

Read Luke 18:1-8

As I write this (just before 9 on Monday morning), I am still waiting for the results of my COVID test.

I rang my doctor last Wednesday morning to say I was sick, and he sent me to get a test done privately, rather than go and join the queue at the hospital testing site. Having been told that I should get the results within 24-72 hours, I was a bit concerned when the 72-hour mark passed on Saturday with still no news, and by this morning it was even more concerning – and frustrating to still be having to isolate. So (because I have very little voice still), Janine has rung the hotline that you are told to ring if you haven't had your results – and apparently they can't help. She's rung my GP's office, who say they haven't got the results, and can't help either. And just now she's rung the private testing clinic, who have put her on hold while they track down my test – and apparently it got lost! They've now found it, and have promised that they will put it through today, and I should find out tonight.

I have been saying for days: "It's just like when I order at a restaurant – they've lost my order!" This is a running joke in my family, that my orders get lost or forgotten.

Here's just one example, to illustrate. We were on holidays down the coast and went out for dinner at a restaurant in Huskisson. We placed our order, and settled in for what turned out to be quite a long wait. As we waited, a lady on her own came in about half an hour after us and sat at the table next to us. Because she was next to me, I overheard her order – which was exactly the same as mine. Twenty minutes or so later, our food arrived. Well, everybody else's except mine. I told them not to wait for me (it had been a long wait already), and to start eating. They were nearly finished when the lady next door's order arrived – the same thing I had ordered and still not received. I don't usually like to complain, but by this point I'd had enough and called the waiter over and asked her to track down my order. She came back with a half-hearted apology, and told me that it was now on the way. By the time it came, not only had the rest of my family finished, but the lady next door had finished, paid, and left!

As I said, this has become a running joke in my family. My order will invariably be lost or forgotten, or come out cold long after all the others.

And now my COVID test has gone the same way!

If you've ever felt that you were being overlooked or forgotten, or had to complain to get service, you'll understand this parable, which was told to encourage us "to pray and not lose heart" (v. 1).

Here's this widow (remember, widows were poor and powerless members of society), desperately trying to get heard, to get justice. And the only reason she gets it in the end is because she refuses to give up and go away quietly. She keeps pestering the judge.

*(continued)*

What is Jesus' point here? Is it that we have to pester God if we are to be heard?

No, not at all. Jesus is here using a rhetorical device he often used, which is to tell a story about how we humans behave, and then say that if we, despite our frailty and weakness tend to the right thing, then *how much more* will God do the right thing (see for example Matthew 7:11; 10:25; Luke 11:13). That is, if the callous and corrupt judge still listens in the end and delivers justice, then we can be confident that God is *much more* inclined to hear us and act. So Jesus says in verses 7-8:

*“Will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily.”*