



## The Gospel According to Luke Wk. 87 “Persistence is Key to Existence” By Pastor Jody May

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### The Parable of the Persistent Widow

**18** And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. <sup>2</sup>He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. <sup>3</sup>And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’ <sup>4</sup>For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, <sup>5</sup>yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’”<sup>6</sup> And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge says. <sup>7</sup>And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? <sup>8</sup>I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

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### Opening Illustration – Babies...

**Objective: Persistence, modeled by God, is Key for our lives. (vs1).**

#### 1. Persistence is Key to Prayer.

<sup>2</sup>He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. <sup>3</sup>And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’ <sup>4</sup>For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, <sup>5</sup>yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’”

There was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. Well, that is a dire place to be in, standing in front of this guy who you have to make your plea. He has no fear of God, which means He doesn’t even pretend to be a good Jew, the Pharisees wouldn’t like him, and they had no sway over him. He was probably also financially secure because his role as judge was not affected by those in that



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local community. It is recorded by historians that that this man, functioned some ways like our current political structures, let me explain.

But this kind of judicial corruption was not limited just to the Old Testament. It was also true in the time of our Lord Jesus. Alfred Edersheim, who has written the classic *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, the great history of that period of time, describes the judges in Jerusalem as being so corrupt that the people changed their title. They were known as *dayyaney gezeroth*. That was the term used to describe a judge and his responsibility to deal with the prohibitions of the law. The people called them *dayyaney gezeloth*. They changed one letter in the Hebrew which turned the expression “a judge dealing with the law” to “a judge who is a robber.” “Robber judges” became their title because they were so corrupt. They did just exactly what the Bible said not to do, what God said not to do. They showed partiality. They were unjust and they took bribes. The Talmud said they were so perverted in some occasions that they would actually pervert justice for one meal, for one meal. And so, when our Lord says this is an unrighteous judge, *adikia*, meaning no sense of justice, dishonest and corrupt. He is defining what everybody would know by the description in verse 2, that he didn't fear God and he didn't respect man. - <sup>1</sup>

So, there is this widow, she needs justice, we don't know what for, but we can understand her plight. Because she has to come to this corrupt judge means that she is alone in the world, no one has stepped up to help her, no relative to get involved, no synagogue to intervene on her behalf, this is her last hope.

She pleads day after day after day – **Give me justice against my adversary.** To the point, the dude talks to himself in exasperation, did you catch that btw in vs. 4, **‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, <sup>5</sup>yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/42-227/persistent-prayer-for-the-lords-return>



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**continual coming.** – That is him speaking out loud to himself. Reminds me of the prodigal son that when he was worn out in the pig sty he comes to his senses and talks to himself because he **realizes by the HS, his FUTILITY**. Now this corrupt judge is talking to himself in desperation and it is as if the HS says, “give her peace because I will not let her stop!”

You see even though in that day and age there were no such things as women rights, widows did have a semblance of protection. This woman was allotted all the space to cry and wail as much as she wanted for it was expected out of widows and you couldn't touch her. If this was a guy, that judged would have got his goons to take care of him, and no one would have asked questions.

This poor woman had one strength here - her **persistent nature**, she was going to **present herself** day after day and according to the text he already feared of her continual coming, in the Greek language there it means he was **afraid that it would go on forever**. **That is, PERSISTENCE is to continually present yourself with no intention of stopping!** So, he relents and in our story, he gives her justice, vindication. **This story illustrates for everyone in here that God, is not above working through corrupt systems to bring justice to His people.**

Now, let's answer this unspoken question in the text, why is He teaching this parable now? With that I want us to go back to vs. 1:

**18 And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.**

First, who is *them*? That goes all the way back to 17:22 “*The Disciples*” and why is he telling them this parable? So that in the last days, when you and I see signs, perhaps even when the church is persecuted, when we feel like giving up, remember the inevitable is going to happen, Jesus will return, **keep praying, and don't lose heart!** He elaborates on that a short while later in Luke:

#### **Luke 21:36 ESV**

**“But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”**



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The message was, in days to come people will begin to leave the church when they are persecuted. Don't miss the awesome fact that God's Word not only speaks to the people that lived in that day, but it speaks to you and me now. **God's Word is timeless and because He is not bound by time then neither are God's principles.** That means keep praying and don't lose faith God has got this thing in the bag!

People then bailed on their faith because of persecution in the first century and every century since then. Right now, we see in our culture there has been pressure turned up and we see a cleansing happening before our eyes. **(GLS 2020)**

When Christians blame other Christians for their emotional state, when those that govern the land are swayed by money and power and not by the righteous fear of God nor respect and care for humanity, we are to approach the throne of Grace with boldness (Heb. 4:16), for it is through these trials we must go (2 Peter 4:12-19) AND stand before Jesus and give an account of how well we did.

**Prayer is to be done with Persistency for it is Key to living as a Disciple of Jesus.**

This is when the Christian life gets real simple, you can read all the theological books you want, you can do acts of mercy till you drop from exhaustion, you can meet in discipleship groupings multiple times every week BUT unless you pray, WITH PERSISTENCY, you are not going to make it...

### **Philippians 4:6 ESV**

**<sup>6</sup>do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.**

Before we move on to why we should be persistent in prayer and our lives, let me just give two reasons maybe why we don't pray:

- Because we don't think He cares.
- Because we really don't care.



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We either think He won't answer because He's too busy and/or we're not important enough which means **you have a belief problem because the Bible says He loves His people.**

Or we tend to give up because we begin to realize **this is not that important to me**, if we're honest. That too is a belief thing, because **we don't think God is powerful enough to fix anything.**

And I want to clue is in on a third problem with our prayers it is because **we don't know what to ask for.** There are situations in every Christian life where we pray against our suffering, but to be a Christian there is a calling to suffer (1 Peter), so we take a “no” as God doesn't care. The widow looked past the ‘no’ and **because of her placement in society, she was able to effect change** because he couldn't touch her, so God uses that widow as a witness to that town.

The widow gets the best of that crooked judge for in her placement in society she was given the power to not be silent. Then because of her allowed suffering and wailing **their story becomes a testimony of how God will work through the unwilling and hardened hearts** and her prayer for justice is answered showing the validity of the OT that God cares for those, the elect, that need justice.

Perhaps the thing **we need to pray for IS God's justice**, to have that which is displayed on earth, be a portrayal of how things are displayed in Heaven (**the Lord's Prayer – thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven**). To help us in our prayer let's look at point two when Jesus tells us why we should be persistent in praying.

### **2. Persistence in Modeled Perfectly in God (God is Persistent in Giving Justice to His Elect)**

<sup>6</sup> And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge says. <sup>7</sup> And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? <sup>8</sup> I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily...



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Jesus asks us **did we hear?** That’s code btw from Jesus to say, if you are born again, then this would make sense to you, appeal to you, emboldened you to pray in the same manner, persistently.

Jesus proclaims, **God will give justice**, and that **action** for crying to God for justice, to bring that which is right, **shows the heart of the person calling for it**. When you and I become more concerned about the Kingdom of God coming instead of asking God to make our Kingdom’s successful His will shall be done, **and it shows who the elect are**.

### **Romans 8:31b-32 ESV**

“If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”

The Father was persistent in His pursuit for us. The Father spared no expense but gave the most valuable thing in the universe, His only begotten Son. The proclamation of justice to the universe is that because God is so Holy man cannot pay for the sin that he has done, because nothing he can do will bring him near to such an awesome God. So, God presents Himself, in the only begotten Son, and **pays for the justice**. If that same God is your God, if you are the ELECT, how will He not give you what you ask for since He must show that His justice as paid for your sin fully.

If anything, God is persistent in glorifying His Son, and Jesus said if you ask it in my name, “God for your Kingdom’s sake of which Jesus is King”, he will answer you! Because it declares HIS GLORY!

Therefore, as His court officials, we display His judgments to the world. We either display:

our dependence on a **Glorious God** by **sharing** what we are praying for or we display **God’s Greatness** by **declaring His answers** to the world, and we display his **Goodness** by saying to people **his answers are good enough** for me!

(Rolando and Miriam)



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Now lastly, I want to pick up on how God, through Persistence modeling how Jesus did, we can live better lives. Persistence is Key for existence and it answers the last question in the text.

### 3. Persistence is Key for Living as a Disciple.

<sup>8</sup>...Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

It is not a question meant to show the disbelief of Jesus, that is a question for us to answer. You and I are put in the spotlight with the disciples, and the **HS asks us will you be a person that shows faith by the persistency of prayer?**

For here is the promise for the persistent person:

#### Matthew 24:13 ESV

“But the one who endures to the end will be saved.”

Lastly, Persistency, **continually presenting yourself with no intention of stopping**, is a practice for all of life. Yes, it is evident in your prayer life, but your prayer life is an extension of your daily walk. There is no separation in how you pray and how you live - **you live how you pray and you pray how you live**. Paul shows us what this looks like:

#### Romans 12:12-13 ESV

<sup>12</sup> Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.<sup>13</sup> Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

The persistent prayer is a person patient in tribulation, they contribute to the church, and they seek to show hospitality in their homes.

Just because we are living in end times, with the inevitable staring us in the face (Jesus’ return) we are not called to be silent prayers but our lives are to reflect that which we are praying for = **The action of Rejoicing in Hope, enduring in tribulations, contributing to the work of the saints and showing hospitality IS**



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**what we are praying for!** God bring your Kingdom through us, help me show Jesus, get people to ask me about Him, give me the strength to endure like Jesus, so that when it happens, I can tell people it is because God answers prayer!  
**Proverbs 15:29 God hears the prayers of the righteous man,"** God hears and answers the prayers of His elect!

**Persistence is the Key for living as a Disciple yes, but the reward is when we live for others it blesses both them and you!**

Persistently living and praying for strength to live as Christ IS Sanctification, the way in which we are continually being saved.

#### **1 Corinthians 15:50-52 & 58 ESV**

<sup>50</sup> I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. <sup>51</sup> Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, <sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

<sup>58</sup> Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Persistence is the Key to Existing as a Disciple and my prayer for all of us today is that HE gives us the gumption, the zeal, and the desire not to quit even when the pressure to quit is high. Will you pray for the same thing? Will you keep being persistent with me? All the way guys, until He returns.

#### **PRAYER**

#### **COMMUNION**

#### **BENEDICTION**

Go in the name of the Father, that was persistent in His love for us and sent His son as a payment for our sins so justice may be paid.





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Go in the name of the Son, that was persistent in His love towards us, that while sinners He died for us first, so we could see the effect of God's persistent love.

Go in the name and power of the Holy Spirit, that asks us the question, will we be found faithful and then empowers us to live persistent lives so that we can.