

Longing for Justice and Mercy (Luke 18:1-17)

She found herself under the oppressive arm of an unjust system and was determined to do something about it. He was in anguish, part of the broken system, and couldn't make things right. She longed for justice, he longed for mercy. Both longings are extremely relevant to our lives and have everything to do with following Jesus.

1. Longing for justice (Luke 18:1-8)

Jesus shared this parable with his disciples so they would always pray and not lose heart.

The judge = doesn't fear God or respect man.

The widow = the most vulnerable member of society (easily victimized by the powerful).

The widow demonstrates a faith that refuses to give up.

God is both loving and just. Psalm 89:14 (this is who he is); Isaiah 62:6-7 (keep crying out!)

The widow appealed to the most unjust judge you can imagine. YOU are making appeals before the just Judge over all! 1 Peter 2:22-23

Prayer is protest against the evil, pain and injustice of this broken world.

What kind of faith will Jesus look for? The kind exhibited by the widow.

Don't give up, your longing for justice before the Judge of all will be answered.

2. Longing for mercy (Luke 18:9-14)

Two men go to the temple to pray: A Pharisee (religious leader of the day) + a Tax Collector (despised)

The Pharisee's prayer is filled with "I" = 5x. = morally upright; religiously devoted.

V13! Standing far off. Won't even lift up his eyes to heaven.

He beat his breast = distressed; repentant.

Mercy = undeserved favor; kindness.

"Justified" = vindicated / declared right / righteous. Only *one* man went home justified.

Romans 3:21-26; 2 Corinthians 5:21

The tax collector looked away from himself and received what he longed for.

3. Receive both like a child (Luke 18:15-17)

V16 *"for to such belongs the kingdom of God."*

Jesus takes it even further - *"If you don't receive the kingdom of God (God's loving and just rule through Jesus) like a child shall not enter it."*

There's something about the complete helplessness of a child. It models the humble trust / dependence Jesus has been talking about.

QUESTIONS

1. Describe a time when you either experienced injustice or had to try to convince someone you were right. How did it make you feel?
2. How does the picture of the unjust judge in the first parable help us understand what God is *actually* like?
3. Jesus asks if the son of man will find *faith* when he returns. How does the widow model the kind of faith he will be looking for? What does she do that is so remarkable?
4. Jesus told this parable so his disciples *"ought always to pray and not lose heart."* Describe a time when suffering, pain or injustice caused you to grow weary in prayer. How might this parable help you to not "lose heart" or grow weary in the future?
5. Read Luke 18:9-14. How do we know the tax collector is *"in anguish, part of the broken system, and couldn't make things right"*?
6. Compare the prayer of the Pharisee with the prayer of the tax-collector. What stands out to you?
7. The tax collector went home justified / vindicated! First, what does that even mean? Second, why is that such a great comfort? Consider Romans 3:21-26; 2 Corinthians 5:21
8. How do children demonstrate the humble trust Jesus has been speaking of?