

## **Luke 18:1-8 – "Persistence in Prayer"**

**Text: Luke 18:1-8 (CSB)**

**1** Now he told them a parable on the need for them to pray always and not give up. **2** "In a certain town there was a judge who didn't fear God or respect people. **3** And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him, saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' **4** For a while he was unwilling, but later he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or respect people, **5** yet because this widow keeps pestering me, I will give her justice, so she doesn't wear me out by her persistent coming.'" **6** Then the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. **7** Will not God grant justice to his elect who cry out to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? **8** I tell you that he will grant them justice quickly. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

### **Key Background:**

- **Widows in Ancient Society:** Widows were among the most vulnerable people in ancient society, having no legal rights, no inheritance, and no male protector. They were often taken advantage of and had little recourse for justice.
- **Judges and Justice:** Local judges were supposed to provide justice for all, especially protecting the vulnerable. However, corruption was common, and judges could often be influenced by bribes or social pressure.
- **Legal System:** The legal system required persistence from plaintiffs to pursue their cases. Without money for bribes or social connections, the poor and widows often faced long delays or denial of justice.
- **Contrasting Characters:** Jesus deliberately contrasts an unjust human judge with the just character of God. This is an "argument from the lesser to the greater" - if even a corrupt judge will eventually respond to persistence, how much more will a loving God respond to his people's prayers.
- **Day and Night Prayer:** This phrase emphasizes continuous, ongoing prayer rather than just formal prayer times. It reflects a lifestyle of dependence on God and constant communication with him.
- **The Elect:** Refers to God's chosen people, those who belong to him through faith. The term emphasizes God's special relationship with his people and his commitment to them.
- **Son of Man's Coming:** This refers to Jesus's second coming and raises the question of whether people will maintain faithful, persistent prayer until the end.

## Questions from the Story:

- What was Jesus's stated purpose for telling this parable (v. 1)? What two things did he want his disciples to understand about prayer?
- How is the judge described (v. 2)? What does this tell us about his character and motivation for making decisions?
- What was the widow's situation and what did she keep asking for (v. 3)? What does her persistence reveal about her desperation and determination?
- How did the judge initially respond to the widow's request (v. 4)? What does this show about his indifference to justice and the needs of the vulnerable?
- What changed the judge's mind about granting the widow's request (vv. 4-5)? What was his motivation for finally acting?
- What did the judge admit about himself when he decided to help the widow (vv. 4-5)? How does this confirm his corrupt character?
- Why did the judge fear the widow would "wear him out" (v. 5)? What does this reveal about the power of persistent, righteous requests?
- What does Jesus want us to learn from this unjust judge (v. 6)? How does Jesus use this negative example to teach about prayer?
- How does Jesus contrast God with the unjust judge (v. 7)? What does this comparison teach us about God's character and his response to prayer?
- Who are "his elect" that cry out to God day and night (v. 7)? What does this tell us about God's special care for his people?
- What does Jesus promise about how God will respond to persistent prayer (v. 8)? What does "quickly" mean in God's timing versus our expectations?
- What challenging question does Jesus ask at the end of the parable (v. 8)? What is the connection between faith and persistent prayer?
- If God is loving and just, why do we sometimes need to pray persistently for things? What purposes might persistent prayer serve in our relationship with God?
- How does this parable encourage us when our prayers seem to go unanswered for long periods?
- What does this parable teach us about the importance of not giving up in prayer, even when circumstances seem hopeless?
- How does the question about finding faith when the Son of Man comes challenge us about maintaining persistent prayer throughout our lives?