Always Pray & Don’t Give Up

- **Luke 18:1-8 (KJV)** 1 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;
- In Luke 17 Jesus warns His disciples about the perilous times that will occur before His return
- Jesus then tells a parable to His disciples to help them understand the place of prayer in their lives considering His warnings
- We are living in perilous times right now
  - This pandemic is affecting every aspect of lives now and for the future
- Jesus tells His disciples *they need to always pray and not faint, or lose heart*
- In this one verse Jesus says a lot about prayer:
  - Jesus is speaking to the *people of prayer*, how His disciples *then* and we Christians *now* must be praying people
  - Jesus speaks of the *necessity of prayer*, believers must pray
  - Jesus speaks of the *frequency of prayer*, we are to *always* pray
  - Jesus speaks of the *value and worth of prayer*
  - Jesus is speaking of the *persistence and perseverance* needed in prayer.
- Jesus says we are to pray and not “faint”
- “Fainting” is losing heart, it’s giving up, it’s throwing the towel
- Why do believers stop praying?
  - We stop praying because of personal doubts, fears, unbelief, impatience, discouragement, distractions, spiritual warfare, and time, etc.
- This is not the time to give up!
  - “Giving up” doesn’t produce the answers you need, but *persistence in prayer will pay off*!
- When we persist in prayer spiritual growth takes place
- We must *always pray* and *never* give up!

The Widow and the Unjust Judge

2 Saying, *There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:* 3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, *Avenge me of mine adversary.*

- Jesus introduces us to the two main characters in the parable the unjust judge and the widow
- **The judge:**
  - A judge is “expected” to be a person integrity, insight and fairness
  - Not this judge, he didn’t reverence God or respect people
  - He was a *circuit judge* that operated out a tent and went from city to city.
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- People with legal issues would come to his tent to have their cases heard.
- The only way some cases could get on the docket and be heard was to “bribe” the judge and this judge seems open to accepting bribes.
- A bribe gave wealthy and influential people “access” to the judge who would then “rule” in their favor.
- In the days of the Bible, these kinds of judges were called “robber judges”, they were in it for all they could get for themselves.

- The widow:
  - Widows were some of the most vulnerable people.
  - This widow was a target of exploitation because:
    1. She was a woman in a male-dominated culture where women were second-class citizens at best.
    2. She was a widow, she had no male relative to stand with her, speak for her or protect her.
    3. She was poor because she could not gain access to her late husband’s estate, even though she was entitled to it.
  - This widow enters the story with “three strikes” against and her.
  - But this widow was no “ordinary” widow; this widow has spunk, attitude, persistence, and a feistiness about her.
  - She’s a widow who’s willing to fight for “the justice” that belongs to her.
  - This widow is desperate.

- Persistence Pays Off
4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself,
Though I fear not God, nor regard man;
5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

- The Bible says the unjust judge refused her; for a while.
- But the widow went to the unjust judge again and again, saying, “Avenge me of my adversary.”
And the judge refused her request over and over again
Whatever city he was in, the widow would come to his tent with the same request, “Avenge me of my adversary”
This widow was not going to rest or let the judge rest until he ruled in her favor
This widow was relentless, it got to the point where the widow had the judge talking to himself, “I know I have no reverence for God and no respect for people, but this widow is working my nerves”
The widow’s persistence wore down the unjust judge

Lessons from the Unjust Judge
6 And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? 8 I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them.

Jesus says there’s a lesson to be learned from the unjust judge
Jesus is saying pay attention to the unjust judge to learn about persistent, persevering, and faithful prayer
Jesus is not comparing God to the unjust judge, but He is making a contrast
  o God is not like the unjust judge; God is completely different
  o God is not unjust, God is just, righteous, and holy
  o God does not have to be pushed, begged, or bribed to answer our prayers
We must also remember we are not helpless widows with no standing or position with God, but we are God’s chosen ones
We are not like this widow, she was the object of indifference and contempt, but we are dear children of God, we are the apple of God’s eye
We are in a better position than the widow
As believers, we are God’s chosen people and He will give us justice
We can cry out to God day and night because we know His court is always in session and God is ready and waiting to hear from us
When we pray there may be a delay between our prayer and the answer
The delay is not because God is “inactive or insensitive”, but God is making preparations to answer your prayer 1 John 5:14-15 (KJV) 14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.
You may not see it today or tomorrow, but God will answer your prayer if you don’t give up
God can answer our prayers now or in eternity and whenever God answers, it will be at “God’s speed”
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*Persevering Prayer, Luke 18:1-8*

- God’s answers don’t always line up with our schedule, but God’s answers are always at the *opportune time*

*Will Jesus Find Faith When He Returns?*

8 I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the *Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*

- Jesus concludes the parable with a question, *“When the Son of Man returns will He find faith on earth?”*
- Before Jesus returns, the days ahead will be filled with challenges, struggles, trials and trouble
- Persevering and persistent prayer *demonstrates* our faith in Jesus
- Without faith, prayer is nothing more than a ritual
- Can Jesus count on you to keep praying and stay faithful until He returns?
- Will you be persistent and faithful in prayer all the way until Jesus returns?
- During this pandemic now and whatever we may face in the future, will God find us praying until Jesus returns?
- Will you keep your petitions before God until He returns?
- Jesus doesn’t want us to lose heart, but to faithfully keep praying
- Keep praying because:
  - You know God will answer
  - Nothing is too hard for God
  - God’s delays are not God’s denials
- Persevere in prayer, your answer is on the way!