

**The Gospel According to Luke**  
Luke 18:1-8  
**Praying with Preserving Faith**

Sermon #75  
April 26, 2020

Our text today in Luke chapter 18, verses 1 to 8 introduces two people to us. The first, an unrighteous judge. This judge is probably in many ways corrupt. He does not care about justice or right and wrong and the implication is he uses his position for his own gain. This judge does not care about what God thinks nor does he care about what people think; he primarily uses his position to serve himself. The second person in this story is a widow seeking justice. We are not told the details concerning where or how she has been wronged, all we are told is she is seeking justice from this unrighteous judge. She shows us what perseverance is like as she keeps coming back to the judge until she beats him down.

This text connects to last week's passage in a couple of ways. One is that while we are waiting for the coming of our Lord, we must be serving Him faithfully and persistently. If while waiting on our Lord's return we undergo trials, which we will, we must not lose heart but battle the trials using prayer. The second connection that we find with Luke 17 in mind, it becomes obvious that in chapter 18, verse 8, Jesus is definitely teaching this parable in light of His second coming, **“when the Son of Man comes”**.

Let me pray for our time in God's Word.

### **Jesus' First Coming**

As we start, let me begin by returning to Luke 17 and tie it to the verses at the beginning of chapter 18, so, we do not miss what our Lord wants us to understand concerning His second coming and the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God.

Turn in your Bibles back to Luke 17, verses 20 and 21, where truth is revealed concerning Jesus' first coming. Luke says, "Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus answered them, 'The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed,<sup>21</sup> nor will they say, "Look, here it is!" or "There!" for behold, **the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.**'" The first coming was missed by most people because everyone was looking for lightning to flash across the sky marking the dramatic arrival of God's Kingdom and they thought it was to be a physical kingdom with God's appointed ruler conquering their enemies. When the Pharisees asked when this kingdom would begin, Jesus replied, it has already happened, it is in your midst. His point being, whenever the King is present, so is, His Kingdom. Jesus first coming was quiet, built upon a foundation of truthful teaching and miraculous signs and wonders to validate His authority was from God the Father. He fulfilled all the Old Testament prophecies, which is absolutely amazing in and of itself. Because of people's preconceived ideas they missed who Jesus was. One primary purpose of God's Word, both the Old and the New Testaments, is to remove people's preconceived ideas and remold their minds to the mind of God and as this happens, they will understand the revelations God has given to the world and for them.

### **Jesus' Second Coming**

Jesus' second coming is very different from the first. We continue in verse 23 of Luke 17 Jesus taught, "And they will say to you, 'Look, there!' or 'Look, here!' Do not go out or follow them.<sup>24</sup> For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day." Back in that day, people were looking for the details to verify the coming of the long-awaited Messiah. Today is it the same, as people try to know when and where Jesus will return. Jesus tells all who are listening not to worry about the day and time because every single person on earth will see the dramatic coming of the King and it will

grab their attention just as the brilliant flash of lightning in the night sky when they are so close there is no delay between the lightning and thunder. While the second coming of Jesus will be unmistakable to everyone, not everyone will celebrate His arrival, for most it will bring judgement.

The real issue regarding Jesus second coming, is not will we see it when it happens, Jesus has already taught us that everyone will see it. The issue for us is the point Jesus is driving home, both in chapters 17 and 18, will we be ready for Him when He comes? When our Lord returns it will be too late to get ready. We must be ready prior to His coming. As our Lord clearly taught throughout the New Testament, one example is found in Matthew 24, verse 44, Jesus says, **“Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”**

### **Faith Perseveres in Prayer**

I believe we are ready to explore what God would have learn from Jesus’ parable of the persistent widow. Hear the Word of God found in Luke chapter 18, verses 1 to 8, *(It appears he is continuing to address the same crowd of Pharisees, disciples and onlookers as at the end of chapter 17)* **“And Jesus told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. <sup>2</sup> He said, ‘In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. <sup>3</sup> And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’ <sup>4</sup> For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, <sup>5</sup> yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’ <sup>6</sup> And the Lord said, ‘Hear what the unrighteous judge says. <sup>7</sup> And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he**

delay long over them? <sup>8</sup> I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily.  
Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?’ ”

This passage has two main themes. I want you to lock onto these as we move through it. The first is as believers in Christ as our Lord and Savior we are called to persevere in prayer and this will keep us from losing faith. The second theme, is will Jesus find faith on earth when He returns? So, while the parable begins with Luke saying we are “[always to pray and not lose heart](#)” the need for Christians to remain faithful is what Jesus is teaching. An important thought for us to consider and ask is, what is our role in the Kingdom of God? When Jesus returns, will He find a strong Church that has endured the trials and tribulations of this fallen world? Are we seeking God above the things of the world by studying and holding fast to His Word? Are we spending time with God in prayer? It is these two these disciplines of studying God’s Word and pray with God that separates the Remnant Church from the world-infected Broad Church. At Jesus’ return will the condition of the Church be strong or weak? The answer is, both. Why, because the separation between the Remnant and Broad churches is widening.

So, while the parable has prayer as its thrust, the preserving faith of Christians is a primary point Jesus is teaching. When Jesus returns the condition of churches who claim Christ will vary from true to wayward to completely false. Just as Barnabas and Paul stood before the assembly in Acts 15 and spoke of what God was doing among the Gentiles, when they finished, James, the brother of Jesus, stood and spoke of the “[remnant](#)” beginning in verse 13, “[Brothers, listen to me.](#) <sup>14</sup> [Simeon or Simon Peter has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name.](#) <sup>15</sup> [And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written, in Amos chapter 9](#) <sup>16</sup> ‘[After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it,](#) <sup>17</sup> [that](#)

**the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name.'**<sup>(v.11-12)</sup>” God never said the whole world becomes Christian or that everyone who claims to be part of His Church will be true Christians. However, there will always be His faithful Remnant Church. So, the question for us is, will we be part of the faithful Remnant?

The world system lead by the prince of this world primary aim is to steal the faith of Christ’s Church, to make the church weak and ineffective. Quite frankly, the evil one has done a pretty good job when we observe the state of that which identifies itself in this world as Christian; including Mormons, Jehovah Witness, Roman Catholicism and apostate churches, but there will always remain the Remnant Church holding fast to the Word of God as He inspired it and they treasure their time in prayer with God. These two actions change who they are from the inside out enabling them to live for the glory of God.

### **Prayer Deepens Faith**

In Luke’s opening he states, Jesus told, **“a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.”** From the fall in the garden, believers in God have had to survive in the hostile environment of the world led by its evil prince. Historically people have come close to God and then fallen away as their faith has ebbed and flowed throughout the centuries. The Scriptures demonstrate that those who maintained a strong prayer life were able to maintain their faith while enduring the trails of this life. So, not only the Scriptures, but history also, teaches the importance of one’s prayer life for maintaining faith by God’s grace.

God’s Remnant Churches are like special op forces in the midst of enemy territory waging war while being greatly outnumbered. I am reminded of Gideon in Judges chapter 7, who prayed and took to heart what God said. With an army of 300 they defeated the Midianites, who are they? They are the descendants of

Abraham through Midian, son of Abraham's concubine Keturah. Abraham sent all the children of his concubines away into the East in Genesis chapter 25. With the Midianites were the Amalekites, the tribe descended from Esau's grandson Amelak as seen in Genesis 36. Together the armies of these enemies of God and Gideon covered the valley like locust. The special forces of God, numbering just 300 and surrounded by the enemy, defeated thousands upon thousands.

The world at large is our enemy and everything around us is trying to sabotage our faith. The evil one has learned over the centuries that an all-out frontal attack tends to unite people. However, planting tares among the wheat or a cancer among the healthy is very effective. The world system's goal is to slowly strangle the remnant of Christ, suffocating its faith and effectiveness for the Kingdom of God. The evil one has promoted a theme proven effective over the centuries; seek the material things of this world and self-pleasure, taking the easy broad road; for these worldly things will bring one happiness. History has shown this broad easy road, in truth, brings physical and emotional pain and suffering. God's way is harder, but for those who travel God's narrow road in life, they are not defeated or emotionally scarred, and they will know God's peace and leave this world without regrets. For those who are faithful, Christ gives them a precious gift as found in John chapter 14, verse 27, **“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”** (v. 27) This truth penetrates our very souls and encourages us while living through the tribulations of this world.

What are some things that rob us of faith? Everything around us is trying to sabotage our faith. The entire world system is out to smother God's people and their faith in Christ. Our sinful human nature tells us that we must seek happiness in the material wealth. The truth is as we seek to live godly lives, we will endure conflicts, trials, tribulation and persecution. Suffering is part of our lives for we

live in the world system that opposes everything of Christ. The world system works against us, so often, we find ourselves in situations of physical or emotional suffering. Our health may fail or may be failing now or we could even be martyred. We also struggle with emotional pain, but God gives us peace the world does not understand and life eternal with Him. However, while here on planet earth, all this, at times, can drag us down. As believers we are not immune to the struggles of this life. Often it is the trials and suffering that drive us to our knees to pray and through prayer our faith is strengthened for the spiritual battles of this world. Trails in life are to be dealt with by faith – the faith that gives us the ability to overcome the world; faith built upon the foundation of God’s Word and prayer.

Jesus understands that while we live on earth we will always be in the midst of struggles. These struggles will increase as we wait for His return. The world is marching towards Jesus’ return in ever increasing self-destruction. As believers, our eternal life begins with salvation and is brought to its climax when we are with our Lord and Savior in heaven; for believers the world itself holds little value, we are but sojourners traveling through on our way to heaven. Jesus calls us to do battle, but not alone. Life’s struggles can wear us down physically and spiritually. It is in community of family and church that protects and strengthens us to live victorious and not be defeated by evil and the world.

There is something else we must fight against if we are to maintain a strong vibrant faith. We must fight against being rocked-to-sleep by the everyday ordinary things. Simply getting caught up in the ordinary everyday tasks of life; job, home, chores and the routine of life can steal away our zeal for God. We cannot let the routine of life, especially during this time of pandemic isolation, to lull us into forgetting our desperate need for meditating on God’s Word and spending time in prayer.

This thought of the routine of life, reminded me of Jesus' words in chapter 17 of Luke beginning in verse 26, "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. <sup>27</sup> They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. <sup>28</sup> Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, <sup>29</sup> but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all— <sup>30</sup> so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed." Noah was exercising faith as he built the ark. Lot exercised faith as he left Sodom with his family. However, the unfaithful died. They had no thought of eternal things but only business as usual. This has been the state of the world under the influence of the evil one since the Fall. What can a dead person do? Answer: nothing! What can the spiritually dead do of eternal value? Answer: Nothing! This world has moved through time and history self-absorbed in sin without regard for God, that is, except for the few, the Remnant Church of Christ.

As the remnant we desire to live for the glory of God. So, let me ask, how much of your time does God get during the week? How much thought do you give to eternal matters as you go about your daily routine? Jesus answer to how we are to maintain a vibrant faith is to persevere in prayer. My beloved, let us strive to live spiritually separate from the world and keep our focus on God.

It interesting that this is one of the few parables where we are given Jesus purpose in telling it at the very beginning, "he told then a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart." My beloved by always praying we will not lose heart and praying constantly increases faith.



## Perseverance Deepens Prayer

I want to return and examine this unrighteous judge. He does not care about anyone but himself. Reading Luke 18, verses 2 to 8, Jesus said, “**In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man.**”<sup>3</sup> **And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’**<sup>4</sup> **For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man,**<sup>5</sup> **yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’**<sup>6</sup> **And the Lord said, ‘Hear what the unrighteous judge says.**<sup>7</sup> **And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them?**<sup>8</sup> **I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily.’**” This judge is an unbeliever, as he clearly states, “**I neither fear God nor respect man.**” It is no secret that this judge is not vindicating this widow out of right motives. He could care less about God and he could care less about this widow. His motivation for giving the widow justice is so that she will stop wearing him out by her coming constantly and by her continual pleading with him that was beating him down. This widow did not give up, but continually came until the unrighteous judge granted her righteous request.

One word in the Greek that is somewhat amusing is *hupopiazō* (hoop·o·pee·ad·zo) translated as “**beat me down**” which is a word found in ancient Greek games, such as boxing. So, this widow is wearing out her opponent, the unrighteous judge, with constantly appearing and with her words. Just as a boxer wears out his opponent with barrage of punches. She is giving this judge a black eye with her words, they are words delivered like a left hook, right hook and uppercut, and she won by a TKO. She is relentless, she gets the judge on the ropes and will not let up until the judge hits the canvas, throws in the towel and forfeits the match.

Please do not make some connection with this unrighteous judge and God who is the just and supreme Judge. God is nothing like this unrighteous judge. The reason that we know God is not like this judge is because Jesus says that the judge does not fear God. The point Jesus is making, if he had feared God he would have immediately come to the aid of the widow because it was right thing to do.

What Jesus is telling us is that by persevering, the widow receives justice from an unrighteous judge in verse 5. How much more will we receive true justice when we persevere in prayer to our merciful and loving God. Jesus states in verses 7 and 8, “will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? <sup>8</sup>I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily.” We are given a comparison between the unrighteous judge and the completely righteous God. The unrighteous judge grants justice by being beaten down. God always grants justice because He is forever righteous and just. As believers we receive the justice reserved for the sinless Jesus because he paid, in full, for our sins, we receive justice through Christ of mercy and love. However, for unbelievers, they have to pay the penalty for their sins directly and receive God’s justice they have earned – eternal damnation.

The next comparison Jesus makes is between the widow and the elect of God. Just as the widow perseveres in her continual coming, so we, the elect of God, are to persevere in our continual praying. Believers are those “who cry to God day and night”. For these, God will vindicate because they are enduring the trials and tribulations of this unjust world perpetrated by unbelieving and unjust people. We are the elect and are those who the eternally just Judge cares for. Jesus is clear, “God will give justice to his elect.” One mark of God’s people, the elect, is that when they encounter trouble, they do not give up their faith, but they fight for faith in continual and persevering prayer. As Charles Spurgeon said, “Faith is not a grace of luxury but a grace of necessity.” Therefore, it is worth fighting for. The

elect are the ones who cry out to God, praying “**day and night**” according to Jesus. The elect cry out by faith and by crying out to God their faith is strengthened. My beloved do we only seek God in prayer during times of trouble or do we pray continually “**day and night**”? By God’s grace He grants us faith and we must do everything possible to hold on to it and that takes effort and time.

Show yourself as God’s elect by persevering until God answers your prayer. Prayer is what draws spiritual life-giving water from God’s deep well spring. Prayer is what reaches into the realm of the eternal and draws strength when all hope is gone. Prayer is what grips the grace of Christ and holds tight until help arrives. God’s people understand that to endure to the end requires persevering prayer in faith. Keep praying – never give up – never surrender and never lose heart for God loves you with agape love and “**he will give justice**” to His elect.

### **Faith on Earth?**

After explaining some of the basics concerning His second coming, Jesus teaches his followers how to address trials and tribulations while on earth. Rather than forfeiting your faith, pray continually to God and your faith will become stronger even in the midst of struggles. Jesus primary theme of this parable is preserving in prayer. As Paul taught the Thessalonians in his first letter, chapter 5, verses 16 to 18, “**Rejoice always,** <sup>17</sup> **pray without ceasing,** <sup>18</sup> **give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.**” This is one of God’s prime directives for believers as we live life. With these things now before his audience Jesus ends this passage with the second half of verse 8, “**Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?**”

Again, we must go back to the previous verses. No faith was found in Noah’s day. The whole earth was faithless and godless. Only Noah, his wife, his

three sons and their wives were faithful. There was no faith found in Lot's city of Sodom. It was a city of the faithless and godless. What about when Jesus comes again, will He find faith? As Jesus taught, while we wait for His return, we must fight for faith as we go about our daily routine. When He returns will be His faithful followers be praying day and night? Will we be ready? By the grace of God and the faith He gives, the answer is, "Yes!"

Jesus will find faith on the earth as He finds His followers praying night and day and not losing heart or not losing faith. Jesus will find faith on earth as the elect pray to God in the ordinary things and in the trials.

Paul prayed for those who gave up much to follow Christ and I now echo what he wrote in the opening of his letter to the believers in Colossi, verse 9 says, "from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding." My beloved, my prayer is unceasing for you and that when Jesus returns, He will find His Remnant Church strong in faith and living fully for His glory! It is my continual prayer we remain strong in faith by knowing the Word of God and through a preserving prayer life. This is to be who we are. Amen.