

Don't Lose Heart

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[0:00] We'll see it here, but we're going to do the first eight verses of Luke chapter number 18. The Bible says this, And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not faint.

So right off the get-go, Luke reminds us, this is what he means in this parable. So here's the parable. Verse 2, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man. And there was a widow in that city, and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while, but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

He said, this lady is wearing me out, is basically what he's saying. And he's like, I don't care about her or her problem, but I just don't want to see her again, so I'm going to take care of it. Verse 6, So we're going to dive into this little parable, and I'm entitled to the message this, Don't lose heart. Jesus understands life is difficult.

He talked last week about, He's come, we know Christ has come, but He's coming again. And we're living in this already, not yet. We're living kind of in this in-between, and there's tension there.

[1:34] And Jesus understands that life sometimes is going to wear you down. And here's what He wants us to know, Don't lose heart. And He's going to show us exactly how we do that. So let's go to Him, ask Him for help this morning, and then we'll jump right into the message.

Father, thank You for this time together. Lord, thank You for the wonderful songs that remind us of who You are and what You've done for us, Lord. What I'm so thankful is a special reminder to us that You laid down Your life for mine.

That when we look at the cross, we don't see other people. Lord, that was my sin that You died for. And I pray that everybody here under the sound of my voice knows that to be true in their own life. But maybe they've never made that personal decision, Lord, that trusting You as their Savior would today be that day.

Lord, I pray for those here that do know You. And many of us are walking through things in life and carry difficulties and burdens and heartaches. And I'm so thankful for a passage like this that reminds us that You hear us, Lord.

You really command us to keep coming to You time and again with our prayers. Lord, I pray You would help us not to lose heart. I pray You'd be with me. Lord, I desperately need You this morning. I pray You would give me the words to say that it would be a help to the hearer this morning.

[2:38] We ask this in Christ's name. Amen. Thank you so much for standing. You may be seated. I won't speak for you, but I'll just say for myself, I'm not good at waiting.

Anybody else here? Okay. I don't like waiting in traffic at all. Like, I mean, I know where I'm going most of the time, but if you go to Denton, I always turn my GPS on both ways because I'm not going to sit on I-35 for five minutes.

I'm going to drive 40 minutes. As long as I'm actually moving in a vehicle, I'm going to drive around there. I don't like waiting at the doctor's office. You know, I was sick a few weeks back, and you go in there, and you have an appointment, and you wait two hours for your appointment.

Then you go in the room, and you wait 30 more minutes. I'm just not a fan of waiting. You know, some of you are going to go today to the restaurant. You're going to wait on your food. That is a good thing, but sometimes it's annoying when the table next to you orders after you and gets their food before you.

Okay. I'm making sure I'm not the only person. I'm like, we ordered first. What's going on back there? You know, I don't like, you know, sometimes you text somebody, and you're sitting there,

and you're waiting on it. You see the three little dots. They disappear, and you're like, what's the deal?

[3:44] And you kind of, we're just not built to wait, and you know, our culture isn't. You know, we've gotten to the point where if a web page on the internet takes more than five seconds to load, we think the internet's broken. And some of us live through dial-up and AOL disk that came in the mail.

You know, it took five minutes just to get onto the internet. I mean, the idea is we're simply just not good at waiting, and that's with things that really just don't matter at all. I mean, yeah, traffic stinks, and waiting here, and at a doctor's office.

Those things really don't matter in the grand scheme of life. But waiting becomes so much harder when it involves something that really does matter.

And I would imagine there's things that are heavy on your heart and in your life, and things you're dealing with right now, and you wish you just had an answer. You wish you just had a plan, and what's going on, and Lord, I've been praying about this, and what do I need to do?

Because when difficulties come in our life, or really anything comes in our life, somebody says, hey, would you pray about this with me? And there are things in life that are just easy to pray about one time. You hear about it, you bow your head, you ask God to do something, and then you just move on with life.

[4:50] But I would imagine most of us have understood that there are prayers we have prayed over and over again. I mean, there's prayers that you probably have prayed so many times in your life, you know the words before you even say them.

It could be a child maybe you're praying for. It could be a prodigal that you're praying to come home. It could be your marriage. It could be a health situation. It could be a friend that you desperately want to see come to Jesus Christ.

You may have prayed it this morning. You may have prayed it yesterday, last week, last year, and it seems like nothing has changed. That's where waiting gets hard. That's where we begin to wonder, Lord, are you even listening?

And I think we would all agree it's one thing to pray when we really believe an answer is just right around the corner. We can maybe see things moving in our life, and we know, okay, it's coming. I know it is. But it's a totally different thing to keep praying when heaven seems silent, and life is getting harder by the moment.

But Jesus knew that would happen. He knew what his disciples were going to go through. He knows he's on the road to Jerusalem. He knows the cross is coming. He knows that he will ascend back to his father.

[6:00] He knows they're going to be alone, and he wants them to understand, hey, don't lose heart. There's a reason to keep praying, and that's exactly why Jesus gives this parable.

The last time we were together last Sunday in the Gospel of Luke in chapter number 17, Jesus has been talking about his coming kingdom and his eventual return.

And there in Luke chapter 17, verse 22, he says, the days will come when you shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you shall see it not. He's teaching his disciples, listen, I'm going to not be here one day with you.

He's going to send the Holy Spirit and praise the Lord we have the Holy Spirit. But he's just saying, listen, there's going to be days that are hard. There's going to be days that are difficult. There's going to be days where you lose, well, it seems like you're losing heart.

And I just want you to know, I love you still. And I'm coming again, but there is a way to make it through. And his disciples would live in this tension.

[7:01] I mean, you study the Gospels, you come to the book of Acts and the early church, and you read the New Testament, and you're going to see that these men hearing Jesus speak this, they would experience some great injustice just for living for Christ, just for preaching the Word.

They would suffer greatly at the hands of the Roman government and different things, and people that were just against Christianity completely in these days.

They would watch a world continue in rebellion against God. And just like they did, sometimes we look up and we think, how long, Lord? Lord, how long is this going to go on?

Lord, I've been praying about this, and Lord, have you seen what's going on in our world? And we know that same tension. We know Christ has won the victory. The Bible makes it very clear.

On the cross of Calvary, Jesus said, Tetelestai, it's finished. We know the victory is won, but we still live in a world that is filled with pain and loss. We know God's good.

[8:03] We say it, and you know, God is good, and everybody says all the time God is good. And it's not just to say, we know this to be true, we've experienced in our life, but let's just be real. Sometimes we don't understand what He's doing.

Sometimes that's our prayer. Lord, I know You're good, but I just, I don't understand this. We know God hears our prayers, but sometimes the answer seems a long time coming.

And Jesus knew what waiting could do to us. When we're waiting for that answer, when we just need a little bit of hope. And in Luke, in verse number one, Luke doesn't make us guess what this parable is about.

Jesus tells us right off the bat that He knew His people would be tempted to faint. Doesn't mean physically pass out. Any fainters in here? We just need to know in case you faint, we'll just keep moving on.

Like, oh, they just fainted, we're good. He's not talking about passing out because of exhaustion or because of a health situation. No, the idea to faint not is to lose heart.

[9:01] To become discouraged. To grow weary in our lives. To reach the place where we begin to think, what's the use? I've prayed and prayed and prayed, what's the use anymore, Lord?

And maybe you're here this morning like that. You haven't stopped believing God. You haven't walked away from your faith. I mean, you're here on a Sunday morning. But here's the thing, you're just tired.

Lord, I'm praying and I really just need something. You prayed and you waited. You prayed and you waited. I'm so thankful Jesus gave an account like this for people like us. So we knew how to walk through the difficulties of life.

Because here's kind of the big idea that we're going to look at this morning in these first eight verses of Luke 18. Is that when waiting makes us want to give up, Jesus is teaching us to keep praying because we can trust the God who hears us.

We're not praying to somebody that can't hear what we're saying. And that brings us to the question I want us to answer. Why should I keep praying when I feel like giving up? So Jesus gives us some great truths in these short verses.

[10:05] And the first thing that we see is this. We should keep praying because waiting can wear you down. I mean, sometimes we're just tired of waiting. Like physically tired. You think, Lord, I don't know how much longer I can do this.

And so in order to illustrate this, Jesus gives us this parable. In verse number two, with just a few words, he introduces us to a judge. And he tells us everything we need to know about him. Here's what we know about the judge.

I mean, what an awful person. Especially for a judge. The idea is he had no reverence for God.

He had no concern for answering to him. He had nobody in his life, especially, that was of a higher authority when governing his decisions.

He basically lived his life for himself. He would use his position. He would use situations like that to just kind of make his life better. But Jesus goes even further.

[11:04] He didn't just fear not God. He neither regarded man. I mean, this is not a great combo for anybody, but especially a judge. He didn't fear God.

And he didn't care about what anybody thought about him. I mean, he's just kind of this rogue judge. And we know that a judge is supposed to care about justice. A judge makes a commitment to defend what is right, to protect those that are vulnerable.

And this man cared about none of that. And he admits it himself. This wasn't just something that people said about him. Verse number four, he says, hey, I don't fear God or man, but this lady's wearing me out. I mean, that was his own testimony of his own life.

The idea that I want us to see is this is not a good man having a bad day. This is a hard man with a hard heart that lives for himself, that's selfish in every decision that he has.

And in verse number three, we see somebody walks into his courtroom who desperately needs justice. And there was a widow in that city. Now, we might just read that and kind of move right on and say, okay, it's a widow.

[12:11] But we understand in the first century, especially in this culture, in this society, a widow would have been one of the most vulnerable people in all the society. There was no indication of

someone influential standing with her.

She didn't have some friends around her. She was kind of by herself. And she doesn't appear to have anything to offer the judge. She had nothing to bribe with. She was probably barely making it by in her own life.

And all she had was her case. And here was her case. She'd been wronged. The Bible doesn't necessarily tell us what was happening. But she comes and she says, avenge me of mine adversary.

Now, she's not looking for revenge. She's not trying to just make somebody pay. She's not looking for a situation where she spills coffee on herself and then sues the people because the coffee's hot. This is not what this is.

It's not one of these weird things where she's just trying to find some money. No, here's what she's saying. I need you to make this right. I need you to protect me from this person who has wronged me. Because Jesus called the Pharisees out.

[13:17] He said, many of them have devoured widows' houses. That they would take advantage of these people and kind of take everything they had, the little that they did have. We don't know if that's the situation. But she was in a spot where somebody had wronged her greatly.

And the Bible says there in the middle of verse number three, and she came unto him. The idea, really, when you study it out in the original, is she kept coming. And we see that, that he later says that.

This wasn't a one-time thing. Hey, I need some help. No, this was a continual coming. I mean, every day, I bet, when he was walking to the office and he got out of his brand-new chariot to walk into the courtroom, there she was.

He's thinking, you've got to be kidding me. Every time I go. I mean, he probably went to the grocery store. She's like, hey, have you looked at my case yet? I mean, she's that kind of person.

Everywhere he goes in the city, she just seems to be there.

Why? Why was she coming again and again and again? Because he wasn't doing anything about it. Her situation remained the same. Whatever it was, she needed some justice there.

[14:19] And I think that's kind of where the story begins to intersect with our lives here. That sometimes the hardest part isn't hearing no when we pray. Sometimes the hardest part is when we just seem to hear nothing. It seems like the situation goes unchanged.

I would imagine if you're like me, we can handle a lot as long as we know it's not going to last forever. Like, okay, I can deal with this. Like for the kids, they all started school this week. They can handle it because they know next May they're going to be out of it.

Yeah. I mean, yeah, it's got an expiration date. Hopefully, unless you go to summer school. But what wears on us is not knowing when.

And that's what's wearing on her. That's where she lived. All that she knows is yesterday she needed justice. And today she needs the same thing. So what she does is she just keeps coming back.

She comes back again. She's going to come back tomorrow. She's going to come back until something changes in her life. And that's exactly where Jesus is taking his disciples here as he gathered them together. Because in Luke chapter 17, he reminded them the Son of Man is coming.

[15:23] And he's going to ultimately make everything right. And his kingdom is going to come with all his fullness and all his glory. But until then, there's waiting. And it's going to wear you down.

There's going to be times where you think that the Lord is not listening to our prayer. And see, sometimes the greatest threat to our prayer life isn't unbelief. It's just the weariness of it.

That you're just tired of saying the same thing. Sometimes I tell my kids, like, I'm just tired of telling you the same thing over and over again. Okay, just making sure. And it's like, you know, as a parent, sometimes you're like, well, I don't want to say anything because I'm tired of saying it.

I said it yesterday. I just don't want to say it today. I'll say it tomorrow. I've got to recoup my energy to say it. Make your bed again. See, I think we still believe God can.

We're just tired of wondering when he will. That's kind of where he's bringing us. I think we can be in this spot where we still, we know God hears us, but we're just tired of carrying the burden all the time.

[16:24] It's kind of weighing our life down. And slowly that disappointment, if we allow it, can turn into discouragement. And this discouragement really can turn into silence on our part.

Well, if heaven's not going to answer, then what's the point of praying? If God's not going to listen and give me what I need, then I'm just going to kind of, you know, I'll just move on then. And it's not that we consciously decide, well, I'm never praying again.

It's just we pray a little bit, a little less about it. And then a little less about it. Until we've eventually just stopped asking altogether. That isn't what this widow did. She didn't say, well, I'm not getting an answer, so I'm just going to stop doing anything.

No, she kept coming. She kept coming over and over. And here's the result, verse number five. Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. I mean, I love it. I mean, it's kind of humorous, the language that Jesus uses. And this woman has just completely worn this judge out. That weary me, it has the idea of being struck or beaten down, having a black eye.

[17 : 28] It is just a nuisance in his life. Like, maybe every time that he showed up and he was walking around town, that lady was yelling at him. And they're like, who's that lady? Like, I don't know. She won't leave me alone. I mean, it was just a constant nagging.

And he just simply comes to the place where he said, I had enough of her. I don't want to do something, but if I don't do anything, she's just going to keep doing this. And so he finally acts. Not because he suddenly becomes compassionate. Not because he developed a fear of God. Not because justice just overnight began to matter to him. No, he acts because of her persistence. Now, I don't want us to walk away with the wrong lesson. Because this parable is not a comparison. It's a contrast. Jesus is not saying, God is like this judge, so if you bother him long enough, he'll give you whatever you want.

That is not the point. That is not what Jesus is saying. The judge does not care, but God does. See, this judge has to be worn down.

[18 : 33] God doesn't. This judge is reluctant to hear this widow. God invites us to come. He commands us to come. He gives an open invitation that we can come boldly into the throne room.

That we can cast our cares on him, as Peter says, because he cares for us. So why does Jesus tell about this widow who just keeps coming and coming and coming? Because he knows that we're all probably going to walk through seasons of life where we feel just like her.

That we're still waiting. And we're still hurting. We're still asking. We're still wondering if something's going to change. And Jesus just gently reminds us here, don't let the waiting make you quit praying. He hasn't forgotten you. Listen, waiting is not evidence that God has stopped working. It feels like that sometimes. Because sometimes maybe something's going in your life and you feel like God's maybe moving some things around.

And then it's just like I-35 construction. It's just never going to get better. And it's just like, well, it's what it is. No, sometimes we simply cannot see what he's doing.

[19 : 43] He's always at work. He's not on vacation. He knows where you are. He knows the need. Listen, don't mistake God's timing for God's absence. His timing is much different.

The book of Isaiah reminds us that his ways are higher than our ways. That his thoughts are higher than ours. That God knows what he's doing. He knows that sometimes in the waiting, we're growing. I know in my own life looking back, and I have to remind myself every time a waiting period comes, that God used that time in my life to grow me.

To stretch me. To bring my dependence back on him. Because I don't know if you're like me, sometimes I'm pretty dependent on myself. I'm going to get things done. And if the answer doesn't come in prayer, then I'll just make it happen.

Sometimes God says, that's not a great idea. Why don't you just trust me? Why don't you be still and know that I'm God? So Jesus reminds us we should keep praying because waiting can wear us down, and it keeps us connected to the Father.

But that raises an important question. If God isn't like the judge, then why should we keep coming? If we're not going to get what we need eventually, if we're not going to wear him down, what's going to give us this confidence to pray again tomorrow if nothing has changed?

[20 : 55] I think we should keep praying, number two, because God can be trusted in the waiting. Verse number six, Jesus says, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

He's saying, listen, think about what made him move. It wasn't compassion or righteousness. It wasn't the fear of God or the concern for justice.

He acted because of the persistence. That's what got him to move. And what Jesus does there in verse number seven is he takes that and he contrasts it.

He says, if he's willing to do that because of this widow's nagging, how much more is your heavenly Father who loves you, who gave his life for you, how much more is he willing to hear and to answer and to remind you that he's on your side, that he has your best interests at heart?

See, that widow, she had to wear the judge down to get his attention. We already have God's attention. That God's ear is towards his people. He wants to hear from us. He wants to hear us cry out.

[22:03] We don't have to keep praying because God's reluctant. No, we get to keep praying because God is good to us. That's what he's teaching here. See, I know it's easy to begin to interpret God's character through our circumstances.

We've all been there. You know, something happens in our life. Well, God, I thought you loved me. I don't know if you've seen what's going on over here. This bill and this health and this, that. And we begin to determine God loves us by what's going on in our life.

That's not true. We've seen that as we've walked through Luke's gospel. Every time somebody has an ailment or a sickness or something happens, they think, well, the only reason that can be happy is because they did something bad. And they're a horrible, wicked sinner.

Jesus says that's not how we should interpret things. I mean, we begin to think when our circumstances don't change, well, maybe he's not hearing me. Maybe, maybe he just doesn't care about this.

Maybe I'm, maybe I'm putting too much thought into that. No, he cares. Maybe this just doesn't matter to him. But we see in verse number seven, and shall not God avenge his own elect which cry day and night unto him?

[23:10] Jesus is saying, just like this widow kept coming, we should keep coming. Because when we look at that phrase, which cry day and night, that doesn't seem like casual prayer to me.

Like, hey, Lord, it's me again, just checking in. No, the idea is, Lord, I need you. I mean, we come with that, with our heart, and we lay it out before him. He already knows it.

He knows what we need before we even ask. But prayer is not trying to change the mind of God. Here's what prayer is doing. It's positioning us in dependence on him. And it's reminding us, not for him to get on our page, no, that our will will be linked with his.

And we keep coming to him constantly. The idea, crying day and night, is there is desperation there. Listen, you may be walking through something difficult, your family, or whatever it may be.

Are you desperate about it? That's the idea that Jesus is saying. He doesn't rebuke us for continuing to ask. I'm so thankful the Lord doesn't say, hey, you already asked about that yesterday.

[24:10] Because I do that with my kids. I'm like, listen, I already told you yesterday, if I change my mind, I'll let you know. That's how we kind of have earthly relationships. I'm so thankful that I can go every single day and ask the Lord the same thing.

If it's heavy on my heart, he wants me to bring it before him. He doesn't say, why are you bringing this to me again? I mean, there's something beautiful about knowing that God is never irritated by the dependent cries of his own children.

I'm so thankful for that. See, the goal of persistent prayer is not about bending God's will to ours. It's about God shaping our will to his.

And that's the importance of coming over and over and over. But we have to understand that we have to trust him even if the answer we receive isn't the answer we really wanted.

That's where it gets tough. Maybe you've heard of the Apostle Paul. I mean, you talk about one of the greatest followers of Christ that's ever walked on this planet. In my opinion, probably one of the greatest.

[25:16] But you know what? The Apostle Paul had a problem. 2 Corinthians chapter 12 tells us he had a thorn in the flesh. And really, Paul's idea was, Lord, if you get rid of this problem, man, I could do a lot more for you.

Lord, if you, I mean, I'm going to serve you. I'm going to love you. Thank you for everything you do. But man, I could really do something for you now, Lord. We don't know what the thorn in the flesh was, by the way.

There's all kinds of things. It doesn't matter. That's really not the point. But we know this. Paul wanted it gone. It was probably annoying. It could have been a health situation. It could have been something like that where he just felt like it was really hindering his mission's work.

And the Bible says in 2 Corinthians 12 that he prayed three times. He besought the Lord. This wasn't a casual prayer. It was three times that we know of. He begged the Lord. And he said, Lord, remove this thorn.

See, God answered Paul.

[26 : 22] Just not how he wanted. But God gave him exactly what he needed. And sometimes we need to be okay with that. Sometimes persistent prayer doesn't mean that he's going to answer it every time like we wanted to.

It means I'm going to keep asking. Persistent prayer doesn't mean I'm going to keep asking until God gives me what we want. Sometimes God changes the situation. Sometimes God changes us in the situation.

Sometimes he removes the burden, but often he gives the grace to carry it. But whatever God does, whatever happens, here's what he reminds us.

Keep praying because you can trust that God knows what he's doing. That thorn in the flesh, here's what it did. And Paul tells us it kept him humble. Because if Paul had all the ability and he had all this success and he could look at his life and say, Well, I started these churches and look at all my preacher boys and look at all the things I've done.

No, the only reason he did that is because God did it in him. And that thorn in the flesh kept him dependent on the one that was giving him the strength. And then we come to the end of verse number 7 and the beginning of verse number 8, and it doesn't seem to make sense.

[27 : 29] He says, Though he bear long with them, I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. So we keep praying, we keep crying out, we keep wanting God to answer our prayers.

And we look at these two verses, it says, He bears long and he acts speedily when we pray. Which one is it? Yes. That's the answer.

See, the idea is this. Is that when God acts, he's going to act speedily. He's not promising that God will answer every prayer immediately according to our timetable.

But here's the thought. Is that when God's appointed time comes, he will act. He will not forget. He will not hesitate. He will not fail.

I don't want to stand here and pretend like I can explain why God makes us wait. I don't know. I don't know in my own life. I don't know in your life.

[28 : 27] Many of the issues that I do know in this room, I'm praying for it. And I'm praying, Lord, would you give them an answer, Lord? Would you give them peace? Would you give them wisdom? But I don't know sometimes why the waiting happens. But Jesus gives us something better than an explanation.

He gives us the assurance of the character of God. That's what verse 8 is. He said, let me just remind you who you're praying to. You're not praying to somebody that has a little bit of authority and can kind of do some things.

He's a little bit of a mover and shaker here. No, no. You're praying to God. That he's going to avenge you speedily. When God moves, when God acts, when it's the right time, he will do it. One commentator said it this way. His character can be trusted even when his timing cannot be understood. That's what Jesus is saying. That's what he's reminding us in this verse.

So I just want to ask you, what's the prayer that you've grown tired of praying? Jesus isn't promising this morning, if you'll pray it one more time, you'll be a little more persistent.

[29 : 34] Tomorrow everything's going to change. But he is reminding you, keep praying that prayer. Because your father hears you. And he sees you. And he cares.

And he's just. And he can be trusted. So keep coming to him. Keep trusting him. See, at first glance, Jesus ends this parable in a very interesting way.

But I think he wants us to see something and understand something about persistent prayer. It's much bigger than just getting an answer. Look at the end of verse number eight. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

You know what persistent prayer really helps us do? It helps us to remain faithful while we wait. So why should I keep praying when I feel like giving up? Because real faith keeps looking for the king.

See, Jesus began this parable by saying, men ought always to pray and not to faint. But then he ends it by asking a question. Not saying, hey, when I come back, am I going to find people praying? [30:42] No, he said, hey, when I come back, will I find faith? Why? Why? Why does he give both of these situations? Because these two belong together.

Persistent prayer is an expression of persevering faith. Because we keep coming to him knowing that he is good. That he is just.

That he does hear us. See, we keep coming to God because we believe all of these things are true. That he keeps his promises. That he cares. That he listens. And this is the connection that we see from our text last week in Luke chapter 17.

Jesus said, hey, the king is coming. I'm coming again. But between those two realities, you're going to have a difficult time. There's going to be situations in your life where you're just going to be waiting.

And he begins to tell this parable. Because he's not teaching his disciples how to get their prayers answered. No, he wants them to understand. And he wants us to understand how to remain faithful while we wait for him to come again.

[31:42] That's what he wants us to see. Because you know what? You're going to experience in your life just like they did. There's going to be days when justice seems delayed. There's going to be days in your life when evil seems to be winning.

When prayers seem to be unanswered. And you cry out, how long, Lord? How long is this going to go on in my life? And here's what Jesus is saying. Don't lose heart.

Keep praying. How can we do that? Because the story's not over. Sometimes we walk through circumstances in life and we feel like this is the end.

This is the end of the story right here. I don't know how I'm going to get up off the mat on this one. It's not the end of the story. No, Jesus is coming. The King is coming.

And when he comes, you know what he's going to do? He's going to make everything right. All those things. And I'm not trying to belittle anybody's issues, anybody's problems. I have them too. But you know what? When we see him, when he comes again, all of the difficulties of life, they're going to be gone.

[32:48] I'm so thankful that every trial, every situation, every difficult thing you're walking through right now has an expiration date. We don't know when it is. But we know this.

When he comes, we shall see him, the Bible says, and we shall be like him. And so shall we ever be with the Lord. And he reminds us, yes, that we're living in this in-between.

We're living in the already and the not yet. But Jesus wants us to understand, hey, keep faith. Don't lose heart. I'm coming. And so he puts it into this question to remind us.

He doesn't want us to question God's faithfulness. That's settled. He's not saying, am I going to find faith? Is God still faithful? No. Here's what he wants to know. Will he find faith with us? Will he find us persevering?

When the king comes, will he still find me trusting? Will he still find me even in the waiting that I am following him? That's the kind of faith that he's looking for. Where do you get that?

[33:43] With constant communication with your heavenly father. By running to him all the time. See, faith isn't merely trusting God when you can see what he's doing. It's trusting him when you can't see what he's doing. Knowing that he loves you.

Knowing that he cares for you. Faith says, I don't understand this, but I know God. You know what faith says? I don't know how long and why God hadn't answered, but I know him. I don't know how long I'm going to have to wait, but I'm going to keep trusting him.

Because he loves me. And maybe that's exactly where you are this morning. You've been waiting. And the waiting's just worn you down.

Maybe you've prayed about something for so long, you don't even know what else to say about it. You've said every iteration you can think of. Maybe you once prayed about it every single day, but now you hardly mention it.

Jesus told this parable for you. For me. And here's what he said. Don't lose heart. I may not know where you are, but Jesus this morning knows exactly where you are.

[34:50] He knows what's weighing on you. He knows it's difficult in the waiting. And he just says, I want to remind you that God you're praying to can be trusted.

Remember the contrast. You're not a widow standing before an uncaring judge. If you know Jesus Christ as your Savior, you are a child standing before your Heavenly Father. And how much more does your Heavenly Father love you?

That he's willing to listen. That he's there. You're not trying to convince him to listen. No, God hears you. You're not trying to come to him and say the right words so he cares. No, look at the cross of Calvary.

He cares. He laid down his life so that you might have a relationship. And you might have a home in heaven. And you might have peace and joy walking through the most difficult thing in your life. So maybe the question isn't this.

Why hasn't God answered me? Maybe God's saying this. Will you keep trusting me until I come? Will you keep trusting me in the waiting? I'll leave you with this thought this morning.

[35 : 53] When you don't understand God's timing, keep trusting his character. And because you trust him, keep praying. And he spake a parable unto them saying to this end, that men ought always to pray and not faint.

Listen, church. Jesus says this. Don't lose heart. Would you stand with your heads bowed? Thank you.