

An Unjust Judge vs. A "Won't Quit" Widow

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[0 : 00] Well, today we're going to talk about prayer.! More persistent.

We're going to look at today in my time with God. I could be more passionate in my times of prayer as opposed to it just being rote.

Just a list of things that I pray for. What is it that we pray for? Many of us, if not all of us, are familiar with a prayer of confession.

We're reminded of a Dennis the Menace cartoon from years ago. Little Dennis the Menace kneeling at his bed, looking up into heaven and saying, I'm here to turn myself in.

Maybe we can relate to that. Corrie Ten Boom, who survived the Nazi Holocaust, said this about prayer.

[1 : 30] Prayer should be our steering wheel, not our spare tire. Prayer should be something we constantly use, like a steering wheel, not something we only have to use when things go wrong or go bad.

But I want to ask you this question. Why should we pray? Why should we pray? I feel it's kind of an odd thing to ask a group of Christians.

I mean, you all are a group of Christians. Why would I ask a group of Christians the why of it? Why should we pray? And most of us would say, okay, I know that I ought to pray, but where does that ought to come from?

Where does that sense of, yeah, I know I need to, I ought to pray, but how do you answer that question? Why do we pray? I mean, after all, am I wrong about this?

God already knows everything. Is that wrong? Are we ever, ever, ever informing God of something he doesn't know when we pray?

[2 : 44] The answer to that question, if we really get down to it, of course, is no. God is not surprised by any of our prayers. Oftentimes, he's the one behind the scenes orchestrating the very thing that we're praying for.

How do we do that? Why do we pray then? Well, if you were to ask that question of Jesus, what do you think he would say?

If you look at our passage today, he's going to tell us, well, one of the things is that you should pray so that you don't lose heart. Let's take a look at that.

This is in Luke chapter 18 and verse 1. He told them a parable to the effect that they ought to always, they ought always to pray and not lose heart.

That's interesting. Jesus is about to tell them a parable, and it's the only time he does this where he introduces the parable with the point of the parable before he ever starts telling the story.

[3 : 48] So he's telling us what this parable is for, the reason why he's telling the parable, before he ever tells us the parable. That's unusual for Jesus here.

That they ought always to pray. He's talking to his disciples. And again, please, even though this is chapter 18, verse 1, remember that the original gospels, the New Testament letters, Old Testament scriptures, were not written with chapter and verse divisions.

So even though we've ended chapter 17, where he's talking about his second coming, right, as in the days of Noah, and as in the days of Lot, and fire and brimstone, and second coming, and people flying in the air, and what is that all about?

We talked about that two weeks ago. But continue that thinking, that second coming, the coming of his kingdom thinking. After all, we're still in this portion of the scriptures where Jesus is declaring what?

Right? If you've been here for a while, you know what I'm doing when I'm standing here. I'm not about to break out into a drum solo. Conga drum solo. Well, kind of I am, right?

[5 : 09] Jesus is saying, the kingdom of God is at hand. And it starts, Luke chapter 9, verse 51, where he has set his face toward Jerusalem, and he's taking this long route to get there.

So he's going through the towns of Galilee, and he's going through the towns of Samaria. Eventually, he's going to get to Jerusalem, where he knows he'll be crucified. He knows he'll be rejected.

He knows that they will have rejected the coming of the kingdom of God, which Jesus himself represents. Jesus would be able to say, I am the kingdom of God.

And they're going to reject him. But this whole section of Luke, between chapter 9, verse 51, all the way to the end, where he's crucified and risen from the dead, there's this drumbeat.

It starts slowly. The kingdom of God is at hand. The kingdom of God is at hand. And then that drumbeat just continues to build, and build, and build, and build, and build, and build.

[6 : 16] And if I had any rhythm, there would be more interesting. But the kingdom of God is at hand, and he's standing right in front of you.

And he's just told his disciples at the end of chapter 17, you're not going to see it. Because something else is going to happen instead of the establishment of the kingdom of God.

And that is, Jesus would suffer. And he would die. And they would not see the coming of the kingdom like they thought they would get to see.

So in that context now, Jesus introduces this idea of prayer and not giving up, not losing heart. You ought always to pray and not give up, not grow weary, not faint. Faint is the King James translation of that word.

[7 : 19] In other words, if you want to avoid a fainting spell, you ought always, there's your ought to, to pray. Why?

Jesus knows that in this life there's going to be pain. Right? Can you testify? Many of you can, could stand right now and testify to the pain, to the disappointment, to the heartache, to the trouble that you've had to face.

If you can't, maybe a couple of things. Number one, you're really young and you haven't really experienced much of life yet. Or two, you've had such a pampered life, I don't even believe that. Because life is tough. And many of you, if not all of you, know that, can relate to that. The disappointment, the grief, the doubt, the fatigue.

Life can be a grind. The conflict that comes about in life to the point where you have no emotional energy left, no spiritual warmth, no desire for prayer.

[8 : 31] And maybe you get to the point of starting to think that all of it's just pointless anyway. And your motivation to pray springs a leak.

And what do you do? Jesus knew, and you have this on your notes, Jesus knew that we easily lose heart.

He knows that about us. That we easily lose heart and give up on prayer. We just do. I've been a pastor for over 30 years.

It's easy for me to give up, to lose heart when it comes to prayer. It's something that you have to rededicate yourself to over and over again.

Jesus understands that about us. He knows that we are weak with this. It is the very reason why he taught this parable.

[9 : 33] Psalm 103, verse 14 tells us, and of course Jesus knows this, for he knows how weak we are. He remembers that we are only dust. We're created from the dirt of the ground.

The Lord scooped up some dirt and blew life into it and there was Adam. And we're made of the same stuff. We think we're flesh and blown and we're strong and we're muscular.

No. He knows that we are weak, that we are dust. And so we have these admonitions, Galatians 6, verse 9, let us not grow weary, same idea, of doing good, for in due season we will reap if we do not, what, give up.

Again, Paul writes this because under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Lord guides Paul to write this because he knows that it's easy for us to give up.

2 Corinthians 4, Paul writes this incredible passage here talking about the pain and the heartache and the trouble that he's been facing.

[10 : 42] We are afflicted. The word afflicted is the idea of being under pressure. You guys ever feel that way about life that you just, you feel like you're under, you're in the pressure cooker.

It's just tough. We are afflicted in every way but not crushed. He says, perplexed. Perplexed, what does that mean?

We don't often use the word perplexed. You don't know the answer to the question. We don't often say, well, I'm perplexed by this question. Well, Paul does.

Paul uses that word here and basically what he says here is, I don't know the answer. I don't have an answer for you. You ever get to feel that way?

Where I, why is this happening? I don't know. I'm perplexed but not driven to despair. Still has hope. Persecuted but not forsaken.

[11:40] Struck down. Any, any big time wrestling fans? WWE or whatever? Anybody? Come on, come on, some of you guys gotta like wrestling.

Joseph admitted it. Any, any of you guys? No? Nobody into wrestling? Anybody else over here? You guys disappointed me. I was expecting this, these two rows, I was expecting no wrestling? Really? When I was younger, I liked wrestling. What's going on? You know, you know it's fake? Is that what, is that what bothers you about it?

Okay. UFC. Okay. Let's switch to UFC. Any UFC fans now? Okay. Okay. All right. Very good. Boxing.

I mean, now we're talking, it's not fixed, is it? Okay. Okay. The idea, where I'm getting at with all of this, I'm having fun, but struck down is the idea of taking down to the mat.

[12:47] Knocked down to the mat. You ever feel like life does that to you? Struck down. I mean, the UFC fighter, can't say boxer, just roundhouse kicked you right in the head and you are down for the count.

Right? Is that okay? Okay. The funny guy in spandex and long hair threw over his shoulder and slammed you on the, okay. But not destroyed. Okay.

Let's see. From our limited perspective, our limited human perspective, it often seems that God is not answering or even listening when we pray.

You ever feel that way? Been there, done that? Okay. Yeah. But again, that comes from our human perspective and we sense it as a delay because we do not see things from his eternal perspective. And why should we? We're not eternal yet in that sense. We can't see from God's heavenly perspective. Now, let me just correct what I just said. If you've trusted Christ as your Savior, you are eternally, you have eternity already.

[14:19] The moment that you trust Christ as Savior, you are heaven bound. It's already yours. He sees you as forgiven and part of his family. But you don't have that heavenly perspective yet.

And that's what trips us up. That's what gets us down because we can only see it from a human perspective. So bring you back to 2 Corinthians chapter 4 again.

So you're getting afflicted. You're in the pressure cooker, right? You're perplexed. You don't have any answers to the questions. You're getting taken down to the mat. But we do not lose heart.

Same idea. Same idea. We do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.

So there's a difference between the old man, the old self, the sinful nature, and what God has planted within us and giving us a new nature, giving us the Holy Spirit who resides within.

[15:23] For this light, momentary affliction. You guys like that phrase? We struggle with that phrase.

It's not very light, and it doesn't seem momentary, and it just, what? It's just tough. But this light, momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.

All right, now, I want to get the picture of this, okay? Because the eternal weight of glory, can you speak like American English, you know, 2026, so I can understand this, or, Mark and I were talking about, what was it, Al.

Tell it to me like I'm 10 years old, right, Mark? You ever feel that way? You read a passage of scripture, and you want someone to, hey, can you just tell me what this means as if I'm a 10-year-old? Right?

That would be great, so I'm going to try to do that for you. Maybe 13. Okay. Eternal weight of glory. Here's my light and momentary affliction, here is what awaits me in glory.

[16:39] Which one weighs more? Boom, bang! I mean, it's throwing the weight scales way off the charts, because what God has awaiting for us is so weighty, so much more than any trouble, any affliction, any difficulty that we could be facing in the here and now.

it doesn't compare. Now, again, from my human perspective, I'm saying, okay, prove it to me. We've got to get there first. When we get there, then we'll see it, full-blown, right? Or maybe we'll get to see part of it on the other side of that affliction, on the other side of that pain, of that hardship. We get a sense of what God is doing, but oftentimes we go to our graves never quite fully understanding what in the world God was up to by allowing us to go through what he did. Oof. He goes on. As we look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen, we just can't see it yet, okay?

It's unseen. Because it's unseen for us, it's unknowable. We just can't. For the things that are seen are transient. I like this word better than some of the translations use the word temporary or temporal.

[18 : 10] Transient to me is even better because it means it's decaying. It's just falling apart. That's what this world is. It's falling apart. Your physical body, welcome to reality, it's falling apart, right? You start to get any kind of sense of age on you and it's just falling apart. You, young folks, you may not experience this yet. It's coming.

Welcome to the party. It's fun. But things that are unseen, you can't see with the naked eye, are eternal. The things that way more, the things that are eternal, the things that matter, but you can't see it, but it's eternal.

And so with all of that in mind, that brings us now to the actual story. But I want us to call back again the context.

Because two weeks ago when we looked at chapter 17, I like repeated this idea of context, context, context. Keep your passage in context. And very often with this parable, the context is completely forgotten.

[19 : 21] We think, okay, Jesus talked about the second coming, whatever that is. It looks like the rapture, but it's not the rapture. What is this? It's the second coming of Jesus. It's the kingdom of God.

He's answering that question. What's going to be happening at the coming of the kingdom? kingdom? And then chapter 18, verse 1 comes along and we switch that off.

My prophecy hat is off. And now I'm on to something else. I'm on to the subject of prayer. So he's teaching a parable about prayer that's completely unrelated.

No. Don't. Don't do that. Don't ever think that what he just said is unrelated to what he's about to say. Because there is a correlation here.

He's not telling this story about this widow and this judge in a vacuum. But often that's how people read this passage and often it's how pastors preach this passage of scripture.

[20 : 28] And they do so to their own detriment. Please keep it in context. He's just told his disciples that they weren't going to see this kingdom.

That Jesus was going to suffer. That he would go to the cross and all of that. And that the kingdom from their perspective was going to be postponed. They wouldn't see it.

And it's their expectations that were not going to be met. When it comes to life, our expectations are so huge.

Because we have expectations about what it's going to be like to go to high school. Oh, this is what high school is going to be like. Or this is what dating is going to be like.

Or this is what my marriage, I'm getting married. So we walk into a relationship like that and we have expectations. And so often our expectations go what?

[21 : 32] Unmet. And we get disappointed. Having children. This is, my kids are going to be just wonderful, perfect little angels.

They're never going to do anything wrong. Welcome to the real world. Those of you who have cute little newborns, they're wonderful.

But man, they grow up into little terrors. it's fun. But the expectations that we have, what our family is going to be like, what life is going to be like, what all of this that we face in this human existence that we have, what it's going to be like.

And so often those expectations go unmet. We have mistreatment, we have persecution, there's disappointment, there's discouragement, there's pain, there's trouble, there's heartache, there's doubt, there's fear, all of it.

And then there are times when we want to faint, and we want to lose heart, and we want to give up. Throw in the towel.

[22 : 54] So he tells us a parable so that we don't do that. he said, here's the parable, in a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man.

That's all we need to know about the judge. Neither feared God nor respected man. What a resume. This is the kind of judge you do not want to find yourself standing in front of, ever, because of how corrupt he is.

Now, judges in this time and place were very well known for being corrupt and accepting bribes and robbing people and all of these kinds of things.

One historian writing about judges in this part of the world, in this time frame, a judge could be swayed with simply a plate of tasty food.

Someone made him scrumptious something to eat. So those of you who knew how to cook and bake and you would have maybe a leg up on this kind of a judge.

[24 : 05] Because any kind of a bribe, if that's all it was, that's how easily he could be swayed. So let's set the scene a little bit more.

I mean, this guy, this resume, he doesn't like people and he's not afraid of God. Right? He doesn't care about you.

He doesn't care about God. This guy is an atheist and he's an egomaniacal only interested in his self, corrupt, bad judge.

Don't equate him with God. Little hint. This would have been somewhat, in the Roman system, a judge that would have been appointed by a Roman official.

This would not have been a courtroom. Don't think of yourself as being in a courtroom that's got all the panel and the bars and all of that stuff and the big bench and all of that. No, no, no. This is like a district judge who would travel in his district when it was the season for this kind of thing to be happening and they would set up a tent for him.

[25 : 18] And then the people in that area would then, if they had a case to bring, they would bring it. There was no docket, there was no time frame, there was no appointments made. It was you just showed up and you probably wanted to show up early and you wanted to have a loud voice and you wanted to be able to shove and push and get your way because basically it turned into a free-for-all.

Who was shouting the largest? Who was paying off the assistance? Who was maybe paying off the judge to get in front to get his case heard?

That's how things were determined in this setting. And then when he was done in that area, they'd pack up the tent and they'd move on to the next part of the district. And that's basically how it worked.

And so this is what's happening in all of this. This poor woman who comes, we're going to see here in verse three, she's got no chance.

verse three, there was a widow in that city who kept coming, who kept coming, who kept coming, who kept coming, who kept coming. That's the tense of the verb.

[26 : 32] She keeps coming. And she keeps coming to him and saying, give me justice against my adversary. We don't know anything about her case. We don't know anything about what happened to her.

We don't know why she's coming. And I think this is purposeful so that when we think about our circumstances in our life and our experiences, we think of what we have faced and insert that into the blank, into that void of why is she coming?

We don't know. Jesus doesn't tell us. Why she is coming is not important to the story. So in your imagination, if you've experienced some sort of wrongdoing that you either brought to court or wanted to bring to court, you could fill in the blank here with whatever it was that you were facing. So she kept coming and she kept coming and she kept coming. For a while, this corrupt judge refused.

But afterward, he said to himself, though I neither fear God nor respect man, thanks for the reminder of your resume, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.

[27 : 57] Remind you, the judge is not God in this story. Sometimes people want to, when they see a parable, they just automatically compare and say, okay, well, maybe this is how we ought to treat God.

Not what Jesus is saying. Hang on there, okay? So this corrupt judge has met his match and she keeps coming and so the commentators, they get a little creative when they talk about how she keeps coming.

So he's at the market one day after court session and he's buying some almonds and she pops up at his elbow. Hello, judge. I see you're buying some of those tasty almonds.

Have you thought about my case? And then he's coming out of the gate in the morning to head over to the court and there she is waiting for him. Good morning, judge.

What a beautiful day it is. Have you thought about my case anymore? He sees her about town. He feels like he's being followed and she's just keeping on coming because she can't, she can't do this in the court, in the tent.

[29 : 10] she's a woman. Women were not allowed to give testimony in court. It's just the culture that they lived in. Not allowed.

She is poor. She's got no one to, she's got no friend to stand in her place to plead her case. She's got no lawyer there to represent her.

She can't afford one. She certainly can't even be tempted to bribe because she's got nothing to bribe him with. So what's she going to do?

The only thing she can do is to keep coming and to keep showing her face and to keep on pressing the issue.

And this judge, why does he finally agree to give in? Not because he's had a change of conscience and thought, well, I ought to do the right thing here.

[30 : 09] That's not his motive. Matter of fact, he's concerned about his reputation here, so much so that what if people find out that I've given in to this poor woman?

I don't want that to happen. But if I don't, she's just going to keep coming and bothering me. So that's why I'm going to finally give in.

Not because I want to do the right thing. Not because I want to provide justice here. He's worried about his reputation. But he finally, finally, finally, finally gives in.

Now, that's the extent of the story. That's it. And the Lord says, hear what the unrighteous judge says.

Okay? The unrighteous judge finally gives in. And hear what he says. Now, here's where Jesus stops the story. It's a very quick story. And he provides a little bit of a pop quiz to those who were listening.

[31 : 15] Three-question pop quiz. You guys ready? We'll do the little pop quiz too. You guys up for that? Let's see how it goes. This is not multiple guess.

This is not 50-50 true or false. Always crack me up when teachers, now I love multiple guess tests when I was coming up and true false questions when I was coming up because those were the easier kinds of tests.

It's the essay questions, right? Can I get an amen on that? It's the essay questions that would kind of eat your lunch because then you had to spill the beans and the teacher could tell if you knew your stuff or if you were just blowing smoke.

You had to know. You had to know. So here's the first question. And will not God give justice to his elect who cry to him day and night?

Now maybe a rephrasing of the question will help us a little bit. Is God going to right every wrong? Or another way of asking that question is isn't God going to do something about it?

[32 : 27] Isn't he going to do something about what's happening? And again, we get brought back to this idea of expectations. What are my expectations?

We have these expectations and they're not being met. Why? Because our expectation is that God puts like a little force field around his chosen, his elect, his children.

God's putting a little force field around them so that when we go about life, our life, we're going to be applauded and appreciated. And our kids are going to be the best behaved kids in the room.

And everything is going to go my way. I'm going to get a raise at work. Better yet, I'm going to get a promotion at work because that's how it's supposed to be. If the right would be rewarded and the wrong would be dealt with, this is how it would work.

marriages would work well. Matter of fact, lab results come back in a way that reports that everything is just fine and dandy.

[33 : 43] The phone call from the doctor says you're well and good. God is our own personal vending machine.

And if we would just put in the right amount of money, push the right buttons, God's going to do as we ask. because that's how it works. And don't you know, there are some preachers and some ministries that teach it that way.

One pastor out on the west coast said she was sitting down and she was talking about the Holy Spirit.

You know what I think of when I think of the Holy Spirit? I think of the genie. Like from Aladdin? That if I just rub him and the Holy Spirit's just going to pop out and do whatever I want him to do.

This is under the headline of a Christian ministry. And there are many that are not that different from that.

[35 : 06] They may not use the words genie in a bottle, but it's as if God is some sort of vending machine. Is what I'm facing, because they can't imagine this, is what I'm facing, is the difficult news, is the trouble, is the hardship, is the heartache, is the doubt, is the struggle, is it the will of God?

God? Could that be possible that it's the will of God? Who's telling the parable?

Who's asking the questions? Who's just a few short weeks away from facing what would be considered, in my book anyway, the greatest miscarriage of justice the world has ever seen, because he is the most righteous, most godly, most perfect person, perfect in every way, obedient in every way, never sinned, never once did wrong.

And what was he facing? The most cruel form of death mankind has ever invented? Death on a cross?

And was that the will of God? I struggle with that. I do. It's a struggle. Will God right every wrong?

[37 : 00] Absolutely. Just not when it fits our timing. It's not when we want it to be. He is God.

He is sovereign. In his time, he will make it right. he will carry out his justice. Let's look at the second question.

How are you doing on the quiz so far? Will he delay long over them? Last part of verse seven. Will he, will God delay long over them?

Those who cry out to him day and night, those who are his elect, will he delay? another way of asking the question is how long is God going to wait?

Come on. I'm guessing my time frame is a lot more quick than God's when it comes to timing.

Because, okay, I'm done waiting.

[38 : 07] I'm done waiting. Sometimes you have to know that God delays his answer, not because we're asking for something wrong. it's not that.

But because God has something bigger in mind, something he's trying to accomplish that we do not understand, we don't know.

We don't know what that delay is about. We don't get it. And now, look at how he answers this question. Will he delay long over them? First part of verse eight.

I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Do you like that? Because we get this messed up really bad.

Really bad. He's going to bring it speedily. But understand the word speedily here that we like in this context doesn't fit what we think it means.

[39 : 09] We think of speedily and we think timing. He's coming to the rescue. He's already on his horse and he's galloping here and he's coming to the rescue. And it's going to be fast.

But the word speedily here does not describe the timing. It describes the manner of his coming.

How do I know that?

Because of context. Leave it in its context. Don't forget. As it was in the days of Noah.

How many years did God, through Noah, the preacher of righteousness, how many years did God delay his judgment on the earth?

How many years did he give them to repent? The answer, if you don't want to go flipping back to Genesis chapter 6 and 7, 8, 120 years.

[40 : 13] Let me say that clearly. 120 years. How long have you been praying? Do we have anybody that's been alive here for 120 years?

I don't think so. You ain't been praying that long. Would Noah have said, oh, the timing of God's judgment was so quick.

I don't think that would have been Noah's testimony. But when the time came, what was the description of how his judgment came? Speedily.

Because they weren't expecting it. It was sudden. Remember what Jesus said? Yes, they were wicked and they were terrible, they were sinful, and ways, they created ways to be sinful.

We could look at our own age and say the same thing, the creative ways that people are sinful. But that wasn't what Jesus highlighted. He highlighted the idea that they were marrying and giving in marriage and just carrying on with life.

[41 : 21] They were busy with life. Are we busy with life? Yeah. So much so that we don't pay attention. So that when he's coming again, are we going to be ready?

No. because we're so busy with life. So when it comes, it comes quick. It comes speedily.

That's the idea of the word here. That's how it fits. It's the same context, it's the same idea when Jesus talks about how he is coming quickly.

It doesn't mean he's coming in my timetable, he's going to be here in the next 15 minutes because he's coming quickly. No, it means that when he comes, it's going to be quick. It's going to be fast and it's going to be over fast.

That's what he's getting at when he says he will give justice to them speedily. Not the timing, it's the manner of his coming.

[42 : 29] So, again, remember, the context Jesus is just right there at the end of chapter 17. He's talking about the end of the tribulation period because you've got people that are getting swept away and some who are staying behind and people confuse that with the rapture, but no, the people that are getting swept away are getting swept away to judgment as it was in the days of Noah when the people were swept away to their death.

The ones who are remaining behind are going to go into the kingdom. So at the end of the tribulation are people going to be ready? Are people going to understand what's happening here? third question. You guys ready for the third question? Keep in context. I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily.

The rest of verse eight. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, here's the question, will he find faith on earth? During those difficult times, when it's the times of the tribulation, when the time of persecution and hardship and difficulty and death all around you, are you going to be ready?

And being ready is a picture of a person's face because they've heeded the warnings. Jesus is coming. I know he's coming.

[43 : 56] I can even kind of pinpoint a time frame. I don't know the day or the hour, but I can get pretty close. And that person who's full of faith then is not looking at the world and the circumstance around they're looking to the skies and they're saying Jesus is coming, it's coming, it's coming.

That's what they're looking for. Will he find faith on earth when he comes again? A lot of new believers during that time frame, lots of difficulty and if you keep on praying, Jesus is basically saying if you just keep on praying, if you don't lose heart, if you don't give up, if you just keep on praying, maybe like the way I taught you to pray.

Do you guys remember the way that Jesus taught us to pray? It wasn't a prayer of his, he didn't pray it himself, but he taught us to pray this way.

And when he taught us to pray, how did he teach us to pray? Some of the words of that prayer, see if you remember, thy kingdom come, thy will be done.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done. Brothers and sisters, we've been praying that prayer for over 2,000 years.

[45 : 34] what does it mean that Jesus is asking us to pray for something that he knew he wouldn't answer for at least that long. He's taught us to pray, thy kingdom come, knowing it's going to be at least 2,000 years, maybe more, we don't know.

Thy kingdom come, Lord, when are you going to set up your kingdom? Jesus has said the kingdom is right here, the kingdom is right in front of you.

He's looking at you right in the face, guys, wake up. They don't get it. They reject him. Jesus knows this, the Old Testament foretold of this, but he still teaches us to pray, thy kingdom come, Lord, bring your kingdom, bring your kingdom, Lord, bring your kingdom.

Jesus taught us to pray a prayer request that hasn't been answered for 2,000 years, and again, I ask you, how long have you been praying for your requests?

And again, I want to clear up this question of this parable, and you have this on your notes, this question, it's a parable of contrast, not comparison.

[47 : 10] So oftentimes when we read a parable, we want to think of it as a parable of comparison, but he's not comparison, the judge does not compare to God, and the widow does not compare to you and me.

Don't think that. you are not the widow, you and I are not the widow in this story, and this judge is not God. What do I mean by that?

Well, this judge is thoroughly unjust. God himself is the very definition of just. This judge, he eventually is going to act contrary to his character.

He's going to do what's right for this woman, but in doing so, he acts contrary to his character. His character is evil, but he's going to do the right thing, not because he wants to, not because that's his motivation, but because he just wants to shut this woman up, get her out of his orbit.

God, on the other hand, is always consistent in his righteous character, always consistent faithful in character.

[48 : 29] This judge shows compassion to this woman, but he does so reluctantly. God loves to show compassion to his children, loves to demonstrate his compassion to us, especially those who are needy.

trick question on the quiz. How many of you would say I'm needy? Buddy, you better raise your hand.

Because you are, I don't care how much money you got, you are the very definition of needy. You don't stand a chance in the Lord's court of law if you're standing there by yourself.

You and I are the very definition of needy. Okay? God loves to show compassion on those who are needy.

Those who recognize, this goes all the way back now to the Sermon on the Mount, those who recognize I am poor in spirit, bankrupt in spirit. It's the definition of needy.

[49 : 44] For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. I can only come to heaven when I recognize just how needy I am. I don't have a chance if I don't see myself as being needy.

This widow, you and I are not this widow in this story. This widow is a stranger to the judge.

Beloved, if you are a child of God, you are no stranger to the Lord.

You belong to him. You are a child of God. You are forever his and he loves you. He knows you intimately better than you know yourself. You are nothing like this widow.

This widow had no friend in court that would come to her aid to stand by her in her time of need.

Listen, we have an advocate who stands at the throne and pleads our case for us day and night.

Wow. This poor widow could never approach the bench. She wasn't allowed. She was a woman.

[50 : 55] She was a widow. She had no husband who could come for her. She was poor. She couldn't bribe. She couldn't buy her way in. She had none of that. Listen, we can approach the very throne of God.

Come boldly before the throne of God. You are nothing like this widow. For this widow, there was no promise that this judge would care for her at all.

And again, you and I, we have a book full of promises that remind us our God cares for us and loves us deeply.

You are not some poor widow who needs to go and wear down a disinterested and dishonorable judge. We are the opposite.

God is the opposite of the judge and we are the opposite of the widow. So, real quickly, I'm going to give these to you real quick. This is the quick part of the sermon.

[52 : 01] Okay, I know it's late. First, we need a proper view of God. Okay, real quick. God absolutely cares for us, absolutely unlike the unjust judge.

God never delays because of a lack of care or a lack of power. That's not his motive. That's not what he's doing. God's delays are always for our good, even if the reasons are hidden from us.

Oftentimes they are. And we can trust him because we know that we are his elect.

Oh, I'm sorry. Did I already say that? We must God ultimately will bring what did I just wrote the wrong thing.

I wrote the wrong thing. I think it's right here. Okay, God ultimately will bring swift and certain justice for his elect.

[53 : 08] Some people get kind of in a bunch over the word elect. I don't know why we do that. We don't like the word elect because it reminds us of election and predestination and we're afraid of that.

But again, brothers and sisters, I would encourage you, if you are part of his elect, that means you belong to him. That's a wonderful word. I am part of God's elect.

Secondly, we need a proper view of ourselves. We are often grieved by mistreatment and difficult trials. This is often true of us.

Jesus reminded us in this world, you will have trouble, but take heart.

There it is. Take heart. I have overcome the world. We should bring our heartfelt needs to God, persistently bring our heartfelt, not our trivial, our heartfelt needs to God.

[54 : 12] we must trust, even when his answers are delayed, because we don't know what he is doing, but we can trust him, and we can trust him because we know we're his elect, which is where I think I skipped to.

Boy, I just missed that. Last two points here. These are great statements of faith that any believer can make in this context here. The first one is this.

We continue trusting in God when wrong seems to be winning. What a testimony that is to a lost and dying world, that we continue to trust him even when it's not going our way.

We don't give up. We continue. Yes, we can question. Yes, we can doubt, but we continue to trust. We continue to persist in our prayer because we know the character of God.

Secondly, we persist in talking to God when his perceived absence lingers over my soul. You ever get there?

[55 : 29] God, are you even there? Are you listening? It's a perceived absence. It's not real because we know, right?

Keep your life from the love of money and be content with what you have. What in the world does that have to do with what comes next? I'll explain in a moment. For he has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you. He's everything you need.

You don't need money. You need him. You need him. And when you're reminded of that, you can be content with what you have. And then, oh, oh, and then we can confidently say this, the Lord is my helper.

I will not fear for what can man do to me. Nice. I want to close with this verse here. This is Zephaniah 3.17 in little chunks. This is wonderful.

Don't lose sight of this. The Lord your God is with you. Even when it doesn't seem like it, even when it doesn't feel like it, the Lord your God is with you.

[56 : 29] And then he draws this picture and I want you to picture in your mind a mother who is holding a baby child. Very much like Angel is doing right now in the back.

Okay? No, that's not Angel. That's Lexi. I'm sorry. A baby holding a precious baby in the middle of the night.

Okay? Get a hold of this. He will take great delight in you. And as parents, are you doing this with your kids? Do your kids know that they delight in you?

Because your heavenly father delights in you. He will quiet you with his love. Think of again, of a mother and a baby. And he will rejoice over you with singing.

You ever do that in the middle of the night with your baby, your precious little baby? Oh, is there anything more wonderful than that? Especially for mom, dad's too.

[57 : 34] Middle of the night, you know, you've gotten up and you had to take care of your little one. They're hungry, they need a diaper change, and they're just not quite ready to go down yet. And so you're walking around a dark house with a little baby, and you're just singing over them.

Do they even have a clue what you're doing? Do they understand the words that you're singing? That's kind of how I imagine my relationship with the Lord.

God, this is what he's doing for me in those times when I'm hurting the most. And I don't get it. I don't understand it. But I'm reminded of his presence.

I'm reminded of his great love for me. He won't ever let you go. He won't ever abandon you or leave you alone.

What a wonderful God we have. Be persistent. Listen, yes, we ought always to pray and not lose heart. Because our God loves us so.

[58 : 36] Don't forget that. Let's pray. Lord, thank you so much. Thank you for your word once again. Thank you for the opportunity to stand here and to be this preacher in this moment and to share these words of encouragement, Lord.

You love us so. Help us not to forget that. Help us not to confuse all that we see going on around us and to think that you don't care or that you don't love us, that you don't have compassion or that you're somehow powerless to intervene.

No, none of those things are true. And yes, you are delaying your coming. We know that you want more people to come into the fold, for more people to become followers of Christ, and that's a part at least of the explanation of your delay in coming.

But Lord, we trust your timing. It's in your hands. We know that you are sovereign and you will do all things right. We know this. And so Lord, whatever that we have to face in this lifetime, we know that you care for us and that you love us and that you are doing what is best for us at all times, even when we don't understand it.

so we come to you as little children, hands outstretched, and Lord, we put our trust, as simple as that trust is, as feeble as that trust is, we put it in you because it is the object of our trust.

[60 : 18] It is you that that's what matters, not the strength of our faith, not the amount of our faith, not how strong it is, but Lord, when we are weak, Lord, we trust you, we trust you, we come to you, and you provide.

You give us what we need. We thank you, Lord. We love you. We ask it now in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you for coming. Have a great week.