

Parable of the Unjust Judge

JUDGE -- (enters wearing black robe, crosses to podium, pounds gavel) This court is now in session. Anyone having business before this court, draw near and be heard.

WIDOW -- (enters carrying an armful of legal briefs with blue cover page) Your honor, I have business before this court.

JUDGE -- (sigh) You again.

WIDOW -- Yes, your honor and there's been a grave injustice perpetrated upon my person and I demand justice.

JUDGE -- Why do you persist in wasting the court's time. I have already given my decision in your case.

WIDOW -- You gave a decision, but justice was not served.

JUDGE -- So, you brought another truck load of legal motions?

WIDOW -- (smiles) Yes, your honor. I think you're going to like these. I worked on them all night last night. I'm sure that one of them will right the wrong that has been done.

JUDGE -- My good woman, as I....

WIDOW -- My name is Lucy Moreland. Referring to me as "good woman" is just another attempt by the court to depersonalize me. I am not your good woman, I am not the complainant. I am not the respondent. I am not the accuser. I am not the defendant. I am Lucy Moreland, a poor helpless....

JUDGE -- Alright, alright, you may be poor, but you're far from helpless. I get the point, Mrs. Moreland. But your name in no way influences the facts of this case.

WIDOW -- The facts of this case are that my farmer husband died, leaving me penniless. And now, because I am a penniless widow, I am being treated as a second class citizen.

JUDGE -- But in Janesville a penniless widow is a second class citizen, Mrs. Moreland.

WIDOW -- That is unjust and you know it.

JUDGE -- Just or not, that is the culture of Southern Wisconsin. We have been over this time and time again, Mrs. Moreland...

WIDOW -- You have the power to make this right, your honor. I'm not just asking for me. I am asking for justice. The bank stole my land from me and...

JUDGE -- Your husband owed back taxes on the land. The land is rightfully the banks and they have taken you to court!

WIDOW -- I have crops in the fields that could pay the taxes. All I'm asking for is a chance to hire someone to harvest the crops and sell them for me so I can pay the taxes.

JUDGE -- I have already ruled on that motion, Mrs. Moreland, and the answer was NO.

WIDOW -- Then, I have another motion. (hands one of the legal briefs to Judge)

JUDGE -- What's this one? (opens brief)

WIDOW -- This is a writ of habeas corpus.

JUDGE -- Habeas Corpus?! Habeas Corpus is a motion to have someone released from jail. What....

WIDOW -- ...Since you have stripped me of all my rights, I am a prisoner of the system. I...

JUDGE -- (gavel) Motion denied.

WIDOW -- (hands Judge another brief) In that case, I have another motion.

JUDGE -- (sigh) What's this one? (opens brief)

WIDOW -- This is a motion denying transfer of the land to that crooked bank on environmental grounds.

JUDGE -- Oh, brother. I can hardly wait to hear the arguments for this.

WIDOW -- There is an endangered species living on my land and...

JUDGE -- Wait a minute. Endangered species? What endangered

species?

WIDOW -- My dog.

JUDGE -- A dog is not an endangered species.

WIDOW -- Mine is.

JUDGE -- What kind is it?

WIDOW -- It's a mut and I've never seen another one like it.

JUDGE -- (gavel) Motion denied.

WIDOW -- (hands Judge another brief) In that case, I enter this motion to turn my property into a city park with me as the caretaker.

JUDGE -- (gavel) Motion denied.

WIDOW -- (hands Judge another brief) In that case, I enter this motion to turn my property into a county park.

JUDGE -- (gavel) Motion denied.

WIDOW -- (hands Judge another brief) In that case, I enter this motion to turn my property into a state park.

JUDGE -- (gavel) Motion denied.

WIDOW -- (hands Judge another brief) In that case, I enter this motion to turn my property into a national park.

JUDGE -- (gavel) Motion denied.

WIDOW -- (hands Judge another brief) In that case, I enter this motion to turn my property into a national monument.

JUDGE -- Motion.... Wait a minute. A monument?! To what?

WIDOW -- My husband. He was a really great guy. You would have loved him! I was thinking of erecting a bronze statue....

JUDGE -- (gavel) Motion denied.

WIDOW -- In that case, you leave me no choice. (hands Judge

another brief) I hereby petition the court to have my property...

JUDGE -- It's the bank's property and you have until noon tomorrow to vacate....

WIDOW -- Hereafter, I shall refer to my property as the "afore mentioned property". And I petition the court to have the transfer of the afore mentioned property delayed until such time as the criminal charges against the bank have been adjudicated.

JUDGE -- Criminal charges?! What criminal charges?

WIDOW -- The petition clearly states that the afore mentioned property is evidence in a criminal complaint filed by a poor unfortunate widow who was ruthlessly robbed of her property...

JUDGE -- (gavel) Motion denied.

WIDOW -- You didn't let me finish.

JUDGE -- Yes, I did. You just finished. (gavel) Motion denied.

WIDOW -- (hands Judge another brief) In that case, I petition you to recuse yourself as the judge on this case.

JUDGE -- Recuse myself? Why would I want to disqualify myself from hearing this case? On what grounds?

WIDOW -- On the grounds that you sit on the board of my bank!

JUDGE -- That has nothing to do with this case. (looks around, softly) How did you find out about that?

WIDOW -- A family member overheard you talking to a loan officer. No wonder I can't get any justice in this court!

JUDGE -- (gavel) Motion denied.

WIDOW -- Fine. (turns to exit) I'll see you tomorrow.

JUDGE -- Tomorrow?

WIDOW -- (turns back) Yes, I'll be here first thing tomorrow

with about a dozen new motions. We still have not explored eminent domain, illegal search and seizure, abridgement of free speech, the many aspects of due process of law. Then, of course, there's the appeals process, where I start all over again. In that case, I would have to file for a stay of execution of your court order pending the outcome of the appeal....

JUDGE -- Alright! Alright!

WIDOW -- Excuse me?

JUDGE -- You can keep your stupid farm. Go! Go! Get out of my court room! I never want to see you again!

WIDOW -- Let's get this straight, now. This is not a continuance or a moratorium?

JUDGE -- No. If you promise never to come back here ever again, you may keep your stupid farm.

WIDOW -- MY stupid farm? Does that mean I can discontinue calling it the afore mentioned property?

JUDGE -- (gavel, gavel) Out! Get out! (chases Widow off stage, shaking gavel at her) Out of my courtroom.

WIDOW -- I'm going already. I'm going.

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Conclusion to Parable of Unjust Judge

Persistence is a key to prayer. So many Christians quit before they just get started. We want answers quickly. We don't want to wait. As we seek to discern God's will for our lives we can not avoid grappling and wrestling with Him as we seek his blessing and direction upon our lives. How many of us pray before we make a business decision? I can tell you how many bad money decisions I've made getting into contracts I had no reason to get into. It was a failure to trust God's providence and care. It was a failure to trust in God's timing – as the gospel states: "Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them."

We have at our disposal Holy Scripture. The epistle reading encourages us to use it for instruction in salvation, behavior modification, encouragement, and sound doctrine. We are a pastoral church meaning that we seek God to guide and nurture our relationships. We emphasize the pastoral but not to the exclusion of the guidance of Holy Scripture and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Therefore I implore you to use study aids in your homes, devotional guides, home group studies in order that we might hold each other accountable before God what we say we believe.

I encourage men to gather together in pairs or small groups and women in their pairs and groups to pray one for another, to be accountable to each other as a person in recovery who is accountable to his or her sponsor. Find someone you can trust to do this with you and your burden will be much lighter. I know I could not be your pastor and God willing your rector without such accountability. Holy Scripture commends this way of life. And as a pastoral church we can do no less!

Let us pray:

Help us O Lord to trust a brother in Christ, trust a sister in Christ, to build upon the foundation that was laid by your Son that we might grow in grace and faith as we wrestle with the challenges of life. None of us can go it alone. It was never meant to be that way. We were created for community but we are so many alone. Instruct us in the way we pray. Amen!