

The Character of Jesus 61
Persistence and Humility
Luke 18:1 – 14

- Characteristic: Persistence and humility
 - (1) The point of the first parable is given: persistence in prayer.
 - (3) A widow was the cultural stereotype of the helpless.
 - (7 – 8) Contrasts:
 - “His own elect” versus doesn’t really care about people.
 - “Though He bears long with them” (we have not had the best of relationships with God in the past) versus giving in because the widow hounded him.
 - Speedily versus slowly
 - (8) “When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?”
 - An odd statement. When the Son of Man came to earth, He found faith as He remarked about the faith of some people several times in the gospels. In His coming in 70 AD, we presume the faithful existed and continued the church into our day. In His coming at the end of time, Paul suggests that faithful people will be on earth (1 Thessalonians 4:15 – 17).
 - So, Jesus is asking a rhetorical question to make the point that, although God will avenge them speedily, that may be at the end. See Romans 12:19. So, be persistent and patient, both of which are necessary for true faith.
 - (9) The point of the second parable is not so much prayer but humility (v 14), to remember the mercy of God, not achievements.
 - (11 – 12) Trusting in themselves:
 - “With himself” His focus was not on God but on feeling good about himself.
 - Picking the comparison for the purpose of looking good. See 2 Corinthians 10:12 and Galatians 6:4.
 - Religious practices (note; fasting is not in the Law). See Colossians 2:21 – 23.
 - (13) The humble:
 - Recognize their shortcomings
 - Ask for repair, not to escape justice.
 - (14) Jesus does not give the attitude of either person when each left the Temple. But the implication is that the tax collector understood his justification whereas the Pharisee did not think he needed to be justified. “He who humbles himself will be exalted.” Hopefully, the tax collector felt this.
- Application: Persistence and humility
 - Do we pray with the knowledge that God sees us as “His own elect”?
 - Do we pray with confidence in the longsuffering of God?
 - Do we pray for speedy resolution but leave the execution timetable up to God? After all, from now to Judgment is short compared to eternity. Does that beg the question?
 - Do we trust in performance, in percentile ranking? Certainly, that method is easy for some. Our communication with God is not about telling Him how good we are; He knows the truth anyway. At the other extreme, some denigrate themselves as if that were appealing to God. It is about being real.
 - We do not want to be forgiven failures, so pray for mercy (repair), then let God do what He promised.

Review:

1. Jesus baptized (Matthew 3:13 – 17, Mark 1:9 – 11, Luke 3:21 – 22, John 1:29 – 34) Unconcerned about position
2. The temptation (Matthew 4:1 – 11, Mark 1:12 – 13, Luke 4:1 – 13) Trusting God
3. Calling His first disciples (John 1:35 – 51) Flexibility
4. At the wedding feast in Cana (John 2:1 – 11) Balance
5. First cleansing of the Temple (John 2:13 – 25) Personal responsibility
6. Talking with Nicodemus (John 3:1 – 15) High expectations of others
7. The woman at the well (John 4:5 – 42) Taking opportunities outside the plan
8. Public teaching in Galilee (Matthew 4:17, Mark 1:14 – 15, Luke 4:14 – 15, John 4:43 – 45) Simplicity
9. Healing a Nobleman's Son (John 4:46 – 54) Challenging
10. Calling the First Four Disciples (Matthew 4:12 – 22, Mark 1:16 – 20, Luke 5:1 – 11) Developing future leaders
11. Healing a Demoniac in a Synagogue (Mark 1:21 – 28, Luke 4:31 – 37) Competency
12. Healing Peter's Mother-in-Law and Others While Preaching in Galilee (Matthew 8:14 – 17, Mark 1:29 – 39, Luke 4:38 – 44) Purposeful
13. More Healings in Galilee (Matthew 8:2 – 4, 9:2 – 8, Mark 1:40 – 2:12, Luke 5:12 – 26) Love
14. Jesus Heals on the Sabbath (John 5:1 – 47) Evidence
15. Plucking Grain on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1 – 8, Mark 2:23 – 28, Luke 6:1 – 5) Consistency
16. Healing a Withered Hand on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:9 – 14, Mark 3:1 – 6, Luke 6:6 – 11) Love – doing what is best – doing good
17. Healing the Multitudes beside the Sea (Matthew 12:15 – 21, Mark 3:7 – 12) And Choosing the Twelve (Matthew 10:2 – 4, Mark 3:13 – 19, Luke 6:12 – 16) Proactive
18. Healing the Centurion's Servant (Matthew 8:5 – 13, Luke 7:1 – 10) Seeking Faithful Spirits
19. Raising the Son of the Widow of Nain (Luke 7:11 – 17) Compassion
20. John the Baptist's Question (Matthew 11:2 – 30, Luke 7:18 – 35) Expectation of Discernment
21. Jesus' Feet Anointed in the House of a Pharisee (Luke 7:36 – 50) Forgiveness
22. Accusations by the Pharisees (Matthew 12:22 – 37, Mark 3:19 – 30, Luke 11:14 – 23) Logic
23. Mindsets out of Step (Matthew 12:38 – 50, Mark 3:31 – 35, 8:11 – 12, Luke 8:19 – 21, 11:24 – 36) Addressing hidden assumptions
24. Exposing Contradictions (Luke 11:37 – 54) Addressing logical flaws
25. Contentment (Luke 12) Contentment
26. Expanding the Question (Luke 13:1 – 9) Addressing the Root Problem
27. Jesus Stills the Storm (Matthew 8:18 – 27, Mark 4:35 – 41, Luke 8:22 – 25) Challenging incomplete thinking
28. Jesus Heals Two Demoniacs and Eats with Matthew (Matthew 8:28 – 34, 9:10 – 17, Mark 2:15 – 22, 5:1 – 21, Luke 5:29 – 39, 8:26 – 40) Responding to the Heart
29. Jairus' Daughter, an Invalid Woman, and Some Blind Men (Matthew 9:18 – 34, Mark 5:22 – 43, Luke 8:41 – 56) Responding to Faith
30. Third Circuit in Galilee (Matthew 9:35 – 38, 10:1, 5 – 42, 11:1, 13:54 – 58, Mark 6:1 – 13, Luke 4:16 – 31, 9:1 – 6) Realistic Expectations
31. Around the Northeast Side of Galilee (Matthew 14:13 – 36, Mark 6:30 – 56, Luke 9:10 – 17, John 6:1 – 21) Challenging Others to Step Out in Faith
32. Spiritual Food (John 6:22 – 71) Lifting understanding out of the physical
33. Tradition (Matthew 15:1 – 20, Mark 7:1 – 23, John 7:1) Thinking through Tradition
34. Lebanon and Decapolis (Matthew 15:21 – 38, Mark 7:24 – 8:9) Meeting Faith Where It Is
35. Signs, Peter's Confession, Hard Times (Matthew 16:1 – 28, Mark 8:11 – 39, Luke 9:18 – 27) Expecting People to Think
36. The Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1 – 13, Mark 9:2 – 13, Luke 9:28 – 36) Pushing for Greater Understanding
37. Healing a Demon-Possessed Boy (Matthew 17:14 – 23, Mark 9:14 – 32, Luke 9:37 – 45) Revealing Hindrances to Faith
38. False Ambition Versus Childlikeness (Matthew 18:1 – 14, Mark 9:33 – 50, Luke 9:46 – 50) Humility
39. Forgiving Others (Matthew 18:15 – 35) Forgiving Others
40. Doing the (Unexpected) Right Thing (John 7:2 – 10, Luke 9:51 – 62) Focus
41. Pointing to God (John 7:11 – 52) Letting the Spirit Work
42. The Woman Caught in Adultery (John 8:12 – 59) Convicting Legalism
43. Countering Typical Accusations (John 8:12 – 59) Confronting Convenient Excuses
44. The Man Born Blind (John 9:1 – 41) Dealing with People, not Theories
45. The Good Shepherd (John 10:1 – 21) Godly Leadership
46. The Seventy Sent and Returned (Luke 10:1 – 24) Intensity
47. The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25 – 37) Consistency
48. Jesus as a Guest of Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38 – 42) Physical Priorities
49. Teaching about Prayer (Luke 11:1 – 13) Trusting God with Requests
50. Healing as an illustration of the Kingdom (Luke 13:10 – 21) Not Overlooking the Seemingly Insignificant
51. The Feast of Dedication (John 10:22 – 42) Refusing to be Manipulated by the Opposition
52. The Narrow Door and a Warning about Herod (Luke 13, 22 – 35) Uncomfortable truths spoken in a comfortable way
53. Healing at a Sabbath Dinner with a Pharisee (Luke 14:1 – 24) True humility
54. Cost of Discipleship (Luke 14:25 – 35) Realistic
55. Parables about the Lost (Luke 15:1 – 32) Valuing Potential
56. Parables about the Lost (Luke 16:1 – 18) Using or Being Used?
57. Parables about the Lost (Luke 16:19 – 31) Those who listen are the right audience
58. Summary about the Lost (Luke 17:1 – 10) A forgiving attitude
59. Raising Lazarus (John 11:1 – 26) Patience
60. Healing Ten Lepers (Luke 17:11 – 37) Exposing apathetic expectations