

Proper 24:
persistent widow: **Luke 18:1-8**

Gospel: The parable of the

Jesus told his disciples a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my opponent.' For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.'" And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

Sermon:

Before we dive into the passage, let's take a look at the characters in the story. We have two people who are on opposite ends of the legal system. The widow, a faceless, nameless woman in a vulnerable position. She was most likely living in poverty and only had God to rely on for any type of support. Then we have the judge, who on the other hand, has power and authority but didn't seem to care much about people. Neither was he afraid of Divine Law. He

did whatever he wanted, whatever pleased him. Like the French say he had this "Que sera, sera" "whatever will be, will be" attitude.

Now let's go back to the widow. I'm going to name her Ms. Persi because sometimes characters need a name. Anyone who has experienced poverty can testify that justice for the most part is never on our side. It's easier for wealthy people to win a case because they can afford the best attorneys in town, Ivy League attorneys to be exact. Wealthy folks are well respected because of their status or connections they might have. Even though Ms. Persi was aware of her misfortune; she had faith and kept going to the judge for help. We're going to refer to him as Scar. Sadly, Scar kept ignoring Ms. Persi. However, her persistence came through. Her persistence wasn't in vain because Scar didn't want to be bothered by her anymore. He got tired of her request and helped her. Victory at last! God was there with her all along. Likewise, being persistent in prayer changes things in our own lives. It shows our devotion to

God plus the Holy spirit pleads on our behalf. When trouble strikes, we have a tendency to look for help everywhere else without realizing that the other person's power is limited. What we usually get is temporary comfort. It's almost like going to them in vain because the problem still lingers. God is the one with all the power and wisdom. The one who gives us unexplainable peace and joy.

As I was reading this passage at home, I said to myself. I know several Ms. Persis in real life. Ms. Persi is that Haitian woman who came through the Biden program with a temporary legal status. Ms. Persi's work permit has been terminated, and she only has sufficient funds for this month's rent. She's just crying out to God for help. I can hear and feel the desperation in her voice. The anxiety shown on her face is like no other. She's unstable in a new, unfamiliar place but yet she relies on her God for deliverance. That right there is what I would call unshakable faith.

Ms. Persi is that single mother who works two jobs for minimum wage but still hopes to go to college or Trade school one day, have a career that pays her a decent salary which in turn will give her child or children a better lifestyle. Quite often Ms. Persi has little to no support system but prays and trusts in God's plan for her family and her future.

When we look at verses 6 and 7, they compare the judge (Scar) and God. Unlike Scar who ignored Ms. Persi in the midst of her suffering, God is a loving God and He alleviates our pain. He listens to our problems, our concerns, and cares for us deeply. He's never too busy to listen to us. He sees our tears, brings justice to us and doesn't let us down. Ms. Persi from our passage was a faithful servant of God who understood God's power and grace. There are moments in our lives when we too are in dire need of God's grace. Yes, it can be challenging to sit and wait on God while we live in a fast-paced and selfish society that loves quick results. I want this now! I want that now! Or like our toddlers do and just grab things and shout "MINE! It's mine!". We need

to remember that we are God's children, and that we can pray with confidence because He already knows what we need before we even ask Him. Most importantly, be kind to each other during that waiting process. Sometimes God puts us in a position with a little authority to see just how we use that authority. Do we use it to help others and lift their spirits or is every opportunity self-gained?

Now, one thing we always ask ourselves is why God doesn't always answer our prayers right away? The truth is that God's timing doesn't always align with ours. God isn't indifferent like that judge. We are not always ready to receive what we ask for! Every parent knows the difference between that child's request and his maturity level in receiving that gift. My son has been asking for a puppy for the longest and my answer has been no sir or no way. It's not that I don't know how much he loves puppies, but I know that he won't remember to feed the puppy, he's not old enough to go walk the dog. However, what he doesn't know is that I will eventually give him a puppy when I feel that he's responsible enough to take care of the puppy's needs. God knows

when we are ready to receive those blessings. God isn't indifferent to our demands, our hopes and dreams.

Verse 8: I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth? Verse 8 reminds us to be persistent in prayer and hold on to God. We live in a world of suffering and challenges. Yes, pressure and stress will tempt us to lose heart but never fail to keep praying God wants us to be persistent. It may not seem like you can find a way at times, but God is in control.

Jesus is a perfect example of persistence. Even though, He could have changed His mind about crucifixion, He persisted in doing His father's will and completed His mission of redemption. One thing I would love for all of you is to remember that God tests our faith to make it stronger. Yes, God allows challenges into our daily lives to grow our faith. By doing so, He strengthens us spiritually. One thing about our God though, He won't let us be tempted beyond what we bear. So, never fail to pray! Sometimes, when we're just about ready to give up, God shows up and gives us a way out. Again, faith finds a

way! You see, Satan knows just how dear we are to God so he does all he can for us to doubt God's love, blessings and compassion.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, loving God is trusting God. Be persistent like Ms. Persi because discipline in prayer is a powerful tool that we grow from. It helps us from being deceived with Satan's traps and lies. Jesus is always right besides us so we can place all our concerns into His hands. The covenant of grace simply asks us to trust in God. Psalm 50: 15 tells us "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me". So, yes, days of trouble will come our way but our help, our deliverance is in God's name. He gave us life; He redeemed us and will surely preserve us when we call upon His name. Jesus wants us to give Him all of our concerns and not just come to Him when in great need. He helps us with matters great and small. Always pray and never be discouraged! Our God is faithful. Amen!

