

youthESource Drama

The Benefits of Nagging

by Rev. Dean Nadasdy

Based on the Gospel for Proper 24, the 22nd Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Luke 18:1-8

Retelling parables is a little bit like retelling a good joke. You can't expect people to laugh as hard as they did the first time. Jesus' parables are masterpieces that stand for all time on their own. There is no competing with them. Still, one tries to grasp the depths of their meanings. These dramas represent such an endeavor. They are parable on top of parables. Some nugget of truth from Jesus' stories has been pulled and recast in contemporary terms. Hopefully, the recasting enhances rather than detracts from Jesus' first and best intentions.

These are Gospel dramas. By that I mean that they are meant to enhance the reading and preaching from the Gospel (Series C) for a particular Sunday. The dramas require little staging and rehearsal. Usually, one rehearsal is adequate for production. The Focus section might be included in the morning worship folder or read before the drama is presented. The best place for the drama in the service order is probably after the Gospel has been read.

Have fun with these dramas. Probe your characters and make the lines alive with feeling. True, you're piling parables atop parables, but you're working with stories that have stood the test of centuries of retelling. You can't top the one who first told them, but you can help ensure that people today hear His message, and maybe even laugh well—twice.

FOCUS

Persistence goes a long way even with people who are not the most gracious. If it works with people like that, we can be sure our Father hears us when we pray and that he will respond with love.

CHARACTERS

Annie - a classic nag who won't quit

Lucy - Annie's friend who has had enough

Bob - local grocer who is another respondent to Annie's nagging

SETTING

Annie sits on a single chair center-stage and speaks with the audience. She drinks coffee, knits, and fidgets as she talks.

Annie: So...Nice of you to drop by. I really appreciate this chance to talk. I'm a real talker, you know. I love to talk. I remember my boss down at work once gave me a present he said fit me just right. I opened the box and there was one of those phony sets of teeth chattering away. A real kidder, Mr. Slocum! (chuckles) Anyway, how are things? Don't ask me how things are. I'll tell you a story that'll keep you here all day. Take the other day, for instance, I was out driving to the store at my usually slow rate. After all, what's the hurry? You know what I mean? Behind me is this young upstart of a driver using my classic Chevrolet as his ornament. I looked in my rear view mirror and, sure enough, it looked like the guy was in my back seat. Well, anyway...Lucy enters) Well, Lucy, you could have knocked.

Lucy: Annie McCarty, you have a big mouth!

Annie: (to audience) What did I tell ya'?!

Lucy: Listen here, Annie. I've had it with you. I worked long and hard for that auxiliary presidency. None worked harder than I did. And we all agreed that we wouldn't campaign. We'd just let people decide for themselves. I go away for a two-week vacation, come back, and everybody's talking about you, Annie McCarty, as just right for the job.

Annie: All I did was make a few phone calls.

Lucy: A few phone calls. Fess up, Annie. How many auxiliary members did you call to sell yourself, to campaign your way into the auxiliary hierarchy?

Annie: I didn't keep a tally, Lucy.

Lucy: Come on, Annie. How many?

Annie: Maybe 30.

Lucy: (steaming) Maybe 30! That's the whole membership! Annie, I know you through and through. You probably talked to those gals till you were blue in the face and they were so sick of your voice that they promised you their vote just to get you off the phone.

Annie: Well, I never!

Lucy: Don't give me that, you, you politician, you! You jawboner! (begins to exit in huff) You wheeler-dealer, you! (exits)

Annie: (gathers her composure) Lucy is highly excitable, you know. So what if I did make a few calls? It worked, didn't it? Anyway, where was I? So...I'm riding in my Chevrolet with this hot-rodder on my tail. I'm feeling so pressured that when I come to this intersection, the light is turning red, and I'm too flustered to stop. So I drive on through to save my Chevrolet. You follow, don't you? The guy would have been wearing me for decorations if I hadn't. Well, sure enough, right there was a cop. And right away I saw his lights flashing. About a mile up Main I finally decided to pull over for him. Well, how was I to know he wanted me? I'll tell you, I taught that young officer something about the driver's side of things. I... (knock is heard) Sorry about this. (goes to door) Yes? Well, Mr. Brewster, it's about time you show up. Come on in. (Bob enters)

Bob: I can't stay, Mrs. McCarty. I just came to let you know we surrender.

Annie: Well, what do you know! What brought the change of mind, Bob?

Bob: Mrs. McCarty, in all my years in the grocery business, I've never seen a more persistent woman. The potato chips were of poor quality by your standards. So you demanded your money back. Then you call every day when we refused, until we really couldn't bother with you any more. Worse yet were those letters to the Consumers' Service, the Business Bureau, and the district manager. (takes out white handkerchief) Mrs. McCarty, we surrender. Here's your 89 cents! Now will you kindly leave us alone?!

Annie: Well, I'm just glad you came to your senses. My next tactic was a letter to the editor of the Gazette.

Bob: Let's lay it to rest, Ma'am, okay?

Annie: Sure.

Bob: Good-bye, Mrs. McCarty. (begins to exit)

Annie: So long, Bob. See you down at the store.

Bob: If you'd like to shop elsewhere, it's certainly okay with us. (exits)

Annie: Anyway...the young officer has me pulled over. He stands at my window and demands my license and my registration as if I were some kind of criminal. He has an angry look on his face as if running a red light were a felony or something. So I put the old choppers into action. In no time I had that fella swimming in a pool of talk-talk-talk. I explained about my Chevrolet, how dear it was to me. I explained about the tailgater. I explained in detail my fine driving record. I ignored every move he made to get at my license. I told him about Cousin Jim on the force, how the mayor and Mr. McCarty are such good friends. I mean, I pulled every stop! And you know what? The guy finally started smiling at me. Imagine that! Well, to make a long story short, I was insulted enough just to be pulled off the road with those lights flashing. Anyway, the officer just smiled and said, "Lady, just get in your car, and the next time you decide to run a light, do it when I'm not around, okay?!" And that was it. I'll tell you, it pays to be persistent. Makes you wonder sometimes, doesn't it? It's a shame you have to be that way in a world like this, but what's a soul to do when people leave you no choice? You just gotta work for what you get. There's no getting around it. Right? Well, isn't that right?! No answer. You're all too busy thinking about what happens next, aren't you? (gathers belongings) Well, I'll tell you this, you ain't gonna get ahead sitting there saying nothing. And that's the truth! (exits)

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