

# Luke 18:1-8

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Preacher: Jonathan Lee

- [0:00] Good evening, church. Thank you for coming out on this hot August evening.
- I'd like to tell you a story about this man who lived in Palestine about 2,000 years ago.
- So let's shift our mind and travel a little back in time, a lot back to 2,000 BC in Palestine.
- So after a long day of hard work, he went to sleep. His family, this man, they all went to bed.
- And in the middle of the night, there was a knocking at his house. And let's say it was about around midnight. So he wakes up and he's wondering, who's knocking at my door in the middle of the night?
- [1:09] And when he opened the door, he was joyfully surprised. Because there was a guest, an unexpected guest waiting at his door.
- Like I said, this is a 2,000 BC, so there was no cell phone. So the guest couldn't call the host and say, I'll arrive in about half an hour.
- So too much is joy. In that time in Palestine, the custom, the tradition is, when you have a guest, you honor the guest by giving them water to wash their feet from long journey.
- Give them food to eat. And I'm sure his guest was hungry from a long journey, maybe riding on a camel. But then he realized, because this is an unexpected guest, he has no food in the house.
- So he tells the guest to wait. I'll be right back. And he tells his wife, give him some water so he can wash his feet. And he tells his older son, go sleep with your brother.
- [2:20] Because we're going to give up your room to our guest. And he runs down to his friend's house. And now he's knocking at his friend's house. And his friend is, who is it?
- And then the man tells him, oh, hey man, I need some food. I have this unexpected guest. I don't have any food, so can I borrow some food from you? And then the friend goes, hey, the door is locked.
- My family is in bed. I cannot come out and give you food. But this man didn't give up. He kept on knocking. I said, please man, please help me.
- Help me, please. If it was today, I'm sure he would have said, get on your donkey. Go down about half a mile. There will be a CVS that opens 24 hours.
- But no such a thing in Palestine 2,000 years ago. And because of the friend's persistent knocking and almost begging, the friend opens the door.
- [3:27] I'm sure his wife told him, give him some food so we can go back to sleep. So he comes out, gives his friend food. I think we can all relate to this story in a way that maybe we helped somebody out of, oh, man, if I don't help this person, that person is going to annoy me.
- And I want this person to be just out of my face. So you help. Or maybe somebody helped you with the same motive. That you asked for help.

And what this person felt was, man, I got to help this person. Otherwise, I'll never see the end of it. Tonight's scripture, Jesus tells us about this persistent widow who's seeking justice from this unrighteous judge.

And Jesus also urges us to pray persistently because God listens to our prayer.

Let us pray. Lord Jesus, thank you for gathering us here tonight to worship you and to praise you for all that you did for us on that cross.

[4:51] And just like we sang, Lord, we live because you defeated the power of death and the sin. And now we have this unwavering hope that we too will live in glorious resurrected body like you.

In Jesus' name, amen. Please turn with me to page 877 in your pew Bible. Page 877.

We're continuing our Followers of Jesus series from Book of Luke. Luke chapter 18, verses 1 to 8.

Page 877. Luke 18, verses 1 through 8. The parable of the persistent widow. The parable of the persistent widow. And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.

He said, In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, Give me justice against my adversary.

[6:16] For a while he refused. But afterward, he said to himself, Though I neither fear God nor respect man, Yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I'll give her justice so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.

And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect who cry to him day and night?

Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?

A little over a month ago, Pastor Matt told us that Jesus is a master storyteller. And as we study this parable, you will see how he builds this story.

About the persistent widow. So first, I would like you to stay in ancient Palestine, 2000 BC.

[7:42] And let's look at this from historical and also a cultural context in Jesus' time. The first character, Judge.

The scripture says, He neither feared God nor respected man. Other translations say, He didn't care about people.

Now, in Israel, For someone to not fear God, Someone to not honor God, I think that's pretty much, you know, Blasphemous.

Throughout the Old Testament, The lesson is to fear the Lord. To fear the Lord. Honor the Lord. And yet, this judge, He had no fear for God.

And on top of that, He really didn't care about the people. So, Jesus builds this character And draws the audience's righteous anger.

[8:56] How can a judge, Out of all the people, How can a judge, Not fear God? And not care about people? What kind of, What kind of judgment is he going to make?

If he doesn't feel the Lord, And don't care about the people. So already, The audience is having, This righteous anger. He's not the right person.

He's not a good person. He's not a good judge. And then Jesus brings up the widow. Now imagine, If the story was about, A wealthy, Pharisee, Then people may not, The audience may not, Sympathize.

Audience may not have compassion. I mean, you know, He's a Pharisee, And he's wealthy, So, You know, Or if he was a Roman, Or a tax collector. But Jesus, Uses a widow, Who's been, Obviously, Obviously, Wronged.

And he wants, She wants, Justice, To be served. So, Jesus, Brings this, Righteous anger, In audience, Against the, Unrighteous judge.

[10:15] And Jesus also brings, Compassion and sympathy, Towards the widow. And then Jesus makes, This contrast, Between the unrighteous judge, And God.

If you look at verse, Six, And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge says, And will not God give justice to his elect, Who cry to him day and night?

Will he delay long over them? I tell you, He will give justice to them speedily. So, The story that I, That I told you in the beginning, By the way, It's not my story.

I cannot take the credit for it. It is actually a parable, From Luke chapter 11. He talks, Jesus, Talks about, These two men. So, That story, Same thing.

Why did the friend, Finally, Brought the food out? The Bible says, He did not do that out of friendship. But because, He, Wanted his friend to leave.

[11:33] Leave him alone. So I can go back to sleep. Why did this judge, Finally, Decide to, Hear, This widow's case.

He doesn't fear God. He doesn't care about people. And yet, He said, If I don't hear this lady's case, She's going to wear me out. Every day, She's going to come here, And knock on my door.

So, Both, The judge, And the friend, Do these things, Out of their selfish reason. I want to be left alone.

Don't bother me. Now that was, Their reason. So, As Jesus, As Jesus, Makes this, Contrast, Between, The unrighteous judge, And God, I would also like us to think about, The parallelism, Between the widow, And us.

This widow, So, Jesus, Is telling us to be, Persistent, Like this widow. Do not give up. Do not lose heart. When you, When you pray to God, Be persistent.

[12:55] But also, If you really, Think about the, The widow, She was, Absolutely, Absolutely, Depending on, Mercy, Of the judge.

As, Unrighteous, Crooked, As this judge was, The widow, Was, Absolutely, At the mercy, Of this judge.

And, How we like that. When we, When we go to God, Are we depending, At the mercy, Of God.

Is he, Is he our final, Authority. So, This parable, You know, You can read and say, Oh, Okay, So, The lesson is, Just pray hard, Pray all the time, And, Don't get discouraged.

But then, Jesus says, In verse 8, Second half of the verse 8, He says, Nevertheless, When the son of man comes, Will he find faith, Our nurse.

[14:13] So, Pastor Nick and I, Talked about this statement, And, I asked him, Pastor Nick, Do you think, This is, A prophetic, Statement, That Jesus is making?

When I come back, I probably won't see anybody, You know, With faith. Or, Is this, A kind of a challenge?

Is Jesus challenging us, To pray? Because, Right before verse 8, He encouraged us to pray. He told us, That, Our father God, He is not like, This, Unrighteous judge.

Earlier in chapter 11, He told us, He's not like this friend, Who just wants to get, Rid of his friend. No. So, Why does Jesus mention, Faith, And he asks, Will I find, Faith on earth, When I come back?

So, What is the relationship, Between persistent prayer, And faith? So, Let's turn to, Hebrews chapter 11, 6. Now, I want all of us, To read together.

[15:27] Somebody can, Shout out the, The page number, I would appreciate that. Hebrews chapter 11, Verse 6. 1007, Thank you.

Page 1007, Hebrews chapter 11, Verse 6. Okay, Let us, Slowly read together.

And, Without faith, It is impossible, To please him. For whoever, Would draw near to God, Must believe, That he exists, And that he rewards, Those who, Seek him.

And, Without faith, It is impossible, To please him, For whoever, Would draw near to God, Must believe, That he exists, And that he rewards, Those who, Seek him.

So, Are we just praying, To, Something that, That's just, Some vague idea, Or a concept, Or are we praying to some, Object that's carved out of stone, Or would.

[16:57] This verse says, You must believe, That God exists, And he rewards, Those who come to him, And seek him. Other translations say, Sincerely.

So, Do you, Do we have that faith? Do we have that faith, When we go to God? I think what Jesus is telling us is, This, This, This, This faith, This faith, This faith, Becomes, Our source of power, In persistent prayer.

Because of this faith, That we believe, God exists, And God created, The universe, And he, Rewards us, That this, Help us to, Keep going to him, Persistently.

And, I would, I would like us to, Look at three things, When it comes to, So, You know, We are, We are, Urged to pray, Always, Without losing heart, But what about this prayer?

What about the prayer? Those who remember, Pastor Ian Maddock, He used this phrase, Cosmic, Cosmic, Vending machine.

[18:20] So, Are we coming to God, As if God is, Some kind of, Cosmic, Vending machine. Our prayer coins, After you insert, So many prayer coins, You're supposed to get, Something that you desire.

Is that, Is that what Jesus is teaching us? I don't think so. I don't think Jesus is telling us, To pray, Constantly, Because, God, Is, Like a cosmic vending machine.

No. The second point is, When we, When we pray, Our daily needs, God already knows.

I'm not saying, Our daily needs, Are insignificant. Because they are not. They are real. They are important. But, In Matthew, Chapter 6, Verses 25 to 34, I'm not going to read the whole thing, But, Jesus tells us, Do not worry about, What to eat, What to wear.

But, Seek, God's kingdom, And his righteousness first. Picture with me, A six year old child.

[19:36] Your parent, You have a six year old child, Who's about to start first grade. And he is so excited. He is, It's like, Around this time of the year, They have to go shopping, To get the school supplies.

So, One day, He comes to, He goes to his parents, And he starts, Giving them a list. Mom and dad, I need pencil, I need notebook, I need new backpack, I need eraser.

The list goes on. So, The parents tell the child, Honey, We know, We know, We'll take you shopping, We'll go shopping next week. The next day, The child comes back, With the same list.

And then he tells the parents, Again and again, I need pencil, I need a new backpack, I need this, This. As a patient parent, You'll tell the child, Okay, Okay, We know, We understand, Okay, I told you, We're going to shopping, Next week.

But imagine, If that's what he does, The child does, Day after day, After day, After day, I think the parents will lose, Patience. And then the parents will start wondering, Does he not trust us?

[20 : 42] Or, Does our child have some issues? God, God already knows, What we need, Our daily needs.

And that's why, Matthew 6, 25 to 34, He tells us to seek his kingdom, And his righteousness first. But now, Picture this, The same six year old child, Goes up to his dad, And says, First he put on his, Brand new Yankees shirt, I'm a Yankees fan, So, Sorry to the Red Sox fans, He puts on his Yankees shirt, Brings out his, Baseball mitt, And says, Dad, I love this, This glove you got me last Christmas, Can you teach me how to throw and catch?

I want to play, I want to spend more time with you, Before I start school. I think that will, Melt, The father's heart. And what about the child, Goes up to mom, And say, Mom, Let's make some cookies, Can you show me, Can we make the cookies together?

I want to spend more time with you mom, Before I go to school. That will melt the mom's heart. So, When we pray, It's not just about, Our daily needs.

God knows, What we need. But seek, His kingdom, And his righteousness first. And thirdly, When you pray, Intercede.

[22 : 23] Intercede for one another. Now, Personally, I, I've been emphasizing a lot, On praying together.

Praying for one another. Whether you, Belong to a small group, Or whether you, You know, Know somebody, Um, You know, Another Christian brother, Or sister, Or anybody, Who comes to you and say, Can you pray for me?

Pray, Pray, Uh, In, Ephesians, In Ephesians chapter 6, Apostle Paul, Apostle Paul urges us, Chapter 6, 18, In praying at all times, In the spirit, With all prayer, And supplication, To that end, Keep alert, With all perseverance, Making supplication, For all, The saints, And also for me, The words may be given to me, In opening my mouth, Boldly, To proclaim the mystery, Of the gospel, For which I am, An ambassador, In chains, That I may declare it, Boldly, As I ought to speak, So, In this parable, Jesus tells us, That God, Is not going to, Delay, But he will,

Give us justice, Speedily, Now, Ephesians, 6, 18, What I just read, Apostle Paul, Is, Is, Is, Is, Is, Is, Is, Is, Is, Encouraging us, To pray together, Pray for one another, Pray for all the saints, And, And then at the end, He says, Pray for me, So I can do what?

To proclaim the gospel, Boldly, And this is why, We pray, For our, Missionaries, We pray, For our non-believing friends, So they will, Receive the gospel, Justice is done, When you receive the gospel, God wants to restore, The relationship, That was broken, By, By sin, And God, Urges us to pray, Pray, So that, The gospel, Can be proclaimed, Boldly, Even in places, Where there are, A lot of persecution, And let's go back to the, The contrast, Let's go back to the contrast, Between the unrighteous judge, And God,

[25 : 18] Now, Does God listen to us, Because he is, Just not as, Mean as this, This unrighteous judge, Is he just, A little less mean, You know, Is he just, A little nicer, Than this unrighteous judge, Does that why he listen to our prayer?

The contrast, Between the judge, And our God, It's, It's right there, At the opposite end, Like I said before, The judge, Finally, Took the widow's case, Out of his selfish reason, But God, He loves, Us so much, That he delights, To hear, Our prayer, One of my, One of my favorite, Verses that, That really lifts me up, Is, It's in Jephaniah, Jephaniah chapter 3, Verse 17, The Lord your God, Is in your midst, A mighty one, Who will save,

He will rejoice, Over you, With gladness, He will quiet you, By his love, He will exalt, Over you, With loud, Singing, He will exalt, Over us, With loud singing, That's how much, He delights, To hear from us, So God, Loved us so much, He sent his son, Only son Jesus, To die in our place, So, He listens to our prayer, And he urges us to pray, Persistently, Because he loves us so much, Past, About six, Eight months, I've been really enjoying, Going to the gym, With my son, Now he has gotten, Old enough, And big enough, Can go work out, With his,

His old man, At the gym, So, One day, You know, I was kind of showing him, How to do the bench press, Free weight, So he's holding his weight, He's lying down, And he's, He's lifting the weight, And as a trainer, You know, You'll tell him, You know, You're pushing, You say, Okay, One more, Okay, One more, Pushing, Pushing, But also as a trainer, You need to know, Whether he reached the limit, Because you want him to build a muscle, But you don't want him to get hurt, So, I am ready, To hold, Take away the weight, The minute, He shows any signs of pain, You know, A little bit of struggle, It's okay, You keep encouraging, Pushing, But, The minute, He shows any sign of pain, Immediately take the weight, Away from his hands, Tell him to rest, And then after he went to another station, You know, This came to my mind, It's almost like God spoke to my heart saying,

I couldn't stop my, I didn't stop my son, At the hint of your son's pain, And, You know, Suffering, You took that weight off his hand, Because you didn't want him to get hurt, My son, Suffered, Tortured, Died, And I didn't stop him, He even cried out to me, My father, My father, Why have you abandoned me, And I still had to, Not interfere, That's how much, That's how much he loves us, So, But it didn't, It didn't just, It didn't just end there, This morning, Pastor Nick preached about, Resurrection,

[ 29 : 42 ] Our resurrected body, Because Jesus died for us, And he defeated the sin, The power of death, When you believe in him, We, Will also rise, In glorious, Resurrected body, And in a moment, We are going to the Lord's table, So, Please remember, What Jesus, Did for us, On that cross, And go to him, Boldly, And persistently, With this faith, That God exists, And he rewards, Those who seek him, Earnestly, And on top of that, He sent his only son, Jesus, To die in our place, Now,

That's why, We can go to him, Boldly, And persistently, Let us pray, Let us pray, Lord Jesus, We thank you, Thank you for what you did, For us, On that cross, And Lord, We repent, Our unbelief, And Lord, We also repent, For not really, Believing, What you did, For us, Father God, Please give us this faith, In our heart, To go to you, Boldly, And persistently, In Jesus name,

We pray, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen,