

# Losing Heart

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Date: 18 August 2002

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[ 0 : 00 ] Our loving God, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the assurance that you hear our prayers and answer them.

Hear us now, Lord, we praise you would help us hear your word, believe it and obey it. Amen. Please sit down and if you could, take up your Bibles that you have in front of you and turn to page 77.

This is in the back section of your Bibles, not the front section. Page 77 at the back at Luke 18. A quick hello.

For those that may remember me, I was here five years ago for a number of years and it's great to be back. So thank you. I have a brother-in-law and he is a cameraman, a freelance cameraman.

And one of the things that he does is he has done filming for World Vision. World Vision has documentaries that they produce and he would go and do those.

[ 1 : 09 ] And one of the things that you'll notice about those documentaries is that they normally have a celebrity. The celebrity is someone well known to the people and they are meant to give it that well known sort of edge to it.

Terry, my brother-in-law, tells me though that something universally happens. The celebrity who is used to Starbucks and cable television and all the glitter and comforts of home goes to some of the worst parts of the world.

There they witness for the first time, as a rule, incredible poverty and suffering and injustice and appalling illness and they are shocked and they are angered and they are changed.

Terry says it is very unusual for the celebrity not to return to Australia and be a different person because they have seen the world through eyes that had only ever known luxury and safety.

Interesting, ironically, that World Vision tends to sanitise the documentaries. When you watch them, they don't actually try to show you too much poverty and injustice.

[ 2 : 30 ] Otherwise, like good consumers, we would be uneasy and change the channel. What World Vision wants us to do is to realise that we can show compassion and mercy and we can make a difference by giving some money and so they try to make the documentary appealing rather than appalling.

I confess though, I have been supporting someone for World Vision. His name is Jacob but that's about all I know and it goes out of my credit card once a month and I suspect I'm like many of the celebrities who don't really know just how cruel and unjust this world is.

Jesus told a parable which you'll find in front of you on page 77. He told it, as we're told in verse 1, so that his disciples would always pray and not lose heart.

The story Jesus tells, and it was read to us and I'll just retell it to you, has basically two characters. It's a story Jesus made up and the two characters are a victim and a bad guy.

We know he's a bad guy because in verse 2 and 4 we're told he doesn't fear God or have any regard for man.

[ 4 : 03 ] Even though he's a judge, he appears to be not interested in justice. The victim is a widow, helpless, powerless, abused, forgotten and the whole idea of this parable is that the victim, though she is powerless, nags, cries out, yells, complains every day until finally the judge who doesn't care less about justice or God vindicates her to get her off his back, so to speak.

Now, Jesus told this parable for a reason. We're not meant to compare God to the unjust judge. Some people have mistakenly thought that Jesus told this parable so that we should pray and pray and pray and nag and nag and beg and beg and finally God will go, okay.

That's actually the exact opposite of what Jesus intended. Well, what are we meant to do with this story then? Basically, I think there are two things that we're meant to learn from this.

We should pray always and we shouldn't lose heart. And I just want to quickly ask, what should we pray? How is it that we won't lose heart?

[ 5 : 35 ] Well, what we pray for is vindication. Here in verse 6, the Lord said, hear what the unrighteous judge says and will not God vindicate his elect who cried him day and night?

Will he delay long over them? What do we pray for? What do we pray for? We pray for vindication. Vindication is to have the cause of right offended.

It's to have wrong declared to be wrong and right upheld. For me, if I'm innocent, to be declared innocent, free from blame and guilt or suspicion.

It's making wrong right. It's making injustice be removed and justice to be done.

It's preventing cruelty and instead having mercy. God says that we are to pray that wrong is made right.

[ 6 : 44 ] The best example I can think of of this kind of prayer is the prayer Jesus told us. It basically goes like this. Father, may your name be hallowed.

Right now, very few people hallow your name. That is wrong. Make it right, Lord. May everyone bow down and worship and honour you.

How will that happen? Father, your kingdom come. May your kingdom come so that everyone will see Jesus and everyone will bow their knee and everyone will confess with their tongue that he is Lord so that your name is hallowed.

And when your kingdom comes, then your will will be done. Give me my sins. Lead me not into temptation. Deliver me from evil.

God, make wrong right. Come, Lord Jesus, because the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours. It's interesting, the context of this parable that Jesus told is teaching about the kingdom of God.

[ 8 : 08 ] If you look just back at page 76 in the second column, we're told in verse 20 that the Pharisees asked Jesus about when the kingdom of God was coming.

Jesus answered them, the kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, nor will they say, lo, here it is, or there, for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.

The kingdom of God is here. You know that Jesus' message was all about the kingdom of God, and so it was natural for the Pharisees to ask, when's this kingdom coming?

I suspect they had a view that the kingdom would be something like the kingdom of David or Solomon, where Israel was coming. Jesus' answer was, oh, no, no.

The kingdom. Just before this, just before this passage, we have ten lepers come to Jesus and ask for mercy.

[ 9 : 19 ] Jesus makes wrong a word. Jesus could speak to any illness and they would be healed.

Just as a king will command and its subjects obey, Jesus the king commands and healing happens. Tortured. Jesus the king would speak to the demon and command it to leave and it obeyed. Jesus, when a storm would come and his disciples plead, save us, stops the storm.

Lazarus and Mary and Martha, his dear friends, weep because Lazarus is dead. Jesus is dead. Not Lazarus. Be alive.

Jesus was present. The kingdom of God was present. He would raise the dead. He would feed the multitudes. He would proclaim the good news that all could be accepted by God.

[ 10 : 27 ] Jesus said, the kingdom is in your midst. Imagine what it would have been like to be with him. I want you to notice verse 22.

Jesus turned to his disciples and said, the days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man.

The days will come, says Jesus to his disciples. He tells them the parable.

Look again at 18 verse 1. He told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not leave. Pray that Jesus would return.

Pray that Jesus would come and vindicate the righteous. Pray that Jesus would come and finally remove the injustice and cruelty of our world.

[ 11 : 46 ] Punish the wickedness and evil of mankind. Bring about mercy and health to those that are broken. I suggest that the way you are to do this is to...

I meant to preach a bit shorter here so I'll just give you my conclusion. Can I encourage you to exercise your heart and do this and do this and do this and do this and do this and do this and do this and do this and do this and do this and do it.

And I encourage you to exercise The point of this parable is that Jesus is saying be steadfast always pray never give up never despair let me put it another way be steadfast immovable, unshakable in your trust.

That's what I mean by... God is real, God is sovereign, God you are loving, God you are merciful. It is your will that mercy and justice be done.

I will not give up asking. The reason I constantly ask God in prayer is not because he won't listen. The reason I continually turn to God in prayer is because he does listen.

[13:03] That's why I talk to him with such confidence. He does listen. So be stubborn. I pray...

I pray... I pray... calling upon the Lord to bring about his mercy. Forgive me. So I need to be stubborn. You need to be stubborn and not give up.

The second one is anger. Let me qualify this again. You need to be angry. That is, you need to have righteous anger. I get angry all the time and that's definitely not righteous.

But there were times when God is angry and Jesus was angry and it was right. Remember when Jesus entered the temple and instead of people honouring and hallowing the name of the Lord, they were selling cattle and making money.

Because he says, my father should be hallowed. Sometimes we need to be motivated by...

[14:37] I refuse to accept that because you've promised me so clearly.

I pray that you will bring about justice. Angry at you, God.

Don't get me wrong. I tell you what, when I'm angry, I do things. Code rage. You do all sorts of things. I encourage you, brothers and sisters.

our nation. Let's pray. We'll only do all the things. I dare to sei.

But it's half a day. Let me ask your arm. We'll never make him regular history Or let me ask your arm. I'll marry you. Okay. We'll be,... Your arm. Pastor. Remember? So this idea is extremely seated.

[16:22] As my spirit of Jesus,