Parables about our Father

Meditations,
prayers,
scripture, and
recorded new hymns
for
public worship and
personal devotions

from the series:

Fresh Views of Timeless Truths

Ken Bible

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Luke 7:36-50

(NASB)

Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to eat with him, and He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and she wiped them with the hair of her head, and began kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume. Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner!"

And Jesus responded and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he replied, "Say it, Teacher." "A moneylender had two debtors: the one owed five hundred denarii, and the other, fifty. When they were unable to repay, he canceled the debts of both. So which of them will love him more?" Simon answered and said, "I assume the one for whom he canceled the greater debt." And He said to him, "You have judged correctly." And turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave Me no kiss; but she has not stopped kissing My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume.

"For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but the one who is forgiven little, loves little." And He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven." And then those who were reclining at the table with Him began saying to themselves, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?" And He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Indebted to God's Love

```
O my Father!

At the cost of Your precious Son Jesus,
You have freed me from
all that I've been and
all that I've done.

And You are transforming me into
all that You are,
all the holy beauty that shines from
Jesus Christ.
```

What a debt of love I owe You! I can never, ever pay it all!

But I am surrounded by people that are inexpressibly dear to You.

Help me to shower them with my love for You and Your love for them.

Help me to pour it out daily personally, lavishly, in a flood of deep gratitude and joyful self-giving.

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Hymn Recording: Indebted to God's Love

Indebted to God's Love



WORDS: Ken Bible MUSIC: Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904) and Ken Bible

SONG TO THE MOON 2 10.10.10.10.

Luke 10:25-37

(NASB)

And behold, a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live." But wanting to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Jesus replied and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he encountered robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. And by coincidence a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

"But a Samaritan who was on a journey came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own animal, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return, I will repay you.' Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?" And he said, "The one who showed compassion to him." Then Jesus said to him. "Go and do the same."

The Good Samaritan

I see myself in this story. But I am not always the Samaritan.

Sometimes I am the expert in the law.

God's wisdom for us is clear and simple:

treat your neighbor the way you want to be treated.

But when I fail, when the golden rule isn't comfortable,

I try to "justify" myself with questions and reasoning:

"But who is my neighbor?

How far does my responsibility really go?"

Sometimes I am the priest.

Though a neighbor's need is obvious,

I have something more pressing to do, and more convenient.

Besides, needy people can seem very "unclean".

I pretend not to see.

But the closer I grow to God,

the more His love grips my heart.

The more I love Him.

the more I care about those He loves.

How can I ignore those that matter so deeply to Him?

Every parent, every loving spouse, every true friend

knows that love has its own logic and

its own agenda.

It doesn't always make sense to others.

That is the logic and agenda my Father wants for me as I live in this needy world,

full of people He loves.

In every needy "neighbor" He wants me to see

my child, my spouse, my dear friend...myself.

When I am needy and hurting,

I am desperate to see that Good Samaritan come along.

Father, help me to be a neighbor to the needy persons I meet.

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Hymn Recording: The Good Samaritan

The Good Samaritan

ALTERNATE TUNE: Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise (ST. DENIO)



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Luke 11:5-13

(NASB)

[Jesus] said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, because a friend of mine has come to me from a journey and I have nothing to serve him'; and from inside he answers and says, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' I tell you, even if he will not get up and give him anything just because he is his friend, yet because of his shamelessness he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, it will be opened. Now which one of you fathers will his son ask for a fish, and instead of a fish, he will give him a snake? Or he will even ask for an egg, and his father will give him a scorpion? So if you, despite being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

Ask Your Father

```
almighty,
      all-loving
Father,
help me bring all my concerns to You with
      plain, simple words and
      a childlike faith.
You never sleep,
      You are never inconvenienced, and
      Your supply is endless.
No request is
      too big for Your power or
      too small for Your love.
Help me to bring them all.
But at the same time, gradually reshape my heart to
      ask more wisely and
      seek the better gifts.
Teach me to pray as Your human Son prayed,
      focused on You,
      wanting only Your glory,
      trusting You simply and completely.
Trusting You means
      wanting what You want.
You want me to come with all my needs,
      but You also want our relationship to grow.
Reshape my desires and concerns that I might want to
      know You more,
      share Your heart,
      live Your love, and
      breathe Your Spirit,
             the Spirit of Your holy, beautiful Son,
             Jesus.
This is what I really want.
This is what I really need.
```

My all-wise,

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Hymn Recording: Ask

Ask

Matthew 7:7-11; Luke 11:5-13



WORDS: Ken Bible
MUSIC: Traditional Folk Tune and Ken Bible

YOUNG HUNTING 2
C.M.

Luke 12:13-34

(NASB)

Now someone in the crowd said to [Jesus], "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." But He said to him, "You there—who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over the two of you?" But He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one is affluent does his life consist of his possessions."

And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive. And he began thinking to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' And he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and I will store all my grain and my goods there. And I will say to myself, "You have many goods stored up for many years to come; relax, eat, drink, and enjoy yourself!" But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is demanded of you; and as for all that you have prepared, who will own it now?' Such is the one who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich in relation to God."

And He said to His disciples, "For this reason I tell you, do not worry about your life, as to what you are to eat; nor for your body, as to what you are to wear. For life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing. Consider the ravens, that they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds! And which of you by worrying can add a day to his life's span? Therefore if you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about the other things? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither labor nor spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you? You of little faith!

"And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For all these things are what the nations of the world eagerly seek; and your Father knows that you need these things. But seek His kingdom, and these things will be provided to you. Do not be afraid, little flock, because your Father has chosen to give you the kingdom.

"Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts that do not wear out, an inexhaustible treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor does a moth destroy. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Living Toward God

```
I will look to You.
If I believe that
      You are
      all You say You are,
why should I fear
      anything or
      anyone else?
When I am blessed,
      I will look to You.
I will give back to You
      joyfully,
      with humble gratitude.
I will share Your generous blessings
      with those in need,
      those You love so dearly,
      as an expression of my love for You.
When I have concerns.
      I will look to You.
Your power,
      wisdom, and
      love
are complete and
      constant.
I will trust in You and
      rejoice in You,
      my magnificent Father!
Help me to live every moment
      in You and
      unto You!
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When I am afraid,

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Hymn Recording: Living Toward God

Living Toward God



WORDS & MUSIC: Ken Bible

RICH TOWARD GOD 7.7.7.6.5.

Luke 13:1-9

(NASB)

Now on that very occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. And Jesus responded and said to them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans just because they have suffered this fate? No, I tell you, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or do you think that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were worse offenders than all the other people who live in Jerusalem? No, I tell you, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

And He began telling this parable: "A man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any. And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Look! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?' But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, leave it alone for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down."

Jesus Weeps for the Unrepentant

Luke 13:1-5

Jesus knew that He was about to raise Lazarus from the dead. But surrounded by the deep grief of His friends, Jesus wept. (John 11:33-35)

His heart grieves

with those He loves.

After entering Jerusalem in triumph,
Jesus wept over the city.

He knew the horrific price its people would pay for rejecting their Messiah and refusing to repent.

When Jesus was told of the violent death of Jews at the hands of Pilate, He replied,

"Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3, NASB)

Name any tragedy in our

violent, unjust world, and

a worse tragedy is the fate of those who

live and

die forever

without

ever

knowing

God.

Jesus weeps.

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Hymn Recording: Jesus Weeps for the Unrepentant

Jesus Weeps for the Unrepentant

Job 14:1-2; Luke 13:1-5, 34-35; 19:41-44; 23:28-31; John 11:33-35; Philippians 3:18; James 4:8-10; 5:1



WORDS & MUSIC: Ken Bible PASTOR SHAWN 7.7.4.4.7.

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Repent

Luke 13:6-9

God prepared and sent John the Baptist to proclaim,

"Repent!" (Matthew 3:2).

Jesus Christ, Son of God, came all the way from heaven, urging people to "Repent!" (Matthew 4:17).

"Repent" means to turn around,

to make a radical change in one's mind, heart, and behavior.

Jesus said: "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Luke 5:32, NIV)

And: "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Luke 15:10, NASB)

Immediately before He returned to heaven, He commanded His disciples "that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations." (Luke 24:47, NASB)

When people came to Him lamenting the deaths of some many people through accidents or cruel injustice,

Jesus told them.

"unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." (Luke 13:5, NASB)

In the parable of the fruitless fig tree (Luke 13:6-9), Jesus urged them not to delay repentance or put it on their "someday" list of "things to do".

He warned that

the unrepentant were already living on borrowed time, that judgment was now hanging over them.

John the Baptist had phrased it this way:

"Indeed the axe is already being laid at the root of the trees; so every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." (Luke 3:9, NASB)

God has solemnly, lovingly promised that

He will completely cleanse our world of

all sin and

all injustice.

He continues to call out with loving urgency:

Repent!

Turn around...NOW!

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Hymn Recording: Repent

Repent



WORDS: Ken Bible MUSIC: African-American Spiritual and Ken Bible SOMETHING ON MY MIND 2 11.11.11.6.

Luke 15:1-10

(NASB)

See also Matthew 18:10-14

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near Jesus to listen to Him. And both the Pharisees and the scribes began to complain, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

And so He told them this parable, saying, "What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the other ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he puts it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost!' I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance.

"Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found the coin which I had lost!' In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

God Loves the Lost

Matthew 9:36; 10:5-6; 12:11-12; 15:24; 18:12-14; Mark 6:34; Luke 15; John 10:1-30; 2 Peter 3:9

Jesus doesn't think of sinners as repulsive people to be

avoided

despised, or

condemned.

He thinks of them as

lost sheep,

lost treasure, or

lost children.

They are to be searched for

eagerly,

lovingly,

single-mindedly.

God's love never gives up!

Sinners arouse, not His condemnation, but

His compassion.

They stir, not His anger,

but His love and mercy

When the lost sheep is brought safely back,

rejoice!

When the treasure is found,

celebrate!

When the wayward child comes back home,

still in the rags of sin,

run to meet him!

Shower him with hugs and joyful tears!

Welcome him with full and glad acceptance!

One of God's children is alive from the dead!

Let the party begin!

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Hymn Recording: One Lost Sheep (EVERLASTING LOVE)

One Lost Sheep

Matthew 9:36; 10:5-6; 12:11-12; 15:24; 18:12-14; Mark 6:34; Luke 15; John 10:1-30; 2 Peter 3:9



WORDS: Ken Bible MUSIC: James Mountain

Alt. Tunes: ABERYSTWYTH; CHIC SHAVER

EVERLASTING LOVE 7.7.7.7.D.

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Luke 15:11-32

(NASB)

And He said, "A man had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that is coming to me.' And so he divided his wealth between them. And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey to a distant country, and there he squandered his estate in wild living. Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began doing without. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he longed to have his fill of the carob pods that the pigs were eating, and no one was giving him anything.

"But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired laborers have more than enough bread, but I am dying here from hunger! I will set out and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired laborers." So he set out and came to his father.

"But when he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and]embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, slaughter it, and let's eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.' And they began to celebrate.

"Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things could be. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has received him back safe and sound.'

"But he became angry and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and began pleading with him. But he answered and said to his father, 'Look! For so many years I have been serving you and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you never gave me a young goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends; but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you slaughtered the fattened calf for him.' And he said to him, 'Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found."

Love Is Not Blind

Love is not blind.

Love sees what no one else sees.

Others see sin and ugliness.

Love sees one unspeakably precious.

Love sees its treasure,

its child.

Your Father calls you to share His love, to live the same love that reached out and drew you in.

Your Father calls you to share His heart.

Father,
forgive my indifference to
the lost sheep that
mean so much to You.
Make my heart as Your heart,
my hands as Your hands,
my life as Your life.

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Hymn Recording: Our Father's Burning Heart

Our Father's Burning Heart Tune: SUSSEX CAROL



WORDS: Ken Bible MUSIC: Traditional English Carol; arr. by Ken Bible SUSSEX CAROL 8.8.8.8.8.8.

Alt. Tune: MELITA

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CCLI Song #5722608. For CCLI information call 1-800-234-2446.

Letter from a Concerned Father

Based on Hosea 11:1-11

My Dear Child,

Since before you were born, I've loved you. You were my delight, my pride and joy. I would sit and watch you and smile and laugh. I looked forward to being with you. I enjoyed you so much. I just could not do enough for you.

I cared for you day and night. You were always on my mind and on my heart. When you were sick, I felt your pain and nursed you back to health. When you fell, I would lift you in my arms and hug you and gently kiss you.

But the more I loved you, the more you resisted my love. The more I cared for you, the more you resented me. The more I did for you, the less you trusted me.

I taught you to walk, and you chose to walk away from me. I shaped your young mind. I carefully fed it and nurtured it. But you became proud, and in your youthful ignorance you found me foolish and old-fashioned.

You took everything I gave you and turned it against me.

But still I loved you and did all I could to help you. I saw trouble coming. I tried to warn you - sometimes gently, sometimes in desperation, as shouting to one standing in front of an oncoming truck: "Look out! Get out of the way!" But you took my warnings as intrusions, as selfish attempts to "run your life."

The trouble came - the incredible hurt, the destruction, the shattered relationships. Believe me, being right brought me no joy. I suffered it all with you.

I still see trouble coming. But I can't help you...not unless you let me...not unless you help yourself.

A parent's grief for a lost child has no comfort, no consolation, except one. It's hope-hope that the child will somehow just come back.

Come back, child. Please, come back.

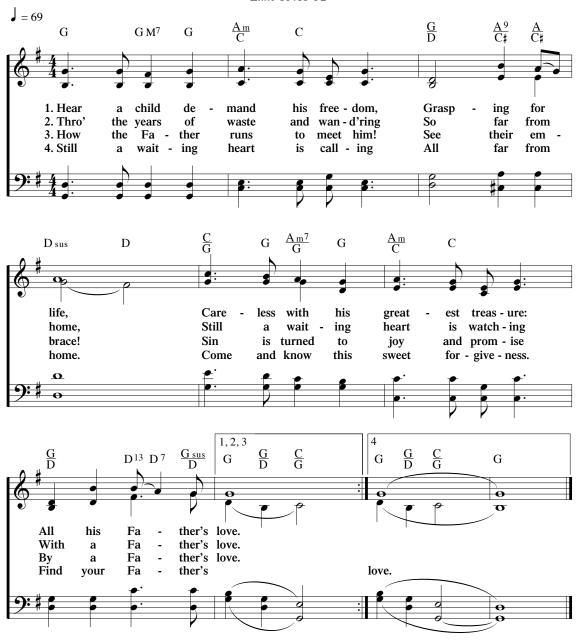
Love forever, God, Your Father

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Hymn Recording: A Father's Love

A Father's Love

Luke 15:11-32



WORDS: Ken Bible LONG TIME AGO
MUSIC: Traditional Folk Tune; arr. by Ken Bible 8.4.8.5.

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Luke 16:1-13

(NASB)

Now [Jesus] was also saying to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and this manager was reported to him as squandering his possessions. And he summoned him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an accounting of your management, for you can no longer be manager.' And the manager said to himself, 'What am I to do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg. I know what I will do, so that when I am removed from the management people will welcome me into their homes.'

"And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he began saying to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' And he said, 'A hundred jugs of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, 'A hundred kors of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.'

"And his master complimented the unrighteous manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light. And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it is all gone, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings.

"The one who is faithful in a very little thing is also faithful in much; and the one who is unrighteous in a very little thing is also unrighteous in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true wealth to you? And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

Invest Wisely

Jesus often uses hyperbole,

that is, obvious and intentional exaggeration,

to make a point.

Here He asks us to imagine

the least admirable of all financial managers:

one cheats his client...

and gets caught.

Even such a sleazy crook gets some admiration

if he is smart enough to

use what he controls only temporarily

for long-term gain.

Jesus urges us to do the same.

Money and all material goods

are on temporary loan to us

from the Creator and Lord of all.

We can take none of them out of this life.

Very shortly, they will all be gone.

That is absolutely certain.

Be wise!

Invest these short-term resources in

true wealth

that will be your own and

will last forever.

What is that wealth?

God is offering us the riches of being -

the deep, holy, joyful, everlasting life of

Jesus Christ Himself.

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Hymn Recording: Take These Goods I Cannot Keep

Take These Goods I Cannot Keep Matthew 6:19-21; 19:21; Luke 12:33-34; 16:1-13



WORDS: Ken Bible MUSIC: John Antes (1740-1811); arr. by Ken Bible MONKLAND 7.7.7.7.

Luke 18:1-8

(NASB)

Now [Jesus] was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not become discouraged, saying, "In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect any person. Now there was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, 'Give me justice against my opponent.' For a while he was unwilling; but later he said to himself, 'Even though I do not fear God nor respect any person, yet because this widow is bothering me, I will give her justice; otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.'"

And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unrighteous judge said; now, will God not bring about justice for His elect who cry out to Him day and night, and will He delay long for them? I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"

Persistent Prayer

Luke 18:1 tells us exactly why Jesus told this parable of the unjust judge

Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not become discouraged. (NASB)

As He often did, Jesus used hyperbole,

that is, obvious and intentional exaggeration,

to make a point.

Imagine the most uncooperative, immovable person –

a local judge who had no fear of God and

no care for people whatsoever.

Imagine the weakest, most helpless of all people -

in that society, a poor widow.

Imagine that judge having no concern for the widow's need and

no intention of ever helping her.

But even then, the widow was so persistent that

the unjust judge eventually gave her justice,

purely to save himself from her continual pestering.

Remember, then, that unlike the unjust judge,

our loving God is eager to meet our needs.

And unlike the widow in the story,

we are so dear to Him that He eagerly listens to our every prayer.

There is absolutely no question, then, that He will

speedily,

iustly

answer our prayers.

The real question is

not about His faithfulness,

but ours.

Will our faith endure as we await

His way and

His time?

Will we continue to

pray and

trust?

But ask yourself,

why do we have to wait at all?

Since He is so eager to answer our prayer,

why does He often make us wait? In any relationship, such as a marriage, one of the biggest challenges is learning to live with the inherent differences between the two parties, between husband and wife. That is so in our relationship with God as well. We are time-bound, pain-sensitive, narrow-visioned. self-centered creatures. God is eternal, all-powerful, all-wise, all-seeing, and all-loving. Every prayer request is filtered through His perfect wisdom, and His perfect love refuses to give us anything but His very best at just the right time. Thus living in relationship with Him requires, commitment,

Our Father wants prayer to be our response to every need. So as long as the need continues, continue to pray, and

enduring trust, and enduring prayer.

continue to trust Him.

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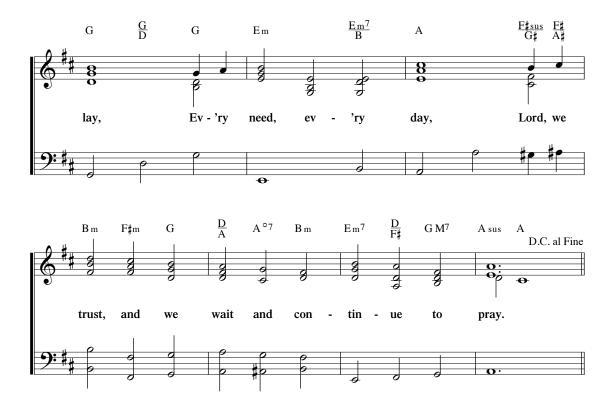
Hymn Recording: Persistent Prayer

Persistent Prayer

Luke 18:1-8



WORDS: Ken Bible
MUSIC: Traditional Folk Tune and Ken Bible
GRANT ZWEIGLE
9.9.9.4.w.Bridge



Luke 18:9-27

(NASB)

Now [Jesus] also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and began praying this in regard to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, crooked, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'

"But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to raise his eyes toward heaven, but was beating his chest, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other one; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

Now they were bringing even their babies to Him so that He would touch them; but when the disciples saw it, they began rebuking them. But Jesus called for the little ones, saying, "Allow the children to come to Me, and do not forbid them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all."

A ruler questioned Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" But Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments, 'Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not give false testimony, Honor your father and mother." And he said, "All these things I have kept since my youth."

Now when Jesus heard this, He said to him, "One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when he had heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely wealthy. And Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God!" Those who heard Him said, "And so who can be saved?" But He said, "The things that are impossible with people are possible with God."

Come Humbly

In Luke 18 Jesus gives us a series of living examples to teach us how to come to our Heavenly Father:

• vv. 1-8, the story of the poor widow and the unjust judge.

The lesson: **come persistently**.

• vv. 15-17, Jesus blessing the children.

The lesson: come simply, trustingly, as children.

• vv. 18-30, the rich young ruler.

The lesson: come without reservation, committing everything to Him.

vv. 35-43, healing of blind Bartimaeus.

The lesson: come in bold faith.

Between the first and second bullets above Jesus told another story as to how we should come to God. Two people come to the temple to pray. The first sounds like a good Christian. He is considered one of the holiest people in his society. He thanks God for His many blessings in his life—and thankfulness is a great virtue! The man seems to be doing everything right.

The second person is a sinner, pure and simple. He is choked by his deep unworthiness. He won't even lift his head in God's presence.

So why is God pleased with the second person and not the first? What is Jesus teaching us about how we come to God?

Pride is self-centered and self-serving. It is one of the biggest barriers to a true relationship with the Living God. Pride fails to see God for who He is and ourselves for who we are. Pride prevents God from filling our lives, and being to us all He wants to be

When we first come to God for salvation, we realize our unworthiness and neediness. We come to God empty, with nothing in our hands, in utter humility, totally dependent on His mercy. Sometimes after we've been a Christian for a while, we forget that in ourselves, we are just as unworthy, just as needy, just as dependent on His mercy as we ever were.

Most relationships are a two-way interchange. Each party contributes something to the relationship. But in our relationship with God, we bring nothing. The only thing we have that is truly our own is our sinfulness and unworthiness. We come empty.

Only when we see God for who He is and ourselves for who we are can we have a true, honest, open relationship with Him.

Listen to the prayer of the Pharisee with the ears of a person today caught in the darkness of sin, and you may hear what they hear when they listen to our church talk. When Jesus talks, I never hear harsh condemnation for sinners, those outside the faith. He saves His harsh criticism for those who are comfortable in their righteousness, those caught up in the externals and forgetting *love*.

When I listen to the church talk through the media about the social "sinners" of our day—for example, homosexuals—I too often hear strident condemnation. If I were a sinner outside the church, that's what I'd hear. And when I listen to the condemnation, spoken in such strident tones, I hear fear. I don't hear confident, secure children of the Father, focused on showing the world how much He loves them. I hear a fearful, embattled minority focused on self-protection.

We don't have to work to conjure up humility. All we have to do is get a glimpse of who God is and who we are without Him. Love, trust, and humility are at the very core of proper relationships with God, with our fellow believers, and with the needy world around us.

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Hymn Recording: ICome in Christ

Hymn Recording: You Are Holy; I Come in Silence

I Come in Christ

Luke 18:9-27; Hebrews 4:14-16; 10:19-22; Jude 24-25



WORDS: Ken Bible MUSIC: Traditional Folk Tune and Ken Bible **HUMBLE PRAYER**

C.M.D.

You Are Holy; I Come in Silence



WORDS & MUSIC: Ken Bible

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YOU ARE HOLY

Irregular

Luke 20:9-19

(NASB)

See also Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12

But [Jesus] began to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard and leased it to vine-growers, and went on a journey for a long time. At the harvest time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, so that they would give him his share of the produce of the vineyard; but the vine-growers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. And he proceeded to send another slave; but they beat him also and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And he proceeded to send a third; but this one too they wounded and threw out.

"Now the owner of the vineyard said, 'What am I to do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.' But when the vine-growers saw him, they discussed with one another, saying, 'This is the heir; let's kill him so that the inheritance will be ours.' And so they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What, then, will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and put these vine-growers to death, and will give the vineyard to others."

However, when they heard this, they said, "May it never happen!" But Jesus looked at them and said, "Then what is this statement that has been written:

'A stone which the builders rejected,

This has become the chief cornerstone?

Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will crush him."

The scribes and the chief priests tried to lay hands on Him that very hour, and yet they feared the people; for they were aware that He had spoken this parable against them.

Fruit unto God

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All that we see,
      all that we have,
      all that we are
flows from our loving God.
In return, He only asks for
      the love.
      the gratitude,
      the simple trust
that is naturally due to
      our Creator,
      our Provider
      our Father.
But like the tenant farmers in Jesus' parable (Luke 20:9-19),
      we greedily grasped for what was His and
      claimed it as our own.
He sent His servants,
      His messengers
to His tenants, and they
      rejected,
      abused, and
      killed those He sent.
So how does He respond to
      their open rebellion?
Does He send armed men to expel and punish them?
No, He shows even more love,
      patient.
      selfless love.
He sends His only Son,
      hoping that they will honor Him.
Who but our loving Father would do such a thing?
Such love is
      mysterious.
It seems illogical,
      even foolish.
But such is the love of a parent.
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Think of the

faithful,
patient,
selfless love
God has shown you
throughout your life.
Will you give Him the
love and
praise and
trust
that He so richly deserves?

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Hymn Recording: Fruit unto God

Fruit unto God



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