

SBCOD Bible Study Notes

5-7-25

Luke 18

The Parable Of The Persistent Widow – Verses 1-8

¹ Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. ² He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. ³ And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’ ⁴ “For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care what people think, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually come and attack me!’” ⁶ And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ 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? ⁸ 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?”

18:1 To persist in prayer and not give up does not mean endless repetition or painfully long prayer sessions. Constant prayer means keeping our requests continually before God as we live for him day by day, believing he will answer. When we live by faith, we are not to give up. God may delay answering, but his delays always have good reasons. As we persist in prayer, we grow in character, faith, and hope.

18:1 And not lose heart: Often we fail in praying because we lose heart. We become discouraged, and then no longer pray as we should. It is easy to lose heart in prayer because the Devil hates prayer. If prayer were powerless, it would be easy. Remember that Jesus lived a prayerful life, and He ever lives to pray for His people Hebrews 7:25. We must therefore not lose heart in prayer.

18:3 Widows and orphans were among the most vulnerable of all God’s people, and both Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles insisted that these needy people be properly cared for. See, Exodus 22:22-24; Isaiah 1:17; 1 Timothy 5:3.

18:4-8 Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her: The unjust judge only reluctantly answered the woman’s request. Jesus did not give this parable to say that God was like the unjust judge, but unlike him. God loves to answer our prayers, and He even helps us when we pray. God is on your side when you pray, not against you (as the unjust judge was against the widow).

18:4-8 Sometimes it does seem to us that God is reluctant to answer our prayers. Yet the delays in prayer are not needed to change God, but to change us. Persistence in prayer brings a transforming element into our lives, building into us the character of God Himself. It is a way that God builds into us a heart that cares about things the same way He does.

The Parable Of The Pharisee And The Tax Collector – Verses 9-14

⁹To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ ¹³“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ ¹⁴“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

18:9 To some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: The connection between those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and those who despised others is almost inevitable. If I credit myself for a supposed great and spiritual walk with God, then it is an easy thing to despise another for their supposed low and carnal walk with God.

18:10 Two men went up to the temple to pray: In this parable, both men prayed, but both men did not come to God the same way. The Pharisee went up to the temple to pray, but he did not pray. He spoke with himself, not with God.; he prayed thus with himself, and in his short prayer he repeated the word “I” five times.

8:10 It is entirely possible to address your words to God, but actually be praying to yourself, because your focus is on yourself, not on God. Your passion is for your agenda, not God’s. Your attitude is my will be done and not Thy will be done. The man was full of praise, but he rejoiced “not for who God was but rather for who he was!”

18:11-14 The Pharisee did not go to the temple to pray to God but to announce to all within earshot how good he was. The tax collector went recognizing his sin and begging for mercy. Self-righteousness is dangerous. It leads to pride, causes a person to despise others, and prevents him or her from learning anything from God. The tax collector’s prayer should be our prayer because we all need God’s mercy every day. Don’t let pride in your achievements cut you off from God.

The Little Children And Jesus – Verses 15-17

¹⁵People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. ¹⁶But Jesus called the children to him and said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁷Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

18:15-16 It was customary for a mother to bring her children to a rabbi for a blessing, and that is why these mothers gathered around Jesus. The disciples, however, thought the children were unworthy of the Master’s time— less important than whatever else he was doing. But Jesus welcomed them, because little children have the kind of faith and trust needed to enter God’s kingdom. It is important that we introduce our children to Jesus.

18:17 How does someone “receive the kingdom of God like a little child”? It means having the simple, trusting attitude that children show to adults on whom they depend. Jesus wants his people to enjoy prayer by delighting in his company. Find ways in a busy day to read the Bible enthusiastically, seek God’s help in any problem, rely on him for guidance, and trust him explicitly. Children do all that with

adults who love them. How much more should believers have that attitude toward Jesus, who loves them.

The Rich and the Kingdom of God – Verses 18-30

¹⁸ **A certain ruler asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”** ¹⁹ **“Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone.** ²⁰ **You know the commandments: ‘You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.’”** ²¹ **“All these I have kept since I was a boy,” he said.** ²² **When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”** ²³ **When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy.** ²⁴ **Jesus looked at him and said, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!** ²⁵ **Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”** ²⁶ **Those who heard this asked, “Who then can be saved?”** ²⁷ **Jesus replied, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.”** ²⁸ **Peter said to him, “We have left all we had to follow you!”** ²⁹ **“Truly I tell you,” Jesus said to them, “no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God** ³⁰ **will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life.”**

18:18 This ruler sought reassurance, some way of knowing for sure that he had eternal life. He wanted Jesus to measure and grade his qualifications or to give him some task he could do to assure his own immortality. So Jesus gave him a task—the one thing the rich ruler knew he could not do. “Who then can be saved?” the bystanders asked. No one can by his or her own achievements, Jesus’ answer implied. “What is impossible with man is possible with God.” Salvation cannot be earned—it is God’s gift (see Ephesians 2: 8-10).

18:18-19 Jesus’ question to the ruler who came and called him “Good teacher” was, in essence, “Do you know who I am?” Undoubtedly the man did not catch the implications of Jesus’ reply—that the man was right in calling him good because Jesus truly is God.

18:22-23 This man’s wealth made his life comfortable and gave him power and prestige. By telling him to sell everything he owned, Jesus was touching the very basis of his security and identity. The man did not understand that he would be even more secure if he followed Jesus than he was with all his wealth. Jesus does not ask all believers to sell everything they have, although this may be his will for some. He does ask us all, however, to get rid of anything that has become more important in life than God. If your possessions take first place in your life, it would be better for you to get rid of them.

18:26-30 Peter and the other disciples had paid a high price—leaving their homes and jobs—to follow Jesus. But Jesus reminded Peter that following him has its benefits as well as its sacrifices. Any believer who has had to give up something to follow Christ will be repaid in this life as well as in the next. For example, if you must give up a secure job, you will find that God offers a secure relationship with himself now and forever. If you must give up your family’s approval, you will gain the love of the family of God. The disciples had begun to pay the price of following Jesus, and he said they would be rewarded. Don’t dwell on what you have given up; think about what you have gained and give thanks for it. You can never outgive God.

Jesus Predicts His Death a Third Time – Verses 31-34

³¹ Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, “We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. ³² He will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him and spit on him; ³³ they will flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again.” ³⁴ The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about.

18:31-34 Some predictions about what would happen to Jesus are found in Psalm 41:9 (betrayal); Psalm 22:16-18 and Isaiah 53:4-7 (crucifixion); Psalm 16:10 (resurrection). The disciples didn’t understand Jesus, apparently because they were focusing on what he had said about his death and were ignoring what he had said about his resurrection. Even though Jesus had spoken plainly, they would not grasp the significance of his words until they saw the risen Christ face-to-face.

A Blind Beggar Receives His Sight – Verses 35-43

³⁵ As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. ³⁶ When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. ³⁷ They told him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.” ³⁸ He called out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” ³⁹ Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁰ Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, ⁴¹ “What do you want me to do for you?” “Lord, I want to see,” he replied. ⁴² Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has healed you.” ⁴³ Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.

18:35 Beggars often would wait along the roads near cities because that was where they could contact the most people. Usually disabled in some way, beggars were unable to earn a living. Medical help was not available for their problems, and people tended to ignore their obligation to care for the needy (Leviticus 25:35-38). Thus, beggars had little hope of escaping their degrading way of life. But this blind beggar took hope in the Messiah. He shamelessly cried out for Jesus’ attention, and Jesus said that his faith allowed him to see. No matter how desperate your situation may seem, if you call out to Jesus in faith, he will help you.

18:38 The blind man called Jesus “Son of David,” a title for the Messiah (Isaiah 11:1-3). This means that he understood Jesus to be the long-awaited Messiah. It is interesting to note that a poor and blind beggar could see that Jesus was the Messiah, while the religious leaders who saw his miracles were blinded to his identity and refused to recognize him as the Messiah.

18:40-43 Nothing could stop Jesus on His journey to Jerusalem; yet He stood still to answer a persistent plea for mercy. What do you want Me to do for you? This is a wonderful, simple question God has not stopped asking. Sometimes we go without when God would want to give us something simply because we will not answer this question, and we do not have because we do not ask. Jesus asked this question with full knowledge that this man was blind. He knew what he needed and what he wanted, but God still wants us to tell Him our needs as a constant expression of our trust and reliance on Him.