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Ebb Tide by Sandy Simpson

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Missionary Sandy Simpson is an evangelist and editor of Pacific Waves Newsletter.

I pray that the Lord will bless you in this new year with wisdom and discernment to rightly know the difference between good and evil, and to avoid being blown about by every wind of doctrine, for that is the biblical purpose of being brought to maturity in Christ.

To that end, I wanted to let you know that the video tapes are now available from our last "Living Water 2003" conference here in Honolulu, HI. These tapes features very important

information for the Church from Pastor Bill Randles, Pastor Gary Gilley and Author Ray Yungen. The topics include: Two Mysteries, Gnosticism, Postmodernism, Open Theism, New Age, Church Growth Movement, and other important issues. A number of Micronesian pastors attended, but it is my heart's desire to get these messages into the hands of many pastors around the islands. The two video set costs \$20. plus \$4. shipping to Micronesia. You can order from me at:

Sandy Simpson
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Please be sure to give me your name and address and make any checks payable to "Alexander Simpson". I'm sure you will be blessed by these messages and they will help inform your church about issues that are rapidly

beginning to influence Christians all over the world.

Living Water 2003
Spiritual Power for Living!

with **Bill Randles**, **Gary Gilley** and **Ray Yungen**

Sponsored by Apologetics Coordination Team, Windward Missionary Church and Let Us Reason Ministries

Date	Time	Speaker & Topic	Location
Friday 12/9/06	7:00-9:00 pm	Ray Yungen—New Age in The Church Bill Randles—Postmodernism	International Baptist Church 20 Duane St. Honolulu, HI 96817
Saturday 12/16/06	9:00-11:00 am	Gary Gilley—Open Theism Bill Randles—Church Growth	
	12:00-4:00 pm	Ray Yungen—Gnosticism & Prayer Gary Gilley—Church Growth Movement Bill Randles—Gnosticism Bill Randles—Buddhism (1 hr)	Call Bill at 335-9631 for details

Address Correction Requested

January 04
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Fruit Of the Spirit Series—Patience by Sandy Simpson

Biblical Examples Of Patience

There are many examples of people who were patient in the Bible. The prophets were patient men, waiting on God, sometimes for years. They sometimes had to wait for God to speak or to act. This took faith, patience, and perseverance. One man who had these traits perhaps more than any other was Job. James speaks of Job this way:

James 3:10-11 Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

Job was a rich man and blessed with family and friends. He would regularly sacrifice on behalf of his children after they got together for a feast in case they had sinned. But as you all know the story, Satan challenged God's blessings on Job by saying that Job would curse God if God took away those blessings. The God allowed Satan to take his children,

and even physical health away. Job's friends then came when Job was in terrible pain and added to it by accusing Job of doing something wrong to deserve the judgment of God. In the middle of this trial Job makes one of the strongest statements of faith we have in the Bible.

Job 1:21 "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised."

Job was content to place his faith and fate in the hands of his Creator. Job recognized that God had the right to do anything in this universe because it is His Creation. This should be enough for us also. But in modern times we seem to need more. And there is more. God would not allow Job to suffer without just cause. He used the suffering of Job to prove Satan wrong and as a witness to Job's friends and everyone who has heard his story since that time. Sometimes God uses trials to build our faith and accomplish higher purposes that we may know nothing of. We should learn to be patient and wait on the Lord. The Lord will bring everything to



justice, if not now then in the end. God was merciful and not only accomplished his purposes but blessed Job far more than he had before with new sons and daughters, possessions and a name that would never be forgotten in the history of mankind. *Col 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.*

God's chosen people are dearly loved. Job was dearly loved, so much that God trusted Job to show Satan that there are men who place their full trust in God. If we cloth ourselves in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience the Lord can use us to accomplish great things in His Kingdom and we will surely be

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Back Issues!

You can access back issues of the Pacific Waves Newsletter online by going to the following address:

<http://op.50megs.com/pw/password.html>

and typing in the password "xv28zb9x" at the prompt. This will take you to the PWN Archive site where you can view all back issues of PWN online!

Being Content In The Time Of Adversity by Mike Oppenheimer

Is there a secret to living the Christian life? It may be a secret to some, but many have found it to be disclosed by God, Who has revealed to mankind in His Word all that we need to live a life of godliness. The Scripture is given so we who believe in Jesus Christ can be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work that can please God (2 Tim. 3:16-17.)

The Word of God tells us "godliness is a means of great gain when it is accompanied by contentment." Contentment is a concept hardly being heard anymore. Paul understood it as the essential

ingredient for our endurance in trials and joy in life. He said, "And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content" (1 Timothy 6:8). If our basic needs are met, we should be satisfied. This was part of Jesus' teaching from the Sermon on the Mount; we are not to long for the immediate but are to look to the eternal. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount makes it clear if God feeds the birds and we are worth so much more, we should not "stress out" over His provision for us. Yet popular teachers of "prosperity" Word Of Faith try to influence the church by telling it not to be satisfied with what we have

... it is not enough, there is always more. While they are presenting this as a teaching of faith, it is not faith to get more, but actually a lack of faith, making people covet and strive; not to be satisfied and content with what God has already given. The definition of faith means to trust, to be patient, and to be satisfied with the answer that you receive. We are to wait on the promises of God and be content with what we have. By this attitude the peace of God is brought into our lives.

Contrary to what some are being told that God will give you whatever you pray for in faith, the Wisdom in

Fruit Of the Spirit Series—Patience *cont.*

rewarded, not only in this life, but in eternity to come with a crown.

2 Tim 4:2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.

As Christians, followers of Christ, we should always be prepared to preach the Word with patience. Many times people do not come to faith in Christ for many years. They watch our lives, they listen to what we teach, they look for the evidence of Christ in our lives first. If, like Job, we show that our actions are as strong as our words, then people will be persuaded of the Gospel message. Allow God to put you to the test. Out of the fire comes pure gold, out of hot water comes cleanliness.

PATIENCE = Accepting a difficult situation without demanding a deadline to remove it.

Read 1 Samuel 1:1-20

Hannah was a godly woman, but she had no children. She was greatly distressed by this situation and she cried out to the Lord to provide a child. She vowed that if the Lord would provide then she would give him to God and His service. Her patience resulted in God hearing Hannah's prayer; He granted her a son named Samuel. Samuel grew up to be a man devoted to the Lord and was instrumental in identifying Israel's first king and anointing a shepherd boy named David.

We live in an instant world—microwave ovens, the internet, cell phones and pagers—which has changed the way we view time. Standing in lines or being jammed in traffic send many people through the roof. A delayed airline flight can be aggravating. Overcrowded restaurants with two waitresses short gnaws on you. The ability to accept delays graciously, calmly and with a smile is tough. Speedy success is our expectation while learning to be patient is put on the back burner.

Does the fast pace world that we live in really bring meaning to our lives? What can we learn from having an attitude of patience? Our lives need to be marked by patience. The Greek word translated "patience" literally means "long-tempered." There are three aspects to biblical patience:

(1) Patience never gives into negative circumstances, no matter how difficult. God told Abraham He would make him into a great nation and give Canaan to his descendants (Genesis 12:2, 7). When God made this promise, Abraham and Sarah had no children. They had to wait far past their child bearing years before God gave them a son. Abraham trusted God and patiently waited for Him to fulfill His promise.

(2) Patience involves coping with

difficult people. Paul tells us to "be patient with all men." (1 Thessalonians 5:14). This is a gentle spirit that refuses to retaliate.

(3) Patience accepts God's plan for everything. It doesn't question God. A patient man says, "Lord, if this is what you have planned for me, that's all right."

Examples Of Patience Today

Not Much Of A Truck Driver Either

I heard a story the other night about a truck driver who dropped in at an all-night restaurant in Broken Bow, Nebraska. The waitress had just served him when three swaggering, leather-jacketed motorcyclists – of the Hell's Angels type – entered and rushed up to him, apparently spoiling for a fight. One grabbed the hamburger off his plate, another took a handful of his French fries, and the third picked up his coffee and began to drink it. The trucker did not respond as one might expect. Instead, he calmly rose, picked up his check, walked to the front of the room, put the check and his money on the cash register, and went out the door. The waitress followed him to put the money in the till and stood watching out the door as the big truck drove away into the night. When she returned, one of the cyclists said to her, "Well, he's not much of a man, is he?" She replied, "I can't answer as to that, but he's not much of a truck driver. He just ran over three motorcycles out in the parking lot."

This is a negative example of patience. We should not be patient in order to get revenge. Revenge is a big problem in the islands, as well as the rest of the world. Being patience to look for an opportunity for revenge is not the kind of patience we need or the kind God requires.

Sensitive Patience

A train was filled with tired people. Most of them had spent the day traveling through the hot dusty plains and at last evening had come and they all tried to settle down to a sound sleep. However, at one end of the car a man was holding a tiny baby and as night came on the baby became restless and cried more and more. Unable to take it any longer, a big brawny man spoke for the rest of the group. "Why don't you take that baby to its mother?" There was a moment's pause and then came the reply. "I'm sorry. I'm doin' my best. The baby's mother is in her casket in the baggage car ahead." Again there was an awful silence for a moment. Then the big man who asked the cruel

question was out of his seat and moved toward the man with the motherless child. He apologized for his impatience and unkind remark. He took the tiny baby in his own arms and told the tired father to get some sleep. Then in loving patience he cared for the little child all through the night.

Patience means understanding that circumstances may be quite different than we think they might be. The Lord has a way of testing us often to see if we have patience. If we don't then let's hope that we will repent of the sin of impatience like the man in this story.

Patience

A missionary told how encouraging and helpful Isaiah 65:2 is which says, "I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts." had been to her. . . . "When she felt she had little patience left with some child, she thought of her Lord's patience. He was willing to 'spread out (HIS) hands all the day.' She thought how God's love and patience are unfathomable. He does not give up, even though reaching a rebellious people!" Aline Trumbull writes, "One morning I wanted to feed the birds. It was gray and cold, and the ground was covered with snow. I stepped out on the porch and flung them handful of crumbs, and called to them. No, there they sat, cold, hungry, and afraid. They did not trust me. As I sat and watched and waited, it seemed to me I could get God's viewpoint more clearly than ever before. He offers, plans, watches, waits, hopes, longs for all things for our good. But He has to watch and wait as I did for my timid friends."

We need to have patience like God has for us. He is the perfect picture of patience for us. We need to think about that when we are impatient with people or circumstances.

Patience In Waiting For God

I heard of a missionary who did not receive her monthly check. She was seriously ill and because of no money had to live on oatmeal and canned milk. She received her check thirty days later. After mentioning this incident while on furlough a doctor asked the nature of her illness. She described the intestinal digestive trouble she had been having and the doctor said, "If your check had arrived on time and you had been eating your current diet you would now be dead, because the best treatment for your illness was a thirty-day oatmeal diet." You know, our problem is that we do

not wait upon the Lord. We forget that it's through faith and patience that we obtain God's promises.

As in the story of Job and others we already talked about, we need to understand as Christians that sometimes the Lord is working through circumstances that to us are not to our benefit. This means we need to be patient and understand that the Lord has us in His hands. "He's got the whole world in His hands".

Love never gets tired

A mother took her six-year-old boy into a doctor's crowded waiting room. As they waited their turn, he began to ask her all kinds of questions. In half an hour he managed to cover almost every subject known to humanity. To the wonder of all the others sitting in the room, his mother answered each question carefully and patiently. Inevitably, he got around to God. As the other people listened to his relentless "how's" and "why's," it was plain to see by the expressions on their faces that they wondered: "How does she stand it?" But when she answered her son's next question, she answered theirs too. "Why," he asked, "doesn't God ever get tired and just stop?" "Because," she replied after a moment's thought, "God is love; and love never gets tired."

Our goal as Christians is to be more like Christ. God never gets tired because of His love for us. His Spirit continues to strive with us, long after we would have given up. Don't give up on people. Continue to pray for them. When God gives you the opportunity to talk to them about spiritual things, take it. Don't let the opportunity pass you by. But be patient as your Lord Jesus Christ is patient with you.

The next story is a story about not giving up from my life.

Outside The Reef

I grew up in Palau and one day I was fishing outside the reef with two of my friends. I was spear fishing while the other boys were line fishing from the raft. Very quickly, a storm came up. It came up so quickly that within minutes the waves at the reef were over ten feet high. I was pretty far away from my friends and as I looked up I saw them paddling for the reef. The last I saw of them was the long bamboo raft tumbling lengthwise, end over end, and disappearing on the other side of the reef waves. One of the boys was only 8 years old and I was afraid that he had probably died. But, at the moment, I had myself to worry about. I looked at the gigantic waves on the reef and the blowing

Being Content In The Time Of Adversity *end*

in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

When the sweat turned to blood on Jesus' face, and his day of undeserved death had come, he asked if there was any other way three times. With the answer of no, he accepted the will of the Father, bowed his head and cried, "Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done" (Matt 26:39). This is contentment in a time of despair...quiet strength. Everyone wants power but what was the most powerful moment in Jesus' life? When He was the weakest and the meekest, when He surrendered Himself over to God the Father on the cross. That became the victory for us all. And that is how He wants us to live our lives—in surrender and contentment. Our distress is God's opportunity to meet our deepest need.

Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." (Mark 10:15) What was He saying? That we need to trust Him by showing our dependence on God as a little child does with their parents. We come into the kingdom dependent on His work for us and we continue to depend on God as we pray as children to our Father. But sometimes we have become children of discontentment, frustrated with

where we are and where we are going. We are in the shadows wondering what is happening to us. Why? Sometimes it is God's hand of care on us for redirection—it may be time to sit still and listen. It may be because we have forged out our own road and our own plans. We have not listened as children that want to be under the Father's authority.

When people promise success according to the things of the world in this lifetime because you are a child of God—when they deny you are to have trials—better check to see if you're in the Faith. You may not be a legitimate child, for God says whom He loves he chastens. Paul states "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (2 Corinthians 13:5). "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened (as child being trained) of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Corinthians 11:31-32). God does send trials of love to purge us of things in our lives that are not to be there. The purpose is to make us more useful for Him and to have us grow up and be mature. It's not that riches are bad that one must deny them, nor is it that riches are good and one must have

them to prove God's blessings or love—it's one's relationship to the Lord and having Him be master of all that we have...being content with him ONLY.

Sometimes God gives us what we want to teach us a lesson. He may give you what you want as He did to Israel when they complained about what they were missing on their way to Canaan "And He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul" (Psalm 106:15).

You may think it is from God and will never want to hear it is not. It may satisfy you for a while, but it will never bring contentment in the long run. We delude ourselves into thinking God wants to bless our plans without our life being nailed to the cross, partaking in the suffering of Christ in this present world.

We cannot be content until we can say by faith, "I cast myself, my cares upon him; for he cares for me."

Nothing short of unreserved surrender to Jesus will do in our times of adversity.

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Mike Oppenheimer is an apologist whose ministry "Let Us Reason" is helping Christians worldwide to stand for the truth.

Bible Study *end*

best for us? We do not need to fear or worry about persecution which Jesus predicted. We belong to God and He will hear our cry. He will intervene to help us and rescue us

Our concern should be with a different matter. The last statement (Luke 18:8b) is scary. "However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" Can true faith be viewed as determined persistence in prayer? Jesus will be coming back, maybe soon. He is warning us that as we near the end, it will be harder and harder to be faithful and persistent in prayer. He describes the difficulties of that time in **Matt. 24:9-13**. Will we continue to trust God even if it becomes unpopular and we are persecuted for it? Now is the time to develop a life of prayer in which we take all things to God, expecting Him to act in the right time and way because He is our Father. Prayer with expectant faith in the nature of God may be expressed in bold persistence. Knowing who God is and recognizing one's place in the divine scheme of creation will build a solid life of prayer with perseverance even in the greatest

of hardships. Let's not give up, but continue to bring our requests before God.



Juanita Simpson is a retired missionary still serving the Lord in Micronesia after 38 years of ministry.

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Being Content In The Time Of Adversity *cont.*

Prov. 14:14 states "The backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways. But a good man will be satisfied from above." Letting God be the Lord over your life will bring contentment. The pursuit of one's own desires—what you think is best in your life—can remove you from being under His grace and His blessings that He has for you.

As Charles Spurgeon stated "we have not been content to do His will without asking questions." On the other hand a good portion of the church has been trained not to ask what His will is. So how can we fulfill His purposes in our life without pursuing His will? We need to do His will, His way and in His time; that should be a Christian's pursuit.

Heb. 13:5 "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." The enemy of contentment is coveting; it destroys our patience and faith. Contentment is a spiritual principle to live by so we can have joy, no matter what happens in our lives. We need to know our own heart's anxiousness and protect ourselves from what would remove us from being content.

It's like the story of a man who asked God, "What's a million years to you?" And God said, "A second.

Then the man asked God, "What's a million dollars to you? And God said, "A penny":

So the man then said to God, "Will you give me a penny?" And God said, "Sure, you just need to wait a second."

We should want to be fruitful, that should be our goal. "But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15). No tree bears fruit overnight, and the Christian life does not yield quick results by a slow and steady work of the Holy Spirit taking place. Patience and contentment go together. Whoever heard of someone being anxious and unsettled and still called content?

Heb. 6:13-15 "For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise." Patience has always been a strength for the saints but in the last days it becomes even more crucial "By your patience possess your souls" (Luke 21:19).

Rev. 1:9 "I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." Six times in the book of Revelation patience is mentioned as part of the commendation to the church and necessary for our

perseverance. Rev. 14:12 "Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." To have patience in trial makes one satisfied with what one has, and one need not strive to gain anything, and the focus stays on Christ.

A good portion of the church has become content with false teachers and prophets in the church. They don't mind as long as they tell them they are going to prosper and be well and be part of some new thing God is doing. Never mind the damage done, the false representations to the world and the church's suffering reputation. Many "Christians" find their contentment in seeking after all the things of the world. We don't want to be like Esau, and have immediate satisfaction of our hunger, trading the promise from God for something that will satisfy our flesh craving for the moment.

Prov. 30:15 "There are three things that are never satisfied, Four never say, "Enough!" The grave, the barren womb, The earth that is not satisfied with water—And the fire never says, "Enough!"

All of these are products of a fallen world. No matter how much they have there is more to consume and they are not satisfied, there is no contentment. Prov. 27:20 "Hell and Destruction are never full; So the eyes of man are never satisfied." When your pursuit in life is to have more money, more success, more of everything except God, and His plan and purpose—then you are no longer content with the lot God has given you. You have stepped off the narrow road onto the slippery slide that leads you quickly away from the Lord.

Let's look at a Scripture that is often ripped from its context to justify getting whatever one wants "I can do all things through Christ." Philippians 4:11-13: "Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." In context what Paul is explaining is that he cannot look at a bad situation and be overcome by it. Not that he can get ALL things through Christ, but he learned to be satisfied in whatever state he was in by Christ's stamina working in him. We need the grace of God to be able to be in the attitude of contentment.

What if we lost everything tomorrow, would we be able to cope? Would we blame God, or say we did not have enough faith and this is why it happened? True contentment is what Paul explained: as we read this whole Scripture in context "I know

how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." He certainly must have had this in mind when he penned 2 Cor. 4:8-9 "We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed..."

To be blessed today is interpreted as having abundance in all things. What they teach is that the Church is under a new and better covenant and should have what some of the great men of faith had under the old covenant. We are not under the curse but the blessing! Certainly there is a portion of truth in this as the writer of Hebrews tells us. We do have a new and better covenant. "But now hath He (Jesus) obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the mediator of a "Better Covenant, which was established upon "Better" Promises" (Hebrews 8:6). However this is not a covenant of works but rest in His work. We cannot initiate the promise but He is the giver of them by His grace.

It is on this basis that most prosperity preachers believe it should include abundance of health and wealth. If Abraham or the Jews were promised prosperity and health, why not us? We are the Church. They neglect to see the blessings for Israel were dependent on Israel's obedience; it was part of their training in the Mosaic covenant. If they obeyed the

commands, they were blessed. It was a conditional covenant; we are under an unconditional covenant that is operated by trusting God and His will for us as individuals, not as a nation. One of the reasons the new covenant is better, and superior, is because it operates by grace. Israel was punished if they did not obey and it was at times quite severe. What we see today is an elimination of any chastisement for the believer, who want only the blessing. We want to have our cake and eat it too. To have a spiritual diet mostly on what is sweet steals our nutrition; honey can taste sweet and we can gorge ourselves on the pursuit of blessings found in the Word without realizing we have moved ourselves into a position of judgment. We don't listen well or allow the Word to pierce our innermost being, but instead use it for self aggrandizement. The Bible is not to be reduced to merely a book of promises we go to and claim our successes and prosperity in life. There is nowhere in the New Testament where a promise of prosperity or financial blessing is given to everyone who follows Christ. Paul wrote in 2 Tim. 3:16 how the Scripture is to be used for the believer "All Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." A godly man is willing to be told the worst of himself. Proverbs states "Those who hate reproof love ruin"

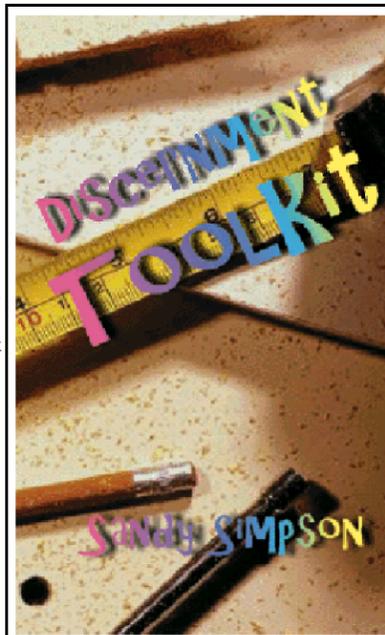
We become enemies to our God's best interests and bring harm to our own souls when we refuse His reproof.

Jer. 5:1-4 "Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem; see

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Bible Study *by Juanita Simpson*

BIBLE STUDY by Juanita Simpson

The Parables of Jesus – Part 8 The Judge and the Widow Luke 18:1-8

To set the stage for this parable we need to look first to find out to whom Jesus was speaking. This parable was spoken to the disciples. It's unusual for Jesus to tell why He told a parable to His disciples. In this case it is made clear. Jesus was teaching them that they should always pray. Can we always pray? Eph. 6:18; I Thess. 5:17 How can we always pray? Jesus' point was to encourage His disciples to pray, keep on praying, and never stop praying. Some people teach that all we have to do is pray in faith once, asking for what we want, and that to continue to pray shows lack of faith. This parable of Jesus destroys that theory. Persistence and patience in prayer is a genuine expression of true faith.

Jesus was also teaching them in this parable that they should not give up. The Amplified Version says: "not to turn coward - faint, lose heart, and give up". Isa. 40:31; Rom. 12:12; Col. 4:2 Have you given up praying about something or someone? Why? The solution to fear and worry is trusting prayer. Jesus and the disciples were faced with rejection and hostility. Jesus told them this parable for encouragement and instruction about prayer. The emphasis is on perseverance in prayer.

Let us examine the characteristics of the unjust judge. What was his first characteristic? He didn't fear God. What does it mean to fear God? Prov. 1:7 When people said, "Do the right thing for God's sake", it didn't matter to him at all. He didn't have to be just because he wasn't afraid of being accountable to God. This is one of the problems with the theory of evolution. Evolution convinces people that since they were not created by God, they will not have to be accountable to Him. The fear of God is a good thing. It promotes justice. In the Jewish culture judges had to fear God. II Chron. 19:2 They must not judge on the basis of partiality or bribes, but must represent God Himself in their judgment. Why was it important for a judge to fear God? Why is it important today? Do most judges fear God today? What a blessing when we find one who does!

What was the judge's second characteristic? He didn't care about men. The Greek word used means he was not ashamed before men. He was hurting a helpless widow. But he didn't sense the evil of his actions when he should have been

ashamed before her. Even if people said, "Shame on you!" he would not feel ashamed. To say, "Do it for this poor widow" was useless to him. He was unmoved by God or man.

Now let's examine the characteristics of the helpless widow. What were her characteristics? Widows and orphans in the Bible are a picture of the innocent, powerless, oppressed, and defenseless person. They were often the forgotten members of the community. This widow may not have been an old woman. Since girls married as young as 13 or 14 she may have still been a young woman. This woman's legal rights were being destroyed. She had no protector to try to force the judge, and she had no money to bribe him. Women didn't usually go to court, so that means that she had no male relative to help her. She had to go to the judge herself.

What was the woman's request to the judge? "Grant me justice against my adversary". Probably this had to do with money or property. Maybe it was a debt owed to her, or part of an inheritance that should come to her. Widows then always had adversaries, because people thought they could take advantage of them. Does she want vengeance? No. She just wants justice and protection. The widow is in the right - is being denied justice she should receive. For some reason the judge doesn't want to serve her - probably because she can't afford to give him a bribe and he considers her too unimportant to bother with. The judge prefers to favor her adversary - probably because he is a man, is influential in the community, or has paid a bribe to the judge. The widow's only weapon is her persistence.

How quickly did the judge act for the woman? He was very slow about doing anything. "For some time" he refused. We don't know how long "some time" was, but she kept coming to him, however long it was. She didn't give up hope. When Jesus praised people for their faith, it was often after they had demonstrated extreme persistence in trying to reach Him for help. One example is the blind man by the side of the road in Luke 18:35-43. He kept calling out to Jesus even though the crowd tried to silence him. Finally they led him to Jesus who restored his sight, saying, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you."

Finally the judge began talking to himself about this whole thing. What did he admit about his attitudes? He didn't fear God or care about people. He would not help in this situation because it was right to do before God

or because he felt sorry for the woman. The judge didn't think of himself as wrong and unjust. He was just realistic in his analysis of himself: "I don't fear God or care about people."

What was the judge's reason to finally help the patient widow? "Because she keeps bothering me." He is tired of her perpetual nagging and wants to be left in peace. He will not do it out of duty to God, and no one can make him ashamed of the bad way he is treating an innocent woman. Only his annoyance at her continual coming can move him to act. The Amplified Version says: "Yet because this widow continues to bother me, I will defend and protect and avenge her; lest she give me intolerable annoyance and wear me out with her continual coming, or at the last she come and scream at me or hit me or strangle me." A physical blow from a widow in his courtroom would be the greatest disgrace to this judge. He must give her what she wants. The judge's reasons for helping were totally selfish, which doesn't surprise us because that was his main characteristic. He wanted to get rid of her, and he saw that there was no other way since she wouldn't give up.

Jesus said, "Listen to the words of the unjust judge". Does He say that the judge was a good man because he finally did a good thing? No. He was unjust and selfish. Then why did he do this good thing? Only to relieve himself of a problem.

Next Jesus compares the judge with God. Can you imagine how shocked his audience was to hear Jesus compare God with a cruel, selfish judge? Is He saying that God is like the judge who doesn't care about people and only does something for them because He doesn't want to be bothered any more? Are we supposed to annoy God and wear Him out so that he finally will give us what we need? The answer is No! Is God just? Yes! Does He care more about some people than others? No! Rom. 3:4, 26. Eph. 6:8-9; I John 1:9; Rev. 15:3

Jesus is contrasting God with the judge. He is saying, "If an unjust, ungodly, selfish judge would finally help a poor widow, how much more will the just, holy, pure and righteous God help us?" If this inconsiderate man who refused for a long time to help the widow and finally only agreed in order to get rid of her, won't our loving God who listens to the cry of the poor be moved with compassion and intervene for their deliverance? God who cares about each of us personally will certainly

bring us justice. WHY?

1.) He will bring us justice because we are His chosen ones. He chose us to be His own children. If a corrupt judge can be influenced for good by someone of no importance, how much more can we expect God to hear the prayers of those created in His image? In His great love, He made salvation possible for us. He loved us so much that He wanted us to be in His eternal family. He is our loving Father, not an unjust judge. Matt. 7:7-11

2.) He will bring us justice because we cry out to Him day and night. This is a picture of an attitude of continual, patient prayer. However discouraged and hopeless our situation seems to be, it is not as bad as this widow who had to go, not to a loving Father, but to a judge who cared nothing about her. We can be sure that our prayers are heard and acted on. When fear or worry grips our hearts, we are challenged in this parable to pray continually in the face of all discouragements with full confidence that God will act in our best interests. Matt. 21:22; John 14:13-14; 15:7; James 1:5-6; I John 3:22; 5:14

3.) God is extending His mercy to us instead of His anger. He is being patient and long-suffering. II Pet. 3:9 We don't deserve that because we are sinners, but the real reason that God hears and answers our prayers is that He is a God of mercy. He has opened the way through the death of His Son so that we can come to Him and He will not put us off. This parable focuses on God's favor. God's favor cannot be earned. We cannot force or persuade God to do something. Everything depends on God.

4.) Whereas the unjust judge took his time to provide justice to the widow, God will see that we get justice for sure and quickly. We do have to think of the word "quickly" with God's time table in mind. "With God 1000 years are as a day and a day as 1000 years." Sometimes this justice only comes after death - as with the disciples and others who have been martyred for their faith in God. Other times it comes very quickly. One thing we can be sure of - God will defend us when we put our lives in His hands. Even when it looks like everyone is against us, we can trust Him to be for us.

This whole parable has been written to encourage us to be faithful in prayer and in trusting God to be at work even in hard circumstances. Are we persistent like the widow? Do we continually bring our requests before God, knowing that He is our loving Father, so we can trust Him to do the