



## THE PERSISTENT PRAYER

Luke 18:1-8

Luke 18:1 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. <sup>2</sup> He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. <sup>3</sup> And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' <sup>4</sup> "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, Even though I don't fear God or care about men, <sup>5</sup> yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!" <sup>6</sup> And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. <sup>7</sup> And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? <sup>8</sup> I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

*A parable is an earthly story illustrating spiritual principle/lesson. The parable of the persistent widow illustrates to us the importance of Persistent Prayer.*

**We will address the following three questions in this lesson**

- ❖ What is Persistence?
- ❖ What are the results of Persistence?
- ❖ What was Jesus' expectation from His followers?

## I. WHAT IS PERSISTENCE?

*Luke 18:1 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. <sup>2</sup> He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. <sup>3</sup> And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'"*

- ❖ Persistence is the refusal to give up a just fight, a godly struggle, and an honest endeavor. The willingness and the determination to go extra miles beyond what is required.
- ❖ Persistence is to patiently continue with the journey even when the end is not in sight. It is to stay focus towards the vision, the goal, and the objective no matter how long it takes. It is to refuse to adjust the course even if it means passing through the territory of danger, and destruction. It is to stubbornly stand against all kinds of pressures because its decision is to keep going and stop at nothing. Its desire is to cross the finishing line. Its delight is to stay in the game. Its dream is to see the reward, the realization of its vision, the fruit of its labor, and the accomplishments of its goal.
- ❖ Persistence as applied to prayer, is the literal daily application of the following scriptures, *1 Thessalonians 5:17 Pray without ceasing, Colossians 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.*
- ❖ Persistence in prayer is not an aimless journey, nor a reckless adventure because it is based on facts as recorded in our text. The widow's persistence is based on a just and righteous cause, the seeking of justice against her adversary. It is based on the premise that there is a right time and a right place to pursue a just cause. It is based on conviction that no matter what happens, no matter how long it takes, justice will be served. Indeed, she received her just reward.

- ❖ Persistent prayer is based on the leading of the Holy Spirit, strengthened by the promises of God in the Scriptures, anchored in the character and Grace of God, and the result is released through Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God.

## II. WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF PERSISTENCE?

**Luke 18:4** "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, <sup>5</sup> yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!' <sup>6</sup> And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. <sup>7</sup> And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? <sup>8</sup> I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly.

The words "wear me out" (lit., "to give a black eye to") probably relate to the common idiom in eastern countries, where to have one's face blackened means to suffer shame. In this parable the reputation of the one being petitioned is at stake. Therefore, though God is not compared to a crooked judge, there is a partial basis of comparison here, in that God will also guard his reputation and vindicate himself.

This parable does not suggest that persistence changes the mind of God, not at all. **Numbers 23:19** **God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?** The Bible is clear God is immutable meaning He does not change. He is the same God yesterday, today, and forever. The parable however, is designed to tell us that God approves persistence and affirms it by releasing the blessings He reserve for it, especially as this applies to prayer.

**Bible.org shared this story of Chuck Sackett, of Lincoln, Illinois from their sermon illustration section. This is what he said.**

I grew up outside the church, but when I learned about the God and Country award in the Boy Scouts, I wanted it. If that meant going to church, then that's what I determined to do. Each week I walked from my house to the little church building in the next block. I walked past the Rinards' home every time, and later, I worked for the Rinards, doing yard work. I attended that little church on the next block just long enough to get the award, and then I quit.

Twelve years later, after I became a Christian and a preacher, I learned that Mr. and Mrs. Rinard were in a nursing home nearby. Out of friendship for the family, my wife and I decided to pay them a visit. After a delightful visit, Gail and I turned to leave. I don't remember which one of them spoke, but I'll never forget what they said: "Do you remember when you used to walk to that little church? We've not missed one day since, praying that God would do something in your life." For 12 years, this elderly couple prayed for me, every day—prayed that God would one day do something in my life. I had no other Christian influence at that time, but eventually I became a Christian and a preacher. I was prayed into the kingdom. There is simply no other explanation.

This testimony is a clear piece of evidence that even today **persistent prayer brings result.**

Persistence in prayer does not suggest that we must insist to God what we want. But to plead before Him that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Here are some results that persistence brings to our lives.

- ❖ Persistent prayer enables us see the heart of God so that we can connect our will, our desires, needs, and even our wants to His will.
- ❖ Persistence keeps us in the right track. It helps us see our flaws in the process so we could correct them.
- ❖ Persistence improves our prayer life and strengthens our faith.

- ❖ Persistence develops the habit of consistency in our prayer life, keeping it alive and taking it forward.
- ❖ Persistent prayer develops our spiritual stamina giving us the patience and the endurance to wait upon the timing of the Lord. ***Isaiah 40:31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*** If we are not persistent in prayer this Scripture will not be fulfilled in our lives, because we will not learn how to wait.

*We do not know when God fulfills His in our lives. That is why it is very important that we should be persistent in prayer, because persistence place us in the right place, at the right time, so that when the answer comes we are there ready to receive it.*

#### NOTES:

- ❖ One of the greatest blessings that God gave us as His children, is the privilege to approach His throne of grace at any moment because of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The knowledge that our persistence does not turn Him off or upset Him is indeed very comforting and encouraging as reflected in the parable of the persistent widow.
- ❖ Through this parable, Jesus is exhorting us that God's throne of grace is the right place to bring our petitions and persistent prayer is the right manner to express it before Him. ***Psalm 118:8 It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man. 9 It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes.*** Persistence in prayer keeps us in the presence of God until we have the certainty in our hearts that our request is granted.
- ❖ Furthermore, when we persist in prayer, it will not only bless our lives, it will also bring encouragement to others to be persistent in their prayers as well especially as they see the result of persistent prayer in our lives.

### III. JESUS EXPECTATION OF HIS FOLLOWERS

**8b** *However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"*

Jesus ended this parable with a statement, "However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" This statement expresses expectations. It spells out clearly that Jesus expects His Disciples to be **faithful in prayer** through Persistence. This is one thing in this parable that He urged His disciples to major on. He expects all of us to be persistent in prayer and to encourage others to do so until He comes back to be with Him forever.

Before Jesus ascended to heaven He gathered His Disciples to a mountain in Galilee and said this to them. ***Matthew 28:18*** *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

I am pretty sure that when Jesus gave this command to go and make disciples, persistent prayer is one of the things He told His disciples to teach those who would follow them. And I believe that they wholeheartedly obeyed this because it is stated in ***Acts 2:42*** *they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.* Indeed, if you read the entire book of acts, you will easily see that the disciples and their convert were very persistent in prayer.

Talking about the prayer that makes the difference? Persistent Prayer is certainly one of them if not the number one amongst them. That is Why Jesus Christ expects us to develop it for ourselves, teach it to others, and encourage others to do the same.

**The November 1996 issue of daily bread on the 18<sup>th</sup> day this story is featured.**

In one region of Africa, the first converts to Christianity were very persistent about praying. In fact, the believers each had their own special place outside the village where they went to pray in solitude. The villagers reached these “prayer rooms” by using their own private footpaths through the brush. When grass began to grow over one of these trails, it was evident that the person to whom it belonged was not praying very much.

Because these new Christians were concerned for each other’s spiritual welfare, a unique custom sprang up. When ever anyone noticed an overgrown grass on someone’s “Prayer path,” he or she would go to the person and lovingly warn, “Friend, there’s grass on your path!” – **RWD *Our Daily Bread*, November 18, 1996**

What a beautiful illustration of caring for one another. I believe, it won’t hurt us if we follow the example of these African believers by continuously encouraging one another to be persistent in prayer. When we persist in prayer we can never go wrong. We may spend much time and energy in the process, but our prayer life will never be the same again. Because our prayer life will never regress or rust, it can only get better and better, bringing our prayer life towards perfection, making great difference in our lives, families, church, friends, relatives, and even in our nation.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION:**

*Two great stories on Persistence in Prayer*

**The first story...**One day George Mueller began praying for five of his friends. After many months, one of them came to the Lord. Ten years later, two others were converted. It took 25 years before the fourth man was saved. Mueller persisted in prayer until his death for

the fifth friend, and throughout those 52 years he never gave up hoping that he would accept Christ! His faith was rewarded, for soon after Mueller's funeral the last one was saved. ***Our Daily Bread, January 13***

**Second story ....Some years ago a young girl was very sick and not expected to recover. Because of her love for Jesus, she was troubled that she had not been able to do more for Him in her short life. Her pastor suggested that she make a list of people in their little town who needed Christ and pray that they might put their faith in Him. She took his advice, made a list, and prayed often for each person.**

Some time later God began to stir a revival in the village. The girl heard of the people who were coming to Christ and prayed even more. As she heard reports, she checked off the names of those who had been led to the Lord. After the girl died, a prayer list with the names of 56 people was found under her pillow. All had put their faith in Christ—the last one was on the night before her death. Such is the result of Persistent prayer. [*Henry G. Bosch, Our Daily Bread, March-May, 1996, p. for April 3*]

God is not a respecter of person. When we are persistent in prayer, whoever we are, whatever situation we are in, God will bring in the results because He honors His word.

**Luke 11:9-13** “God rewards persistent prayer handsomely because it is His command”