

February Teaching Theme: Lent

讲员 Speaker: Dr. Victor Hamilton

题目 Topic: "Two Parables About Prayer."

经文 Scripture: Luke 18:1-14

Monthly Theme: This month, we will spend time reflecting upon matters of spiritual formation, discipline, and the process of sanctification in light of Lent season. This month for much of the Global Church begins a season called "Lent," from February 17th to April 3rd. Lent is a time to "travel with Jesus towards his death." In this season, we spend extra time in repentance through self-examination and renewal through identification with Jesus on his journey. This season is characterized by prayer, fasting, and almsgiving (generosity). Much of the Christian life and spiritual formation is the battle of living like Jesus and not participating in evil (sin). Growing into the likeness of Jesus is both the Holy Spirit's work and the choice to submit to the Holy Spirit in the choices we make. We kicked off the series this month, spending time reflecting on "Who We Are Becoming" and with whose eyes we see the world, ourselves, and others. Pastor Tian continued last week, talking about winning the battle in Christ. This week, Dr. Hamilton examined two important parables Jesus told about prayer, found in the Gospel of Luke.

二月 February – 四旬期 Lent

7th – Who Are We Becoming? (Phil 3)

14th - 舍己的争战 The Battle of Self-Denial (罗马书 Romans

7:7-8:1-2 and/or 诗篇 Proverbs 5) (四旬期 Lent)

21st – 祈祷与谦卑的争战 The Battle of Prayer & Humility (路加福音 Luke 18:1-14) (四旬期 Lent)

28th – 爱的争战 The Battle of Love (约翰一书 1 John 4:7-21) (四旬期 Lent)

Resources:

[Sermon Video](#)

[Sermon Slides](#)

Discussion Questions (Dr. Hamilton):

1. Read Luke 18:1-14 together. What observations do you make, and what stands out to you? How would you summarize the passage?
2. At the beginning of his sermon, Dr. Hamilton listed nine differences/similarities between the two prayer parables in Luke 18:1-8 and Luke 18:9-14. Pick out two or three of them that you think are especially important in applying the teachings about prayer in these parables to one's own life. (See Slides 3-11)
3. How do you reconcile the truth of the first parable in which Jesus teaches persistence in prayer, keep knocking, keep asking, with a verse like Isaiah 65:24, which starts with these words, "Before they call I [God] will answer..." or Matthew 6:7-8, "And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of

their many words. Do not be like them for your Father knows what you need before you ask him”?

4. In the second parable, what are the “good” things, the Pharisee says about himself? What are the “bad” things he says about himself that really cancel out the good things he may have said earlier?
5. Is there any significant difference between asking God to forgive your sins and asking God to show mercy to you, and if so, what is that difference? (See Slides 19-20)
6. What did you think of Dr. Hamilton’s suggestion near the end of his sermon that Jesus did not intend in the second parable to teach that we ought to start each day beating our breasts and staring down at the ground? (See Slide 21)

Important Notes (Pastor Will):

Notes on Luke 18:1-8:

- The scenario of a widow seeking justice should be a familiar situation to Jesus listeners as the Old Testament repeatedly demands that Israel practice justice for **“the widow, the fatherless, the foreigner, and the poor.”** (Often called the “quartet of the vulnerable”). In our treatment of marginalized people in our day, do we reflect God’s desire or the unjust judge’s attitude?
- **If this unjust judge listens to the persistent pleas of the widow, much more will God listen “to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night.”** The judge refused to do justice for a while. In contrast, God will not “delay long,” but “will quickly grant justice” to them. This contrast between the judge’s delayed reaction and God’s prompt response must be stressed. Otherwise, the parable may be understood (and has often been understood) in the sense that God is like that unjust judge and will eventually answer prayer, not out of justice or compassion, but out of sheer fatigue at the insistence of petitioners. Such an interpretation would seem to place God on the side of the believer’s adversary, just as the judge in the parable, by not acting, took the side of the widow’s opponent. Nothing could be further from the intention of the parable. **What Jesus is saying is that God, who is loving and not unfeeling, as the judge is, will respond promptly and will not delay and demand insistent petitions, as does the judge.** (González, J. L.)
- **Why then the need “to pray always and not to lose heart”?** The disciples live in the difficult days when they long for the day of the Son of Man and their open vindication. They are like Noah being mocked by his neighbors. The only way to remain firm in such a situation is to pray continually and thus to receive vindication from the Lord. The open manifestation of such vindication may not be until “the day when the Son of Man is revealed.” But those who pray will receive prompt assurance of their vindication. (González, J. L.) **In our practice of consistent prayer, God meets us and forms us into the likeness of Jesus, vindicating** (show or prove to be right, reasonable, or justified) **our faith.** Note that Jesus’ question at the end concerning faith places the

widow's action as an act of faith. When we pray and live in hope (of the New Heaven and New Earth), we are acting in trust that King Jesus will answer.

- **Main Point of Parable:** Jesus calls us to trust in God (and his promised return), knowing he is a just, loving God who cares for our needs and never to stop praying as God meets us in prayer and will answer.

Notes on Luke 18:9-14:

- This **parable continues the theme of prayer but looks at our posture in both prayer and life.** Both the Pharisee and the tax collector stand, one "by himself" and the other "far off." One stands by himself so as not to be contaminated by others less pure than he. The other stands far off because he does not consider himself worthy. Yet, the one who stands far off is, in fact, nearer to God. All that the Pharisee says he does he should be doing; and all he says he is not, he should not be. Tithing and fasting are good religious practices, commended by Scripture. Being a thief, a rogue, an adulterer, or a tax collector (a collaborator with the occupying Romans) were not commendable activities. Jesus is not saying that people should not do what the Pharisee does (fasting and tithing) nor that they should become collaborators with the powerful and the ungodly, as tax collectors were. He says that **when the Pharisee uses his piety and religious practices to consider himself better than the tax collector, he will not be justified. Even a tax collector who acknowledges his sin and his shortcomings will be justified.** The reversal is that the one who brings piety, purity, and obedience, and who trusts in all these, is farther away from God than the one who simply brings misery, weakness, and dependence but trust in God. (González, J. L.)
- This **passage should cause us to ask two questions:** (1) How do I view others? Do I think I am better than others? (2) Who/What do I trust? Do I trust in God and his abundant grace in Jesus, or do I trust in my efforts? *Pride and self-importance are shown as an obstacle in the way to the kingdom.* When we pray from a place of humility, this will change the way we view and honor others.

Reflections on Q6:

Dr. Hamilton suggested that the practice of "beating our breast" with our "heads towards the ground" as the tax collector should be evident in seasons but not a habitual practice. This insight is significant, as often we approach the Christian life living under the weight of constant guilt and shame. However, in the Gospel, we are declared not guilty and empowered to walk away from sin. In God's mercy found in King Jesus, we can walk free of sin, guilt, and shame. We should seek to live a life of repentant and humble recognition of our constant need for mercy, but in Jesus, we know we are forgiven!

Sermon Summary (Elder Yin):

二个祷告的喻言

Victor Hamilton 2/20

"耶稣设一个比喻，是要人常常祷告，不可灰心。说：「某城里有一个官，不惧怕 神，也不尊重世人。那城里有个寡妇，常到他那里，说：『我有一个对头，求你给我伸冤。』他多日不准，后来心里说：『我虽不惧怕 神，也不尊重世人，只因这寡妇烦扰我，我就给她伸冤吧，免得她常来缠磨我！』」主说：「你们听这不义之官所说的话。神的选民昼夜呼吁他，他纵然为他们忍了多时，岂不终久给他们伸冤吗？我告诉你们，要快地给他们伸冤了。然而，人子来的时候，遇得见世上有信德吗？」耶稣向那些仗着自己是义人，藐视别人的，设一个比喻，说：「有两个人上殿里去祷告：一个是法利赛人，一个是税吏。法利赛人站着，自言自语地祷告说：『 神啊，我感谢你，我不像别人勒索、不义、奸淫，也不像这个税吏。我一个礼拜禁食两次，凡我所得的都捐上十分之一。』那税吏远远地站着，连举目望天也不敢，只捶着胸说：『 神啊，开恩可怜我这个罪人！』我告诉你们，这人回家去比那人倒算为义了；因为，凡自高的，必降为卑；自卑的，必升为高。」"

路加福音 18:1-14

一，二个比喻

第一比喻不放弃的祷告寡妇

第二个是法利赛和税吏的祷告

二，两个比喻不同点和相同点，

听众不一样：耶稣的门徒和仗着自己足义人藐视别人的人，你是那一种？当然两个比喻是不同的时间和地点。

人物不一样：寡妇和法官，在某城里，在法院，对比：法官被迫听陈述（神乐意听我们的祷告），为求公正和为求怜悯的祷告，坚持不懈的重要性。比喻结束时提出问题，人子来时，见世上有信德吗？指寡妇。比喻开始指出观点：常常祷告不可灰心。

法利赛和税吏，在圣殿里，在敬拜中，对比：自大的法利赛，和低头自卑的税吏，为做错的事发出的祷告，谦虚的祷告的重要性，圣经结束时提出了应许：凡自高的降自卑，反自卑升为高。圣经最后才提出观点：凡自高的降自卑，反自卑升为高。

三，你是那一位

1，二个比喻有4个人，你是那一位？也四个都是或者没有一位是。

2，不效仿的：法官和法利赛人也许不是我们要学习的，

-法官听是因为被缠磨，希腊言缠磨指哥前9：27也用过，自我节制，攻克己身，攻克就是缠磨一个字。

-法利赛也不必效仿，法利赛人是自以为是，说神啊感谢你我不像别人。我们希望不要成这样的人。

3，该效仿的：也许可以学寡妇或者税吏？

-寡妇是弱势群体，被人压迫，忽视，被占便宜，被利用，欺凌。神爱寡妇。申10:18，徒6：1人被错待，耶稣在十字架上的祷告是一种。有时求神申张正义也是正常的。

-税吏让我们学习，谦卑，承认自己是罪人，

4，二个比喻所学到的

-寡妇求公正，被错待，知如何得帮助。

-税吏有怜悯，做错的，没求饶恕而求怜悯，怜悯是对应罚的人的情感，使应罚的不得不惩罚，给第二次机会，不定罪，是选爱而不是怒。我们只能求怜悯。这比喻，当然不是神要我们每天在求怜悯。

-税吏不敢举目望天，虽然圣经中说到，望天是好的，可6：41，可7：34，约17：1，徒7：55。当然有时我们会低头，求怜悯，但神圣时刻不只是一个习惯，我们有时与神说怜悯我们，有时我们说，诗118:24

结语：最后，你觉的那一位你可以效仿的，从他们身上学到了什么？

Two Parables About Prayer

Luke 18:1-14

Dr. Victor Hamilton

2 parables, only in the gospel of Luke

Parable of the persistent widow (who would not stop banging the door)

Parable of the Pharisee and a tax collector

2 back to back parables

Both about prayers but different focus

9 differences/similarities

1. Different audiences

V18:1a to his disciples

18:9 confident in their own right

Probably Jesus delivered at different time and places

Who are we?

2. Two main characters

The widow and the judge

The Pharisee and the tax collector

3. The location of the action

In a certain town (anywhere)

In the temple, set in Jerusalem

4. The action took place

At the court, widow in pleading her case

In a house of worship, the individual came to pray

5. Stunning contrasts

The judge was forced to listen to the widow vs

Our God is delighted to respond to us, He welcomes us to pray

The proud Pharisee vs meek tax collector

6. The prayer purpose

For justice against wrongdoings vs for mercy

Wrongs committed against me vs wrongs I have committed

7. The importance in prayer

The importance of persistence in prayer, don't take no for no vs.

The importance of humility in prayer

8. The endings

End with a question? V8b when the son of man comes, will he find faith on the earth? Do we have the faith of the widow?

Ends w a promise v14b

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, he who humbled himself will be exalted

9. Time of making point

Jesus told the disciples this parable at the beginning, to pray not give up v1

Jesus told at the end, humble then be exalted v14b

Four individuals, which one does you identify with?

Most easily see something of yourself?

Not the judge! Don't fear God, don't care about man!! He listened only because of widow's bother! 1corinthians 9:27 the word "bother" appears, Paul talked about self-control, beats his body, gives me a black eye 🙄

The Pharisee

He thought himself more spiritual and moral than others, self important, proud, look down his nose on you. Lord, please don't let me be one like him 🙏

The widow

Represent someone vulnerable, abused, used, oppressed, take advantaged.

In Deuteronomy, the word, widow, appears 13 times, all references to God's care and compassion for widow

Deut 10:18He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and love the alien

Acts 6:1 the Grecian Jews' widows were overlooked in the daily distribution of food

Father, they don't know what they are doing, said Jesus on the cross

It's good to seek for justice if wronged

Tax collector

The best illustration of humble in front of God, to seek for mercy, a sinner

Instead of like the widow ask for justice, he knew he sinned, asked for mercy only, not even for forgiveness

What's mercy?

Is compassion showing from one to another, when the first one has the power to punish the latter

God chooses forgiveness over condemnation, over punishment, gives us a second chance

God chooses love instead of wrath

Everyone in our life time, there is time all we can ask to God, kneed, is mercy!! But Jesus didn't suggest we do that daily, stared at the ground, beat us up, the tax collector didn't even dare to look up in heaven

Other parts of the Bible tell us it's healthy to look up in heaven

Mark 6:41, 7:34, John 17:1, Jesus looked up and prayed

Acts 7:55 (Stephen)

Humble moment is not a habitual moment. At times, we plea God for mercy. Hopefully most days of our life begin w "this is the day the lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it" psalms 118:24

Widow or tax collector?
Seek for justice
Seek for mercy