



SERMON GROUP LINK

BRADY HERBERT | "PARABLE OF THE UNJUST JUDGE"

Harris Creek Baptist Church

August 3, 2014

LIFE GROUP LEADER INSTRUCTIONS

In preparation for group discussion, take a few minutes to read through the instructions to the right.

PASSAGES TO STUDY

SERMON TEXT:

Luke 18:1-8

OTHER SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Luke 11:11, 17:20-21

BEFORE LIFE GROUP

1. Spend time in prayer and studying the passage.
2. Listen to the sermon and take notes. Write down questions you had while listening to the sermon.
3. Read through all of the material.
4. Write down two or three ways to apply the passage to your daily life.

DURING LIFE GROUP

1. Summarize the sermon in your own words. Ask other group members to do the same.
2. Ask someone to read the text for the group.
3. Lead your group through the discussion questions, asking the ones that are relevant to your group. Supplement some of the discussion with your own thoughts and follow-up questions.
4. Share how you might be able to apply the sermon to your everyday life.
5. Close with a time of prayer, asking God to increase the depth of our relationship with Him and our obedience to what we learned.

SERMON RECAP

Parables have the ability to reach a wide audience because they are stories that have multiple layers to them. There's the more obvious surface layer to every parable, but there's also often a deeper meaning in these memorable stories, particularly in the parables of Jesus. That is certainly the case with the parable found in Luke 18:1-8. On the surface, it might appear that Jesus is addressing the issue of prayer, or perhaps even the need for persistence on our part. In fact, Luke 18:1 plainly says, "Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up." However, by the time we get to the end of the parable, we see that Jesus is addressing a deeper issue than what we see on the surface. While persistence in prayer is the "symptom" Jesus is speaking to, the deeper disease he is addressing is a lack of faith based on a distorted view of God amongst his followers. In his book *Turn My Mourning Into Dancing*, Henri Nouwen probably does the best job of capturing what Jesus is saying in this parable. Nouwen says, "Trust in God allows us to live with active expectation, not cynicism. When we view life as a gift, as something given to us by a loving God, not wrestled by us from an impersonal fate, we remember that at the heart of reality rests the love of God itself. This means that faith creates in us a new willingness to let God's will be done. The word so often translated *faith* in the New Testament comes from an ancient word that literally means 'trust.' Faith is the deep confidence that God is good and that God's goodness somehow triumphs."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When reading this parable, what would you say the essential issue Jesus is addressing? Why is the context in Luke 17:20-21 essential when trying to understand "The Parable of the Unjust Judge" in Luke 18? How might Luke 18:8 tell us what issue Jesus is really dealing with in this parable, even more than Luke 18:1?
2. Describe the character of the judge in this parable. Why is it important that Jesus repeats his description of the judge in this parable (see verses 2 and 4)? Why is this judge the antithesis of the message Jesus preached throughout his ministry?
3. How would you describe the actions of the widow in this parable? How do you think the original audience would have felt about the widow's persistence? In what way did the modern-day version of this story shared in this weekend's message help you better understand the bold actions of the widow in this parable?
4. Do you think this is a parable encouraging us to keep praying no matter what until we get what we desire? Why or why not? How can we know when we should have persistence in prayer and when our prayers are not aligning with God's will?
5. In what ways might this parable be misunderstood or misused by people of faith when it comes to issues we are praying for?
6. Have you ever prayed for something and not had your prayer answered? If so, did you struggle with cynicism, fatalism, or have a distorted view of God? How does Jesus address both a fatalistic worldview and a distorted view of God with the two characters in this parable?
7. What did you take away from this weekend's message? How do you feel led to respond?