

Tommy Meador / General

The Gospel of Luke / Luke 17:20–18:17

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## Introduction

- <https://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2023/november/man-issued-million-dollar-speeding-ticket.html> -
- It's coming for all of us - the return of Jesus - a day of judgment for many - a shocking day that they didn't see coming - for others - a glorious reunion with Jesus. What is it going to be for you?
- Jesus constantly pointing us to the end of time when He will return. [Luke 12](#) - we already discussed the return of Jesus, now at end of [Luke 17](#) - discussing His return again. [Luke 21](#) - we'll discuss the return of Jesus yet again.
- Return of Jesus a big deal - consummation of His Kingdom. What we're waiting for because when Jesus returns everything will get gloriously better.
- We all want better. Life is hard. Struggles abound. It's hard not to be discouraged, overwhelmed, etc.
- Good news... Everything is going to get better... BUT, not yet. That's the tension we live in. We know everything will be better when Christ returns, but it's not better yet.
- We're an impatient people. We want everything to be better now. As we follow Jesus by faith, lots of things DO get better - your walk with the Lord, how you respond to different situations, perspective on life, etc. BUT, you still live in a broken world. Sin still abounds. The affects of the

fall are everywhere. We're waiting for the King to return to make everything better, but it's not yet.

- A lot of Scripture this morning. [Luke 17:20-37](#): Jesus teaches about the nature of the Kingdom of God, and then in 18:1-17, gives three ways to we live well in the “not yet” as we wait for Jesus’ return.

## Jesus’ teaching on the Kingdom of God ([Luke 17:20-37](#))

- Pharisees and Jews looking for the Messiah - longed for things to go back to the way it was in the time of King David - Israel unified, a world superpower. It had been centuries since Israel had been a great nation. Looking for a Messiah to “Make Israel Great Again.”
- vs. 20 - Appropriate question. Jesus talked about the Kingdom of God often. “When will the kingdom of God come?” Or, “When will things go back to the way they were under King David?” After all, that’s what God promised, right?
- What God promised was to establish His Kingdom. Kingdom of God = God’s rule over His people in His place. The Garden of Eden = a picture of the Kingdom of God - Before the fall - Adam and Eve live submitted to the King in His place - the garden of Eden - invited to be vice-regents - to rule with Him. Instead, Adam and Eve wanted to rule in the place of the King. They rebel against the King.
- Ever since, God has been reestablishing His Kingdom - to once again be like it was in the Garden of Eden. OT is the long story of how God is fulfilling His promise to reestablish His Kingdom through His Messiah.
- Messiah is present. Advent - The King has come. BUT... Jesus is the King who rules our hearts, not merely a piece of land in the middle east.

- Answer to Pharisees: “Kingdom of God is in your midst.” Jesus standing before them, and they can’t see that He’s the King because their hearts set on a political king that would free them from Rome.
- To His disciples: Everyone is looking for the signs of the times - Here’s the sign: a suffering Messiah. And... His people will suffer as well.
- The King has come, the King suffers for His people through His death and resurrection. The Kingdom grows as people place their faith in Him and endure suffering for His name sake ([Luke 9](#), invisible Kingdom). Eventually, consummation - King will return and bring people to their eternal home.
- Kingdom invisible to the world yet we see the Kingdom growing as people trust Jesus - but many don’t see it. So, people go on with life as normal - like in the days of Noah, or Sodom and Gomorrah. Day of Consummation will take people by surprise like judgment took people by surprise in days of Noah or in the days of Lot - one taken to judgment, one not (vs. 33-34). Don’t be like Lot’s wife! Caught up in the world - looked back - and lost her life - because she longed for the things of the world.
- Point of teaching: The King has come, He has established His Kingdom, He is growing His Kingdom, and He will return for those who embrace His rule. BUT... Hasn’t returned yet. So, how do we live for His return, in the “not yet?” Three ways:

## Stay persistent.

- [Luke 18:1-8](#) - An unjust judge and a persistent widow. Persistent widow has been done wrong by an adversary. We don’t know what the injustice was, but the widow wants justice.

- Widow pesters the judge. Every day, coming to the judge's presence: give me justice. Judge eventually gives in because he gets tired of the woman pestering him.
- A contrast. God is not an unjust judge. He is a faithful father who treats you much differently than this judge treated the persistent widow. And, you are more than a begging widow - you're a child of the King. You can expect your Father to treat you much better than this godless judge treated the persistent widow.
- The point: as you wait for the King to return, stay persistent.
- **Beware of your tendency to give up way too easily.** Life hasn't gotten better **yet**. God hasn't come through **yet**. I've been waiting, and it seems as if God is doing nothing. He's sitting up in heaven relaxing while I'm down here struggling. Yes... sometimes God delays in answering your prayers? Not according to Jesus (vs. 8). It may seem like God is delaying because it doesn't seem to you like life is getting better fast enough. But, rest assured, what seems like inactivity on God's part to you, is actually God working on your behalf in ways you can't see or know. Right now, He is preparing you for His return. Don't give up. Keep persisting in prayer - keep coming before your heavenly in faith. When Christ returns, will He find you faithful (vs. 8)?
- **Know that God never gives up on you.** Let that motivate you. You give up on Him. You at times stop persisting. But God persists with you. He convicts you. He puts people in your path to remind you of His love for you. He gives you a church family that holds you accountable. He doesn't give up on you.

## Stay humble.

- [Luke 18:9-14](#) - A second parable - for those who "trusted themselves" and looked down on everyone else.

- Parable: A pharisee in the temple. Brags about his self-righteousness. “I’m glad I’m not like...”
- You might not ever say it aloud, but how many of you have thought to yourself, “I’m glad I’m not like...”?
- Self-righteousness is evidence that you may not be a part of the Kingdom of God - because a self-righteous person doesn’t see his need for a king.
- “A tax collector...” This tax collector knows his condition before God... Stands far off. Wouldn’t even raise his eyes to heaven. “Have mercy on me.”
- Tax collector goes home justified - Jesus says, “Whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”
- A warning: **Beware of a delusional faith.** As you live in the “not yet” a temptation to think you have life figured out. You learn more of the Bible, you get really good at being at church on a regular basis, you live a moral life, and some of us will go through life with relative ease - No major hardships. Marriage works out, children do great, no disease to deal with, etc. Tendency to get delusional: “Life is good, so I must be doing life right.” Then look to others who are struggling: “Why can you get your act together?”
- **Embrace a work-in-progress faith.** In the “not yet” that’s what we are - a work in progress. A people who are daily depending on the grace of our Savior as He makes us into who He wants us to be. You need to get really good at saying, “I’m not where I want to be in my relationship with Jesus” because none of us are. You also need to get really good at saying, “Help me.” Some of us struggle at asking for help, but followers of Jesus should never be ashamed of asking for help - asking God for help and asking His church to help. It’s more than ok to be a work in progress.

## Stay child-like.

- [Luke 18:15-17](#) - Little children brought to Jesus for him to touch. In those days, parents often would bring their children to a rabbi for a blessing. Imagine the joy of Jesus as He holds babies in His arms and prays over them.
- Disciples rebuked Jesus - saw it as a waste of time for Jesus to spend time with children.
- Jesus: “Whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”
- **Don't settle for a childish faith.** The problem for many Christians is they have a childish faith rather than a child-like faith. In the not-yet we get settled down into a self-seeking, self-centered faith. (e.g., the Pharisee, Lot's wife) Hebrews warns of a childish faith ([Hebrews 5:13-6:2](#)). A childish faith isn't characterized by a lack of Bible knowledge as much as it's characterized by a lack of Christlike character and godly wisdom. A childish faith is one that claims Jesus as Lord but constantly makes foolish, self-centered choices.
- **Strive for a child-like faith.** Child-like faith trusts even when you don't have all the answers. To be a child! To enjoy life and let the parents worry about the big things of life. Child-like faith = enjoying relationship with God while letting God take care of the big things in life that you so often question. Instead of “Why, God?” say, “I'm going to enjoy you God and trust that you know what you are doing.” A child-like faith is awestruck. You've seen children in awe of big things... Are you in awe of God? Are you amazed at what He's done in your life? Have you lost your awe of God? This is why you need regular fellowship with the people of God in the Word of God - nothing cultivates the awe of God quite like seeing God's work in us as we are in His Word together.

- The King is returning. He will make everything better. And right now, life isn't is as good as it will be. Struggles abound. Life has challenges. The world is broken. But, here you are, a Christ-follower, in the Kingdom of God but waiting for your King to return. Don't waste your "not yet." Be ready for His return by growing in Him, serving Him and His Kingdom. How are you living in the not-yet? Will Jesus return to find you living out your faith?
- Do you know the King? He will return - judgment for those who have not trusted Him as their King. Today, know the King. Know that Jesus died and rose again for you so you could be a citizen of His eternal Kingdom, a child of the Father.