widow (vv. 3–5)	3b. Perseverance of the elect in prayer, and an imperative not to lose heart (vv. 1, 7)
4a. The widow's pleas (v. 3)	4b. Prayers of the elect, crying out day and night (v. 1, 7)
5a. The judge's fear of a widow's abuse (v. 5)	5b. God will not delay over the elect, but will vindicate them quickly (vv. 7, 8)
6a. The widow is potentially vindicated (v. 5)	6b. A promise that the elect will be vindicated, but with a lingering doubt about their perseverance (faith) (vv. 7, 8)

"Dissonance in Luke 1–8" JBL 121/1 (2002) 107–121 Stephen Curkpatrick

Luke 18.1-8a

Now where is the focus of this parable?

How do you experience the parable now?

We ought to pray always and not lose heart.

Luke 18.1-8b

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And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

Luke 18.1-8b

Now where is the focus of this parable?

How do you experience the parable now?

The persistence of a shameful widow

The repentance of an unjust judge

Luke 18.1-8b

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² He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. ³ In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my opponent.' ⁴ For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.'"

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Luke 18.1-8b

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