

AGAINST THE ODDS

Luke 18:1-8 (NKJV) Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, 2 saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. 3 Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' 4 And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, 5 yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' "

6 Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. 7 And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? 8 I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

Currently in south Africa, at least 2.7% of the population are considered as problem gamblers, whilst 1.5% of the population are considered "pathological or compulsive gamblers". However, even with these low figures, this represents hundreds of thousands of South Africans – here we are talking about close to 2 million South Africans. This is a large number, and it is because people have believed a lie that gambling can get you out of poverty.

What people don't realize is that no matter how skilled and how many times you gamble, the odds are always against you. No matter what game you choose to play, the odds of the casino winning your money are greater than the odds of you winning the casino's money. That's because all casino games are designed to provide the house with a built-in edge, diminishing the chances and sizes of potential payouts.

- Why am I saying this? It is because for a natural being, the odds are stacked against you each time you face a challenge. It is you against a system that is designed to win against you.
- The question is, how do you get over a system that has a built-in system to always beat you. This is the story of humanity, it is as if we are stuck in this matrix in which no matter what you do, life will always have an upper hand. How do you explain a child choking whilst drinking milk, how do you explain what started as a small pimple on your hand becoming a cancerous tumor. How do you explain a father who collapses whilst doing his garden?

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- With this background firmly rooted in your hearts, I want to talk to you on the subject **AGAINST THE ODDS**. I want you to realize that you can overcome when all odds are against you.
- When people say, “you won against all odds”, they mean that you overcame when everything was working against you.
- In my introduction, I alluded to gambling at the casino and the casino or the house has a system that is meant to bankrupt everyone that comes in. In the same way, this world, this Babylon has a master called diabolos who has designed a system that is meant to beat anyone who tries to engage it. That is why his agenda is to kill, steal and to destroy.
- In the scriptures we read, Jesus gave a parable of a widow, who had an adversary, and the adversary had robbed her of something that was dear to her.
- Being a widow, it meant that she was in a place of weakness and was without the means to confront her adversary.
- How many times have we faced more powerful situations, hopelessness and not knowing how to deal with what is in front of us.

- Not much was said about this widow and because of that it opens the opportunity in which that widow could be any one of us here today.
- That widow could be a powerless and frail lady being owed a large sum of money by a rich landlord.
- That widow could be a single dad whose child is about to be expelled from school, maybe it is someone whose mother is about to die of cancer, maybe it is a young man who is being accused of a crime he didn't commit.
- Whatever the case might be, the odds were stacked against this widow and like this widow, many people have odds stacked against them.
- Jesus did not leave the story at this point but said this widow realized that though she was powerless, there was a city judge, a man in a place of authority who could assist her.
- Jesus describes the city judge as a ruthless person who did not fear God or considered people as anything to pay attention to.

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- This widow realized that if she could have any joy, she needed someone in authority to deal with the matter.
- Just like this widow, for your situation to change, you need to escalate it to someone bigger than the situation.
- Jesus goes on to say, for a long time, this judge did not pay attention, but the widow also did not stop pestering this ungodly judge to the point of wearing him out.
- Every morning, this woman came and sat in the reception of this city judge, until he got fed up and gave her what she wanted.

Jesus then made this statement: *Luke 18:4 And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, 5 yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me'*

- This man could not take it no more and granted her desires.
- Jesus then compares this heartless judge with Father God and said:

Luke 18:6 Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. 7 And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?"

- When the odds are against you, there is a God in heaven, seated in a place of authority who knows how to turn the odds in your favor.
- Like this woman, someone needs to be steadfast in approaching God. Our problem is that when the odds are against us, we quickly throw in the towel, we start agreeing with our situation.
- This woman brought this judge to his knees, and I want you to know that if you wait long enough in the presence of the Lord, you will be vindicated speedily.
- I don't know why this woman remained adamant despite the reputation of the judge.
- I am also asking the question; why should a husband who has not had peace in his marriage for years continue asking God to change his wife's heart? Why should a young man with proper qualifications but has not landed a job for 5 years continue praying to the God of heaven? The answer is in verse 7 and 8 of the story.

Luke 18: 7 And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? 8 I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

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- The only plausible reason why the widow did not give up was because she was looking at the position and authority of the judge and that was her only hope for her situation.
- For you, it goes beyond the position that God holds but goes to the very essence and being of God – shall God not avenge His own elect.
- It is only people who know God's character, who will turn to Him when odds are against them!
- You must believe that God is too God to leave you in the mess you are in.
- Jesus told this parable to teach that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.
- You must persist in prayer because:

1. God is characterized by integrity.

- You need a clear revelation of the character of God. He is integrous and highly reliable.
- I want your spirit man to catch this because it is key to how you wait on God.

Numbers 23:19 God is not a man that He should lie, neither the son of man that He should repent. Has He said, and shall He not do it? Or has He spoken, and shall He not make it good?

- Nothing of a fallen man is found in God and God cannot lie.
- His promises are yes and amen in Christ, the scriptures were inspired by Him and they are true.
- There is no situation that can make Him backtrack on any of His promises.
- Man will repent and change his mind as to what he intended to do but nothing of that sort is found in God. God will never vary or change His affection and love towards His people.

1 Samuel 15:29 Moreover, the Glory of Israel does not lie or change His mind, for He is not a man, that He should change His mind."

Isaiah 55: 10 For just as rain and snow fall from heaven and do not return without watering the earth, making it bud and sprout, and providing seed to sow and food to eat, 11 so My word that proceeds from My mouth will not return to Me empty, but it will accomplish what I please, and it will prosper where I send it.

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- This means that when you come to God with His word, He stands by it. There is a reliability in God that should inspire everyone to wait on Him.
- He is not a man that He should lie – it means that He will never tell you what He cannot do.
- When He seems late, we can start believing that He has changed His mind – no, God does not backtrack on His word.
- Whatever you are going through, you must look for a word that aligns with it and do everything to meet the condition of the word and wait upon God.

Joshua 21:45 Not one of all the LORD's good promises to the house of Israel had failed; everything was fulfilled.

- It is one thing to be reliable, but I have seen people that are reliable, but they lack the ability to deliver. This person is faithful but when they are with you, they don't add much value because they don't have power and capacity to help me.

2. God is capable and willing

- God does not only have the character, but He has the capability to back up His character.

Exodus 15:6 Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power, your right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy.

Jeremiah 32:17 'Ah, Lord God! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.

- Listen to what the psalmist said about our God

Psalms 147:2 Jehovah builds up Jerusalem; He gathers together the outcasts of Israel. 3 He heals the broken-hearted, and binds up their wounds. 4 He appoints the number of the stars; He calls them all by their names. 5 Great is our LORD, and of great power; There is no limit to His understanding. 6 Jehovah lifts up the meek; He throws the wicked down to the ground.

- God has the power to change situations in a moment. That is how powerful He is towards you.
- After being in captivity for over 400yrs, Israel was set free in a moment.
- He fed over 3 million people with bread and meat in the desert.
- He overthrew Jericho with a shout. He parted river Jordan with a step of the Levites.

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- In the New Testament, He fed over 5000 men, He caused money to be found in the mouth of a fish.
- Finally, He raised Jesus from the dead and never to die again.