

# 19th Sunday after Pentecost October 20, 2019

Proper 24(29) or 18th Sunday after Trinity  
Year C – the Gospel of Luke

**Lutheran**

## **Living the ^ Lectionary**

*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.  
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

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**“AND WILL NOT GOD BRING ABOUT JUSTICE FOR HIS CHOSEN ONES,  
WHO CRY OUT TO HIM DAY AND NIGHT? WILL HE KEEP PUTTING THEM OFF?”**

# LUKE 18:7

<http://lb.dustoffthebible.com/Blog-Archiv/2016/10/01/daily-bible-reading-devotional-luke-181-8-october-1st-2016/>

### Hymn of the Day

**Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 734 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 524**

**“I trust, O Lord, Your holy name/ In Thee, Lord, have I put my trust”**

Adam Reissner 1496-1572, is the author of this paraphrase of Psalm 31. As seen in the information below, like our own hymnals, this hymn has variations in title, verses and musical adaptations. TLH has 7 verses and LSB only 5 with slight variation in the melody.

“The only hymn by Reissner translated into English is:—**In dich hab ich gehoffet, Herr.** *Ps. xxxi*. First published in the *Form und ordnung Gaystlicher Gesang und Psalmen*, Augsburg, 1533, and thence in *Wackernagel*, iii. p. 133, in 7 stanzas of 6 lines. It was included in V. Babst's *Gesang-Buch*, 1545, and repeated in almost all the German hymnbooks up to the period of Rationalism. It is one of the best Psalm-versions of the Reformation period. Included in the *Unverfälschter Liedersegen*, 1851, No. 629. The translation in common use is:—**In Thee, Lord, have I put my trust.** A good translation, omitting st. vii., by Miss Winkworth, in her *Chorale Book for England*, 1863, No. 120.

Other translations are:—

(1) "Lord, let me never be confoundit." In the *Gude and Godly Ballates*, ed. 1568, f. 82; ed. 1868, p. 141. (2) "Great God! in Thee I put my Trust." By J. C. Jacobi, 1725, p. 33 (1732, p. 116). Repeated in the *Moravian Hymn Book*, 1754, pt. i., No. 118. (3) "Lord, I have trusted in Thy name." By Dr. H. Mills, 1856, p. 171. (4) "On Thee, O Lord, my hopes I lean." By N. L. Frothingham, 1870, p. 263. [Rev. James Mearns, M.A.] --John Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology* (1907)"

- [https://hymnary.org/person/Reissner\\_A](https://hymnary.org/person/Reissner_A)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nN3TYI-8zTE> Instrumental using LSB 734 - Christian Hymn Series Hymns of Trust © 2015 Preus Music LLC
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9oJE1-jtIMs> Piano using TLH 524 [Andrew Remillard](#)
- 

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by [Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.](#)

**O.T.**—“I will not let you go unless you bless me.”

**Psalm** – “My help comes from the **LORD**”

**Epistle** – “**All Scripture is breathed out by God**”

**Gospel** – “**will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night?**”

**Genesis 32:22-30; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Jeremiah 31:27-34 or Genesis 32:22-31**  
*(Next week: Reformation Day, Revelation 14:6-7; RCL, 20<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost, Proper 25(30), Joel 2:23-32 or Sirach 35:12-17 or Jeremiah 14:7-10, 19-22)*

*“The story of Jacob's wrestling with the angel provides an embarrassment of riches for homiletical possibilities.*

*There is the mysterious incarnation of God into human form; there is the act of wrestling which simultaneously connotes both intimacy and struggle, but ultimately yields a blessing; there is the theme of identity that is connected to one's name -- and, of course, there is the new name given to Jacob by God... At the beginning of Genesis 32, preceding the lectionary pericope, Jacob has heard that his brother Esau is coming to meet him, accompanied by four hundred men (32:6). Jacob's response is to panic (32:7), because he assumes Esau is coming to attack him (32:8). The subsequent verses narrate Jacob's prayer to God for deliverance, and his plans of how to minimize the damages, plans that include sending a present to Esau, and dividing his camp.*

*Our text begins with Jacob sending his wives and children across the river Jabbok, an eastern tributary of the Jordan located about twenty miles north of the Dead Sea, at the border of Ammon (cf. Numbers 21:24, Deuteronomy 2:37 and 3:16, Joshua 12:2, Judges 11:22). The river's name, Jabbok, plays on the name Jacob, and is related to the word "wrestle")...*

- [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=710](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=710) Sara Koenig Associate Professor of Biblical Studies, Seattle Pacific University Seattle, WA

## Jacob Wrestles with God

<sup>22</sup> The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children,<sup>[a]</sup> and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. <sup>23</sup> He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had. <sup>24</sup> And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. <sup>25</sup> When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. <sup>26</sup> Then he said, “Let me go, for the day has broken.” But Jacob said, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.” <sup>27</sup> And he said to him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Jacob.” <sup>28</sup> Then he said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel,<sup>[b]</sup> for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.” <sup>29</sup> Then Jacob asked him, “Please tell me your name.” But he said, “Why is it that you ask my name?” And there he blessed him. <sup>30</sup> So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel,<sup>[c]</sup> saying, “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered.”

- a. [Genesis 32:22](#) Or sons
- b. [Genesis 32:28](#) Israel means *He strives with God*, or *God strives*
- c. [Genesis 32:30](#) Peniel means *the face of God*

“Gen 32:1-2 has this curious meeting between Jacob and the angels which seems to have no particular purpose except to name a place. Jacob is clearly anxious about the impending meeting with his brother especially when he finds out that Esau has a company of 400 men with him. He prays to God and indeed reminds God that he has returned because God told him (Gen 32:9-12)... Jacob is left alone and has an encounter with the "a man" (vv.24-31). Initially we have no identity of this man until later in the story when we discover Jacob has wrestled with God. In the Hebrew there is a play on Jacob's name (ya'aqob), the name of the wadi (Yabboq) and the verb to wrestle (ye'abeq) (Scullion:231). The irony is in Jacob asking for a blessing and apparently does not yet

know it is God. It is at the point that God gives him the name of Israel that God announces his identity. Jacob sees God face to face and lives as does Moses at a later time. The place is named "the face of God" = Peni(u)el. V.23 is almost a repetition of v.22 and there is further repetition about the length of the wrestling which lasted until the breaking of the day (vv.24, 26)... "

➤ <http://otl.unitingchurch.org.au/index.php?page=gen-32-22-31> © Copyright Rev Dr Anna Grant-Henderson

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"What does it mean for God to wrestle with a human being and have the human opponent "prevail"?"

What does it mean to have *God* commend Jacob for his *success* with *God*? What kind of God is this? Wrestling raises issues of bodily contact and power. The Godness of God seems to be compromised. Hence, efforts have often been made to work with textual issues in such a way that a more traditional understanding of God can be claimed for the text.

I make five introductory comments:

- The one whom Jacob encounters is God in human form; this understanding is congruent with Hosea 12.3-4, which speaks of Jacob's antagonist as both "God" and "the angel."
- God initiates the wrestling match with Jacob and has a *positive* end in mind relative to Jacob's imminent encounter with Esau. Inasmuch as Jacob was in the process of being obedient to God's command to return to the land (Genesis 31:3-13), God does not seek to keep Jacob from responding positively.
- Jacob is endangered by the daylight; he would then "see" God (Genesis 32:30). So, God's "let me go" (32:26) expresses a concern for *Jacob's* future, not *God's*.
- God's naming Jacob as Israel (Genesis 32:28) is a divine *commendation* of who Jacob has been and still is, not least in view of his successful response to God's wrestling initiative. The new name Israel is joined with the old name Jacob in the narratives that follow.
- God's encountering Jacob has no disciplinary purpose. Jacob voices no repentance of sin and God extends no forgiveness to him. Jacob's pattern of life continues much as before, even his deceptive behaviors (see Genesis 33:12-17). ..."

➤ [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=2906](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2906) Terence E. Fretheim Elva B. Lovell Professor Emeritus



I lift up my eyes to the mountains  
where does my help come from?  
My help comes from the Lord,  
the Maker of heaven and earth.

Psalm 121:1-2

<https://thebiblewallpapers.com/2017/06/08/psalm-1211-2/>

**Psalm 121; RCL, Psalm 119:97-104 or Psalm 121 (Psalm 46; RCL, Psalm 65 or Psalm 84:1-7)**

*The meaning of the title, "A Song of Ascents" has been long debated and often reviewed.<sup>9</sup> That explanation which seems best to fit the evidence and which is the opinion of the majority of recent scholars understands "ascents" as a reference to the "going up" to Jerusalem for the annual festivals held there (see Deut 16:16). A "going up" to Jerusalem is mentioned in Psalm 122:4 of this group, as well as in texts like I Kings 12:28, Isaiah 2:3, Matthew 20:17 and Luke 2:42; Psalm 24:3 refers to ascending the "hill of the Lord." Thus these psalms may be designated "pilgrimage psalms." This position has been refined in a number of ways: Kraus suggests that the "going up" may also refer to the last stage of the pilgrimage, the procession (II Sam 6:12, 15; I Kings 12:33; II Kings 23:2). Seybold believes that the sequence of the psalms may reflect the stages of the journey: Psalms 120-122 are concerned with setting out, 123-132 fit the situation "again on Mt. Zion," and 133 and 134 are suited for the time of farewell. Hans Seidel finds a tripartite structure in each of these psalms, consisting of the statement of a theme, a meditation on that theme, and a concluding blessing. He classifies these psalms as "Short Meditations" (Kurzandachten), connecting them with the preaching of the Levites to the pilgrims. In sum, we cite Seybold's conclusion that this collection is "a handbook for pilgrims, a kind of vade mecum with prayers and songs, perhaps a breviary, also containing texts for meditation...."*

➤ [http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/5-2\\_Psalms/5-2\\_Limburg.pdf](http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/5-2_Psalms/5-2_Limburg.pdf) James Limburg

Listen to the choir sing this Psalm. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRp-2WDyKAE> John White Chapel Geneva College Text: John D.S. Campbell Tune: Charles H. Purday, 1860, arr. Michael R. Kearney, 2014

## **My Help Comes from the LORD**

### **A Song of Ascents.**

121 I lift up my eyes to the hills.

From where does my help come?

<sup>2</sup> My help comes from the LORD,  
who made heaven and earth.

<sup>3</sup> He will not let your foot be moved;  
he who keeps you will not slumber.

<sup>4</sup> Behold, he who keeps Israel  
will neither slumber nor sleep.

<sup>5</sup> The LORD is your keeper;  
the LORD is your shade on your right hand.

<sup>6</sup> The sun shall not strike you by day,  
nor the moon by night.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD will keep you from all evil;  
he will keep your life.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD will keep  
your going out and your coming in  
from this time forth and forevermore.

“There are no references or allusions to Psalm 121 in the New Testament. Nevertheless, it remains one of the more popular psalms in Christian liturgy, hymnody, and piety. In the Lutheran tradition, for example, this psalm has found a place in services at both the beginning and the end of life. In the baptismal service of the old Evangelical Lutheran Church, as the child or adult was brought to the font, the pastor said, “The Lord preserve thy coming in and thy going out from this time forth and forevermore,” a paraphrase of Psalm 121:8. Contemporary services for comforting the bereaved and for the burial of the dead make use of Psalm 121. The Psalm is suggested for use in ministering to those who are addicted and the last verse is part of an order for the blessing of a dwelling. In the course of the church year, Psalm 121 is assigned as one of the readings for (*Proper 24*). Hymn paraphrases include John Campbell’s, “Unto the Hills,” Ernst W. Olson’s, “Mine eyes unto the mountains I lift,” and John Ylvisaker’s setting of this psalm to the traditional American folk tune, “Wayfaring stranger.” Among memorable musical settings we may mention Mendelssohn’s, “Lift thine eyes to the mountains” and the chorus, “He, watching over Israel,” both from the *Elijah*, as well as Leonard Bernstein’s use of the Psalm in “A Simple Song” in his *Mass*. Finally, this psalm has always had a place in the everyday piety of the people of God...”

- [http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/5-2\\_Psalms/5-2\\_Limburg.pdf](http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/5-2_Psalms/5-2_Limburg.pdf) James Limburg

## 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5; RCL, the same reading (Romans 3:19-28; RCL, 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18)

*“If you’re just joining us now for this, the third of four Sundays devoted to Second Timothy, here’s what you’ve missed so far:*

*Timothy must persevere in the faith and teach others to do likewise by passing along the instruction he has received. What is his example for remaining steadfast despite the threat of persecution and the challenges posed by other teachers spreading false doctrine? Paul...”*

- [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1836](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1836) [Matt Skinner](#) Professor of New Testament, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.

*“We start out in our meditation then, noting that the first word is “all”: **All** Scripture is inspired.... Now there may have been some false teachers... in Timothy’s midst that denied certain aspects of Scripture as being not from God or authoritative. Perhaps they viewed certain portions of God’s word as unimportant or unnecessary for spiritual growth and development. They would rather substitute their own teaching for those of Scripture. Paul says that that idea is patently false. He says that the whole thing is from God...yes, including the genealogies! There are even some of us who, as Christians claiming to love the Lord, are not really committed to the truth Paul is affirming here. We show our defection when we read only those portions we like and give no attention to the other books or letters. For example, I have often heard people say that they just can’t get into *Leviticus*; it doesn’t do anything for them. Or, some refuse to listen to verses that do not fit their preconceived theological biases. This is dangerous ground, indeed, that may someday*

*open and swallow its tenants whole. In sum then, we must carefully evaluate what we are subscribing to when we readily confess that all Scripture is inspired by God..."*

- <https://bible.org/article/adequacy-scripture> Greg Herrick lives in Calgary Alberta, He has a passion to teach and disciple others, and holds a Th.M. and Ph.D. from Dallas Theological Seminary.

<sup>14</sup> But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom<sup>[a]</sup> you learned it <sup>15</sup> and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> **All Scripture is breathed out by God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God<sup>[b]</sup> may be complete, equipped for every good work.

## Preach the Word

4 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: <sup>2</sup> preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. <sup>3</sup> For the time is coming when people will not endure sound<sup>[c]</sup> teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, <sup>4</sup> and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. <sup>5</sup> As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

- a. [2 Timothy 3:14](#) The Greek for *whom* is plural
- b. [2 Timothy 3:17](#) That is, a messenger of God (the phrase echoes a common Old Testament expression)
- c. [2 Timothy 4:3](#) Or *healthy*

"In the passage before us Paul encourages Timothy to make the truth of the gospel known in the face of "hardship", and particularly in the face of the temptation to develop a popular ministry of the Word...

Paul now gives his final charge to Timothy... Paul gives his charge in the form of five commands. The first, "preach", sets the overall theme of the charge. Timothy is to preach the truths of God's Word. He must be ready, willing and able, to do this at every possible opportunity, whether the time seems right or not. Timothy's preaching must seek to "correct" (reprove, discipline Christian behavior), "rebuke" (censure, expose evil) and "encourage" (exhort, appeal to the conscience). His preaching must be undertaken with all persistence and forbearance and must fully cover Biblical truth...

It is fascinating to note, not only what is in the charge, but what is not in it. The charge focuses on the delivery of an effective Word ministry. Timothy is struggling against false teachers and so it is only natural that Paul should underline the preaching/teaching element in ministry. But even so, it is worth noting that the charge is devoid of matters of people management, marketing, social welfare, official public duties ....., all the stuff that is so central to full-time Christian ministry today.

What then are the elements of this charge to a young minister?

- i] Preach the Word. All other exhortations in Paul's charge are sub points of this exhortation. Communicating the Word of God is the central ministry of the church. Note how Paul gives weight to this charge in v1 and how Timothy is to do it in all situations, whether positive or not.
- ii] Stick at the business of communicating the Word of God. A minister faces many diversions, particularly when it comes to preparing the Sunday sermon. Maintaining a Word-ministry-focus is essential.
- iii] Censure. Through the preaching and teaching of the Word, reprove those who have fallen into sin.
- iv] Warn. Again, through the church's Word ministry, rebuke those who are falling away from faith.
- v] Exhort, appeal to, encourage, the faint hearted.
- vi] Maintain a well-balanced ministry. Given all the pressures facing ministry today, the preacher must strive to give the business of communicating God's Word its proper place.
- vii] Bear opposition patiently, but firmly
- viii] Do the work of an evangelist. We may not be gifted evangelists, but at least we can play our part in getting the gospel out into our local community and beyond.
- ix] Fully carry out these duties.

So, there we have it, the business end of a church's ministry - making known the truth of the gospel."

- <http://www.lectionarystudies.com/sunday29cie.html>  
Pumpkin Cottage Ministry Resources

**Luke 18:1-8; RCL, the same reading (John 8:31-36 or Matthew 11:12-19; RCL, Luke 18:9-14)**

*"In this pericope and the two that follow, Jesus' teaching is directed especially toward people who easily regard themselves as faithful followers. Here Jesus reveals his freedom to act for the program of God's Kingdom, giving a lesson for those who have been ensnared by their own pride and possessions. The judge in this parable is a negative example to reveal, by contrast, the unqualified mercy and justice of God... The word about prayer is not that God, like the judge, can be manipulated and that, therefore, one should pray day and night. This is not a prescriptive word, or even good advice. Rather, it is a descriptive statement about God and prayer... this Lucan parable asserts that God is always for God's people. God is the one who can be trusted far more than any human relationship can be trusted. God is not like the malevolent judge who had to be manipulated. The end of 18:8 ...makes this clear: "Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?" It is faith in the presence of the faithful one that is at stake here. God's claim upon God's creatures is a justifying claim that heralds righteousness and salvation..."*

- [http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/6-4\\_Romans/6-4\\_Kreider.pdf](http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/6-4_Romans/6-4_Kreider.pdf) Eugene C. Krieder, Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota

**The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 18th Chapter"**

## The Parable of the Persistent Widow

18 And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. <sup>2</sup> He said, *“In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. <sup>3</sup> And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’ <sup>4</sup> For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, <sup>5</sup> yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’”* <sup>6</sup> And the Lord said, *“Hear what the unrighteous judge says. <sup>7</sup> And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? <sup>8</sup> I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”*

“This is the Gospel of the Lord” “Praise to You, O Christ”

“In what way is God like an unjust judge?

Even the question seems inappropriate. God is *nothing* like an unjust judge, we quickly assert. What do we make, then, of this parable?...

Three distinct possibilities present themselves that, while drawing on similar elements, yet differ enough from each other that the preacher will need to exercise homiletical and pastoral judgment in determining which route to pursue.

### God the Good Judge

Perhaps the easiest interpretative road to travel involves correcting our faulty hearing of the rhetorical force of the parable's comparison of the unjust judge and God. The point is not that God is like an unjust judge who will, eventually relent to the persistent petitions of the widow. Rather, the rhetorical force of the construction mirrors that of earlier instructions about prayer: "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, *how much more* will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (11:13). We might read today's comparison similarly: "If even the most unjust of judges will finally relent to the ceaseless petitions of a defenseless widow, then *how much more* will God -- who is, after all, a *good* judge -- answer your prayers!"...

### God the Just Judge

A second and related path would be to give primary attention not only to Luke's introductory note but also to the choice of the unjust judge as a major character. Might the parable give voice to some of the discouragement of early believers, whether caused by the delay of Jesus' return or the difficult or unjust circumstances they were enduring? If so, the parable might be saying, "While I know that God may *seem* like an unjust judge, God's actions are just and God will deliver justice in due time."...

### The Widow as Pursuer of Justice

A third interpretive route shifts our attention from the judge to the widow. Widows in the ancient world were incredibly vulnerable, regularly listed with orphans and aliens as those persons deserving special protection. The fact that this particular widow must beseech a judge unattended by any family highlights her extreme vulnerability. Yet she not only beseeches the judge, but also persists in her pleas for justice to the point of creating sufficient pressure to influence his actions.

The focus in this reading is on the judge's description of his own motivation for settling the widow's claim. He asserts (as the narrator already had) that he neither fears God nor respects people, thereby testifying that his unsavory character has not changed during the course of the parable...

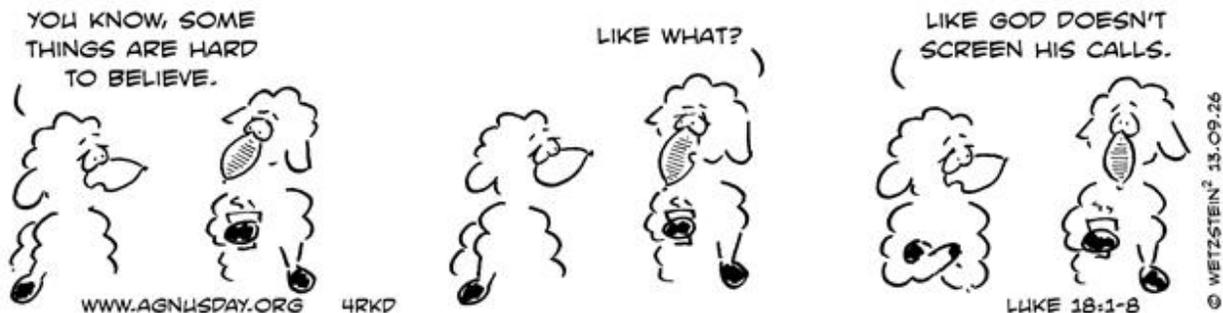
Read this way, the parable serves to encourage those suffering injustice to continue their complaints and calls for justice... God, the Bible has persistently insisted, gives special attention to those who are most vulnerable; therefore, we should persist in our complaints, even to the point of embarrassing the powers that be in order to induce change.

### A Contextual Homiletic

One's decision on how to preach this text will rest not only on interpretive decisions but also on contextual sensitivity. This parable, as ambiguous as it is provocative, can support several readings. Which one the preacher chooses will depend in large part on... the present and pressing needs of *(the)* congregation... Whichever direction you choose, surely one thing is certain -- our preaching, as with our living, should be accompanied by ceaseless prayer."

- [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=810](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=810) *David Lose* Senior Pastor, Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minn.

Folks complain because they pray and God seems to be harder of hearing than the judge in Jesus' story. But then it's always possible that we're the ones not listening.



But God does have caller ID, you can count on that.

- *Agnus Day* appears with the permission of <https://www.agnusday.org/>

"What we find today is a general apathy toward the Christian faith; it is now just one of the many different spiritual paths. Our privileged position is no more. In the push and shove of the religious market-place we have to compete for market share; a new phenomenon for the Christian church. Sadly, we are tending to lose out a bit.

The sad state of Christianity in Western society can easily lead us to lose heart. We pray for the Lord to stand up for his people, we pray for his just intervention, but little seems to happen. Of course, Christ's "kingdom is not of this world" so we are often unaware of the effectiveness of our prayers. As for the future, we can be sure something will happen at the return of Christ, but all seems so far away. Will our God act for his people?

The answer, of course, is "yes indeed!" For our part, let us not lose heart in the waiting. The Lord Jesus has not forgotten us. As we wait, our Lord requires but one thing of us, that we persevere in faith. May we never abandon our allegiance to Jesus."

- <http://www.lectionarystudies.com/studyg/sunday29cg.html>  
Pumpkin Cottage Ministry Resources