



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY October 20 & BEYOND

God Listens, Because He Cares

I'll be honest with you, my favorite parables that Jesus tells are the ones where there is an explanation!

It could come in the form of an introductory comment, or a concluding comment by the author of the Gospel which contains the parable, or by Jesus himself, such as when he is asked to explain the meaning.



The fact is that the meanings of Jesus' parables are not always seemingly obvious (like when the 12 disciples themselves are saying to Jesus, "I don't get it; please explain"). But what I'm thinking about right now is that the parables -- with all the twists and turns that sometimes are part of the telling -- can cause us to spend a lot of time on the wrong point. So when an explanation is given by Jesus or the Gospel author it can be amazingly clarifying, and even relieving to be provided with the object of the lesson.

On Sunday (October 20, 2019) the Gospel reading (the Good News reading) is a parable that Jesus tells as a story of the interaction between a Judge, and a Widow who is seeking justice for some purpose. As the story unfolds, which is quite short, we hear that the Judge really is not interested in giving even the time of day to this widow who is being relentless in keeping coming back to the Judge to get the justice for which she is pleading. The judge finally provides the decree providing justice. Jesus' implies strongly that the Judge provides the justice because he finally just gave in, to get rid of her. It's a great story. It has its own sense of humor, it has drama, it has elements of stereotypical truth, it has David and Goliath written into it, it has the potential of several morals to be taught regarding civic justice, attention to each other's needs, the stewardship of power and authority rightly administered, "and there's more!" as the info-mercials tell us.

But I think you can see, too, that there is so much that can be talked about – and I have talked about or written about or preached about or “taught” about everything this story provides as subject matter – that we can end up somewhere completely different than the reason the story was actually told!!

I was reminded of this phenomenon when going to the store recently to purchase ONE THING. I needed one, single thing for a project I was doing, a project I left in order to go to the store to purchase the one thing I needed to continue on with the project. You get the idea. And when I came out of the store I had 10 items, and I had spent at least 5 times more in money to buy all those things than I had planned, and used a lot more time to go to the store than I had intended.

Working at trying to understand a parable can be just like that. The best thing I could have done was to write myself a note and take it to the store with me. The note would have had the one item written on it, plus a little helpful exhortation: “And nothing else!” (that still hasn’t always helped come out of the store with only that one thing! I mean, who can go into a hardware store without spending time looking at all the cool stuff there!)

So, the attached explanation or introduction to a parable is also intended to keep our minds and ears and even our hearts attentive to Jesus’ purpose. Sometimes the parable is built with lots of interesting things in it in order to make the conclusion as powerful and as thought-provoking, and truth-telling as it needs to be.

And the story of the unjust Judge and the Persistent widow? It is about prayer. And here is what the author of this particular Gospel says, “*And he told them a parable, to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.*” (Luke 18)

If you are like me, then I know that you wonder about your prayers regarding your life – perhaps even the injustices of life – and whether God is listening at all, and whether there is some advice from God about how to do the praying!

Then this is one of those moments for you to hear it said, where Jesus, the Son of God, the Christ teaches and encourages us that we 1) need to pray (!), that is to ask God for the things of our lives, that we are to do that praying “always”, and 3) are never to lose heart in making your request, no matter how long it takes.

At the end of the parable it is not the author of the Gospel, but Jesus himself who tells us the difference between how God receives prayers from us, and the unjust

judge in the story. It's not about the judge; it's about God and those who come to him for help. Alleluia.

Come hear the story on Sunday, and get the full effect. And hear the other bible readings that let us know that God cares about us and loves us.

Fr. Robert G. Eaton

Readings for this Sunday – The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Genesis 32:3-8, 22-30 Psalm 121 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5 Luke 18:1-8a

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

8:30am Low Mass (Church)

10:30am Solemn Mass (Church)

AA Meeting

7:00pm Little Apple Group (Parish Hall)

—The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue—

Note: Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

FRIDAY AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)

8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)

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10:30am Solemn Mass (Church)

AA Meeting

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