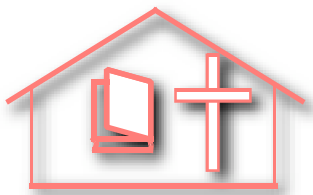


Getting Ready

Personal preparations that make an eternal difference!

Paul J. Bucknell



Luke 18:1-34

Hopelessness Self-righteousness Caring False-confidence Faithfulness Reminders

- A.) Handling Hoplessness (18:1-8)
- B.) Facing Self-righteousness (18:9-14)
- C.) Caring for the Neglected (18:15-17)
- D.) False Confidence (18:18-27)
- E.) The Reward of Faithfulness (18:28-30)
- F.) A Lesson to Remember (18:31-34)

As Christ approaches the cross, He readies His disciples for what they would soon be facing. He was guarding them from hopelessness that might arise after seeing their hope disappear at the cross. Although they could not understand any of this, Jesus simply reminded them to keep praying even when things looked dark. The disciples were now facing another problem of self-righteousness. Jesus exposed two kinds of self-righteousness, both of which are devastating. The first had to do with comparing themselves to others while the other was to think that they had fulfilled the law when in fact they were far from it. The disciples were as blind as the ruler, perhaps worst. Jesus told the disciples several times about His coming death, but they refused to listen. They insisted on living on in their dreams which would never be fulfilled, at least in their way.



A.) Handling Hopelessness (Luke 18:1-8)

When it is dark, remember the dawn is coming. When things seem hopeless, it is just at that time we need to keep on praying.

- Have you ever faced a situation where you thought about giving up praying? Explain. Did you give up?
- Why do people give up hope?
- What is Jesus' point of the parable of the judge and the widow as said in Luke 18:1?
- Describe the parable. If you can, act it out!
- What are the key components of this parable? How might we face them in our lives?
- Why would the Lord compare God with an unrighteous judge (Luke 18:6-8)?
- Why might God's people cry out day and night?
- Why does God delay help to His people?
- What is the answer to Jesus' question, "Will He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:9)?

"That at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart" (Luke 18:1).

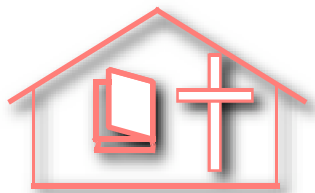
Application

- Have you accepted the fact that one day you might face some serious problem without immediate resolve? How might you handle that? In Job's case, his wealth, family, friends and health were stripped from him.
- Why does God allow such things happen to His people? What should our resolve be in such cases?
- What will the end of the world be like (Luke 17:20-37)? If many people fall away, will you join them? How do you know? Can you be sure?

Jesus is preparing His people for the worst. He knows things will drastically change for the worse (18:31-34). His days on earth are limited. Once gone, they must live by faith.

Faith is essential to communion with God. Without faith, we have no hope. The strength of our faith comes from the time we spend with Him each day. Satan tries to bring dire circumstances on us so that we will lose faith and stop praying. God, however, wants to keep us praying because He wants to do great and mighty things through our prayers. It is not us doing the great things, but Him. We are reminded of His great power as we day and night cry out to Him in prayer and see Him answer prayer in His time.

Darkness will come. Will we continue to pray?



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Hopelessness Self-righteousness Caring False-confidence Faithfulness Reminders

Luke 18:9-17

B.) Facing Self-righteousness (18:9-14)

This parable targets those that think they do not need help. If in the first parable (18:1-8) Jesus addressed those in great need and about to give up hope, here, Jesus faces those who do not think that they are in any special need. It appears that they will be in for a great surprise.

- Who did Jesus target this parable's teaching towards (18:9)?
- Do you think this problem of self-righteous people is as much a problem today as back then? Explain.
- Jesus says that because they trusted themselves, they had two problems. What were they (18:1)?
- How does each of these views affect one's relationship with God and others?
- How does the parable go? Who were the prime actors? Who does each person stand for?
- What did each man do and what was his reward?
- What was the rule Jesus used from which He judged these men (Luke 18:14)?
- How are people saved? Does justified mean the same as saved? Explain.

*"Everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled and (*but) he who humbles himself shall be exalted." (Luke 14:11; *18:14).*

Application

- * In what areas of life do you 'have confidence in yourself'? Is this good or bad in light of Luke 18:9?
- * Is it okay to be better than others? How can we grow in righteousness without becoming self-righteous?
- * We are called to humble ourselves. Name seven ways to humble yourself and do them!
(Need help? http://wwwFOUNDATIONSforfreedom.net/Topics/Humility/Humility_Steps.html)

People tend to have two extremes. We can easily fall into the helpless category where we do not trust the Lord (18:1-8) or have a lot of confidence but in the wrong place—in this case it was in the way that he lived his life better than others. In the first case, God does not get glory because we do not ask to see His great works. He does not do them. In the later, we are so focused on ourselves that we cannot even think about His glory.

C.) Caring for the Neglected (18:15-17)

These verses relate to the former topic but probably not deliberately. The lack of genuine interest for the children reveals how a 'better than another attitude' had infected them. Jesus saw these children not as ones which needlessly filled up His schedule but a place where people brought their most precious concerns to the Lord. These parents were to be applauded.

- Who were bringing babies? Where did they take them (Luke 18:15)?
- Why did they do this (Luke 18:15)? What do you think they hoped to gain by doing this?
- Who rebuked these people for bringing their children to Jesus (Luke 18:15)? Why do you think they did this?
- How did Jesus respond to this situation (Luke 18:16)?
- What did Jesus mean by Luke 18:17, "Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it at all."

The Greek word 'brephos' (15) can either mean an unborn foetus (still in the womb) or recently born child, an infant or baby.

Application

- * Have you ever felt that the Lord might not welcome you? How can this passage be of help to you?
 - Do you ever get resentful when others are favored by the Lord and you aren't? What should be our attitude?
- Jesus used the word for child (*paidion*) which includes babies, toddlers and even older children. We can only conclude that Jesus purposely broadened His welcome to even include older children. There were no doubt some children there watching Him, and when they heard this, probably ran up to Jesus to be blessed. Oh, that more people including children would have a greater love and affection for Jesus. They will be more blessed! We should desire that more people receive His blessing and respond by seeking Him more diligently ourselves!



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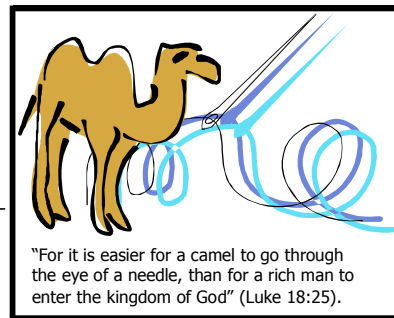
Hopelessness Self-righteousness Caring False-confidence Faithfulness Reminders

Luke 18:18-30

D.) False Confidence (18:18-27)

The contrast between having or not having eternal life is startling. It seems that the problem of the self-righteous, "I don't need Jesus" attitude is more of a problem than one whom loses faith. Jesus again is tackling this topic. This person featured here does not, however, compare himself favorably with others (as in Luke 18:9-14) but has a distorted view of God's standard.

- Who was talking to Jesus in Luke 18:18? What did he ask Jesus at that point?
- How would you answer the question if someone asked you, "What shall I do to obtain eternal life?"
- How did Jesus answer him (Luke 18:19-20)? (There are two parts to this answer though connected.)
- What was Jesus getting at by questioning why the ruler called Jesus a good teacher?
- Do you think that the Ten Commandments Jesus here lists reveals God's holiness? Explain?
- Which commands did Jesus mention? Which did He leave out (compare Exodus 20)?
- How did the ruler reply to Jesus in Luke 18:21?
- Jesus wasn't impressed. What area of life did Jesus challenge the ruler with in verse 22?
- How did the ruler respond this time (18:22)? How was this response different? Why so?
- How did Jesus summarize the problem of the ruler in 18:24-25?
- What does Jesus mean by 'a camel going through the eye of a needle' (Luke 18:25)?
- The man was highly respected for his values. How did the people respond to Jesus' conclusion (18:26)?
- What did Jesus mean by saying, "The things impossible with men are possible with God" (18:27)?



"The things impossible with men are possible with God" (Luke 18:27).

Application

* Would you consider yourself a good person? Are you good enough to gain favor with God? How do you know? What if God pointed out some deficient area of your life? Would you quickly respond in repentance or get ensnared in the fight to keep living the way you had been?

• It is often difficult to assess our love for riches unless we have forsaken them. What ways have you proven that you do not love riches and therefore have committed idolatry and covetousness? Make sure your answer includes advice Jesus gives in Luke 18:22.

Jesus not only attacks (1) the notion that anyone is naturally good enough for the kingdom of God but also (2) exposes the deep roots sins have in the lives of every person. People are often blind to their sins. This, of course, makes them all the more harmful, for without God's grace enabling one to see his or her sins and grace to forsake them, then that one will perish.

E.) The Reward of Faithfulness (18:28-30)

The disciples immediately responded thinking about their own circumstances. "Hey, we did that!" They gave up temporal things in order to seek for eternal. Peter, the bold one, states what they all were thinking.

- What did Peter state that the disciples had done (Luke 18:28)?
- How does Jesus answer him in Luke 18:29-30?
- What might Jesus mean by "at this time and in the age to come, eternal life?"

Application

* What have you left behind in order to gain?

• What is the most difficult to leave behind? This is your greatest opportunity!





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#4

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Hopelessness Self-righteousness Caring False-confidence Faithfulness Reminders

Luke 18:31-34

F.) A Lesson to Remember (18:31-34)

Luke placed this passage after His disciples open declaration to follow Jesus, “We have left our own homes and followed You” (18:30). We do not know if it happened in time this way, but the two, back-to-back, highlighted Jesus’ care for His disciples. The disciples were still living for their significant ministry. They were sure they made the right choice! They, however, had not come to terms with broken dreams--no Jesus.

- How did Jesus change the way He was ministering in Luke 18:31?
- What is it that Jesus told the disciples in 31-33? You can answer these by carefully going through the passage or follow the questions below.
- Where were Jesus and the disciples going to go? What would be there normal expectations of going there?
- The prophets in the Old Testament made many predictions about Jesus. How many would come true? Name three.
- Who was Jesus going to be turned over to? How?
- Name the five ways Luke 18:32-33 describes how Jesus would be treated.
- What would happen after Jesus was killed (Luke 18:33)? What does that mean?
- Did the disciples understand these things (Luke 18:34)? How many ways did Luke state this in this verse?
- Why might they have not understood these things that were so clearly announced to them?



“All things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished” (Luke 18:31).

Application

- How well do you know the scriptures? The disciples seem not to be as acquainted with them as they should be. Get on a program of reading the Bible at least once a year.
- Something else, though, was the problem with their understanding. Jesus told them, but they could not comprehend it. “They did not get it.” Perhaps it is because what they hoped to gain by following Christ was so astronomically different than what Jesus was saying. Joining Him in His glory was one thing but following Him to the cross was another. If a great persecution came up against Christians because of their unwillingness to join the world in their tolerance of sin, are you prepared to give up your possessions for the sake of Christ? Your life? Discuss.

Summary of Luke 18:1-34

By taking a look at the 18th chapter of Luke, we would almost have to conclude that Jesus was speaking in a veiled way to His disciples. Is it possible that Jesus was suggesting that they would meet up with hopeless situations where they would be tempted to give up praying? Indeed they would.

Were the disciples so convinced of their commitment and zeal that they thought that they were okay? Were they, perhaps, those who had exalted themselves rather than humbling following Christ? From the way they speak and later betray Jesus, it is all too clear that their understanding was too shallow and would not stand the shaking it would soon receive when Christ would be killed and they being left alone.

How ready are we for what the Lord has appointed for our lives? Is our commitment to Christ so sealed that no storm or threat could shake it? One step for us is to decidedly live for tomorrow (eternity). But this is not enough. We need to commit to living for Christ no matter what.

Are you ready?