

# Persevere in Prayer (Masterclass: Storyteller Series)

## Luke 18:1-8

The definition we've been using in this sermon series is a quote by John MacArthur: "A parable is an ingeniously simple word picture illuminating a profound spiritual lesson."

These were short and simple stories Jesus used to bring about his message to everyday living that would stick into the minds of the listeners.

### (Read Luke 18:1-8)

Here we see how this parable shows the woman's perseverance to get her justice, God's faithfulness to us and how God will bring ultimate justice.

1 And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to **pray and not lose heart.**

Jesus is speaking directly to the disciples here. He encourages them to stay in prayer and be watchful. To pray and not lose heart! To pray and not give up! Not just a passage about eschatology - an end time view.

So what does this look like for us?

A Christian life is a persevering life - displaying a character of faith and of prayer.

Prayer here is not focused on repetition but rather on sincere and confident reliance on God to intervene.

**1 Chronicles 16:11 "Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually!"**

If we stop praying we're acting as if God will not listen to us.

Don't give up - even if you feel alone in a situation - reach out to someone.

**Philippians 4:6 "do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."**

**Hebrews 4:16 “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”**

So in this parable we have Jesus using 2 people to describe what’s going on - we got the widow and the unjust judge.

2 He said, “In a certain city there was a **judge who neither feared God nor respected man.**

Historically it was said that this particular judge was appointed by Herod or the Romans. These corrupt judges in Jerusalem were referred to as “robber judges.” People would call them “Dayyaney Gezeloth” for not dealing with the law.

He was a wicked man who had no reverence for God.

But then in this parable you have a widow, someone who wasn’t prominent in society at that time.

3 And there was a **widow in that city who kept coming to him** and saying, ‘Give me **justice** against my adversary.’

She kept coming, refusing to give up - asking for justice. The heart of one crying out for the answer, not giving up, continually pressing on without allowing the situation to pull her back. The widow was persistent.

And this was a male-driven society - she represented the powerless and helpless people in her day.

But Jesus is illustrating how the Kingdom of God is counter-cultural - bringing justice to this widow - she doesn’t have a husband to represent her - so she goes directly to the court.

Jesus is making assertion that the widow needs to be recognized and receive dignity whereas the judge needs to answer her plead.

4 For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, **I will give her justice**, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'

We see action in this parable - talk about the seeking out of justice in today's world and how people are reacting and speaking out.

The language here is as these two are going at each other in a fight match.

Why does Jesus use fighting language?

I think does this to show the passion and fervency in the widow.

She's giving the judge messages or signals that this is going to get real dirty quick. You're going down Mr. judge!

Prayer is a spiritual battle - as believers we have the Holy Spirit to fight with us against the enemy.

**Ephesians 6:12 "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."**

We see here a contrast between an unjust judge versus God as our righteous judge and loving Father.

Sometimes people view God as a mean judge or a passive God that displays no judgment at all.

This judge wants to get the lady off her back so he vindicates her - if this evil judge gives her justice how much more will God for us?

**Luke 11:11-13 "What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 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!"**

6 And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. 7 And will not God give **justice to his elect**, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them?"

God hasn't forgotten you. The starting place is the gospel - Looking to the gospel is a major reminder of God's unconditional love and justice for his children.

God is patient with us - calling us to himself - and holding back the wrath that is to come.

**2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."**

If He's patient with us when we get to that place of repentance God's going provide us with the answers in His perfect timing - God is refining us - shaping us in every circumstance. My house situation, waiting on other things that are in front of us.

8 I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, **will he find faith on earth?"**

The answer is yes - Jesus was telling the disciples to watch and pray.

We're reminded here to pray as we continue to trust God in every circumstance.

God's timing is the perfect timing as we seek Him in all things.

When we look towards Christ's return we will be continually refined and matured which will be seen through a persevering prayer life.

There is this one question that we ask when looking in this parable:

How long will it take for my prayers to be answered?

God is a loving father and knows what we need when we need it.

**1 John 5:14 "And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us."**

We see in Hezekiah's life that his prayer was answered about the Lord giving him 15 more years to live. (**2 Kings 20:1-6**)

**“Now, O Lord, please remember how I have walked before you in faithfulness and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in your sight...Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold, I will heal you.”**

And then there was Hannah - childless and God opened her womb. **1 Samuel 1:7**

Paul Tripp says “Prayer finds its hope not in the qualifications of the one praying, but in the character and plan of the One who's listening.”

Remember the One who is always listening!

Implications of Luke 18:1-8

- 1) Pray always and not lose heart - in this verse we see the truth that praying is part of our continual journey with Christ.

The **marks** of a persevering prayer life looks like this:

Faith - in the One who brings justice

Sincerity - from the heart, giving all you have

Persistence - continual non-ceasing prayer life

Boldness - fervent, Spirit-empowered prayer life

Jesus modeled how to pray and showing the persevering life.

When He was on earth He persevered by praying to His Father in Heaven.

Jesus high priestly prayer: **John 17:14-17** praying that while we are in the world but not of the world he will take care of us.

**“I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”**

This is comforting - Jesus persevered in prayer for us - when he lived the perfect life for us (what theologians refer to as his active obedience) as Jesus fulfilling what the law required - this frees us to desire to pray.

Jesus lived the perfect life we couldn't live and died the death that we deserved to justify us and bring us back into right standing with God - because of this everything Jesus did including his time in prayer was for our good!

When we feel defeated in our prayer life we can know that Jesus' own prayer life pleased God the Father.

We must look to Jesus because he kept the course by continually persevering in prayer.

**Matt. 24:13 "But the one who endures to the end will be saved."**

- 2) God is always faithful - to his elect, he will take care of His own - the character of God **Luke 12:32** - "it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (We will fail and fall at times but this passage shows us that God will never fail us.)

This is the blessing about walking with the Lord - He indwells you with the Holy Spirit and you gain an understanding of who your heavenly Father is and how faithful He is - that He will not leave you begging for bread - even when we don't deserve these things it's all by His grace.

Again, our God is not like the unjust judge but he desires us to grow in relationship with him - pray to him, wait upon the Lord - that will renew our strength in the midst of our daily lives.

- 3) As believers we look forward to the day that Jesus will return and bring justice to all.

We are to be reminded of the Lord's return while we pray and stay on mission.

Jesus Christ will one day return in all His glory and splendor.

**1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 "For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we**

**are awake or asleep we might live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”**

You see that? But in the meantime show the love of God to others - be the church - The church is called to love others and point to Christ who will bring justice. How does this look like? Listening to others - people are hurting live in your communities - love on culture - give grace to other - share the gospel.

To summarize: Even at times of uncertainty in this world, each circumstance should remind us that God is in full control and justice on His part will prevail.

Here's the big idea: we must look to Jesus because he kept the course by continual persevering in prayer.

Keep praying - don't lose heart - don't give up - be reminded of the gospel of Christ - look to Jesus!