

# THE PARABLE OF THE UNJUST JUDGE: THE SECRET OF PRAYER – PERSISTENCE

## LUKE 18:01–08

### *Introduction*

The secret to prayer is persistence. This is the great lesson Jesus taught in this passage.

- I. The great duty to persevere in prayer (v. 1).
- II. The parable of persevering prayer (vv. 2-5).
- III. The lesson on persevering prayer (vv. 6-7).
- IV. The great tragedy: in the last days few will persevere in prayer and faith (v. 8).

### **I. *Luke 18:01 Perseverance in Prayer***

The great duty to persevere in prayer. Jesus was strong and forceful in stressing the believer's duty to persevere in prayer.

1. This discussion follows the passage dealing with the return of Christ. There is need for perseverance in prayer, for praying over a long period of time and not giving in and becoming discouraged. God's people are to pray and keep on praying until Christ returns, no matter how long He may be delayed.
2. The word "should" has the idea of necessity. It is absolutely necessary that men persevere in prayer.
3. The word "always" means at all times. The believer is to develop a constant spirit of prayer, to maintain an unbroken consciousness of God's presence, to practice the very presence of God, to walk in a constant state of prayer.
4. The words *not to give up* (me egkakein) mean not to lose heart, not to turn coward; or give up, or give in to evil.

*1 Chr 16:11* Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.

*Jer 29:13* You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

*Mat 7:7-8* "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."

*Mat 26:41* "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

*Eph 6:18* And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

*Col 4:2* Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

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*Phil 4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*

*1 Th 5:17 Pray continually.*

## II. *Luke 18:02–05 Perseverance in Prayer*

The parable of persevering prayer. The parable shows clearly the *power of persistence* even in the business and judicial affairs of men.

1. There was the unjust judge. He had no fear of God and cared even less for what men said. The idea is that he took bribes and gave favours to persons who held position and authority. He did not care for conscience or law, for morality or justice. He was out to fill his pockets and to gain honour and esteem, recognition and position from those who were influential, those who held position, power, and wealth (see Eccl. 3:16)
2. There was the poor widow.
  - She was poor, without money to bribe the judge.
  - She was a widow, a woman all alone in a man's world, with no man and no money to secure legal counsel to plead her case.
  - She held no position or authority, no rights to commend her to the judge.
  - She was persecuted, being taken advantage of and abused by some adversary.

Note what she did; she let none of this stop her. She came to the judge and asked him to avenge her, to get rid of her adversary.

3. There was the silence of the judge. The judge did not move to help her. His heart was hard and harsh; he had no interest in helping anyone who would not benefit his career or fill his pockets.
4. The point is this: the judge gave in. For sometime he used, but the poor widow kept on coming and coming, pleading and pleading. She would not let the judge rest.

Now note the stress. The judge...

- did not fear God,
- did not regard man's opinions,

...yet he gave in to the widow, granting her justice against her adversary.

Why? Because of her *continual coming*. He could not rid of her. She would not accept silence nor take *no* for answer. She kept coming and coming. The judge said, that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming." (*hina me hupopiazei me*). The literal meaning is unless she "give me a black eye." The word can mean to *annoy or to damage a reputation*. She was persistent — refusing to let the judge go!

### III. *Luke 18:06–07 Persevering in Prayer*

The lesson on persevering prayer. The lesson has four points.

1. Hear the lesson. The unjust judge holds a great lesson for believers. Hear, give attention and thought to what he teaches.
2. God avenges and brings justice to His chosen ones who persevere in prayer.
  - a. The chosen ones are God’s “chosen ones,” the followers of His dear Son (See *Chosen ones*, Lk.18: 07).
  - b. God will avenge and bring justice to His chosen ones. This indicates that they are in trouble; they need to be avenged and delivered from being...
    - ridiculed                      • abused                      • ignored
    - passed over                  • slandered                  • persecuted
    - cursed                          • injured                      • criticized
  - c. The reason God avenges and brings justice to His chosen ones is because they persevere in prayer.

They pray *day and night*.

- They have great need.
- They recognize that God alone can meet their need.

Therefore, they go before God as the just Judge of the universe. They are one of His own chosen ones, and they cry day and night to be avenged of their adversaries (spiritual as well as human adversaries). They plead and plead their case before God. They do not let God remain silent nor let Him refuse His delivering power.

**Mat 26:41** *“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”*

**Luke 21:36** *Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.*

**John 15:7** *“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.”*

**Psa 91:15** *He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him.*

**Jer 33:3** *Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.*

**Zec 13:9** *This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are my people,’ and they will say, ‘The Lord is our God.’*

3. God waits and bears a long time; He puts off justice for a time. He is *long-suffering* toward unbelievers. This is part of His purpose: to have mercy upon all who can be reached, not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. 3:9). Note a significant point: the believer, bearing up under trial and persecution, is a dynamic witness of the strength of Christ. Some unbelievers are reached, and eventually they turn to Christ because of the strong witness of suffering believers. The point is this: God does not always answer the cry of a believer immediately. God allows the believer to suffer trial.
- a. A believer is allowed to suffer in order to be a dynamic witness to others. The presence and power of Christ is sufficient to help the believer stand faithfully.

*2 Pet 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

*1 Pet 1:7 These have come so that your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

*2 Cor 1:4 [God] who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.*

*1 Pet 3:1-2 Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.*

- b. A believer is allowed to suffer in order to become stronger and stronger in trusting and hoping God (Rom. 5:3-5).

*Rom 5:3-5 Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*

*James 1:2-4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

4. God will quickly bring about justice for His chosen ones; that is, in God's time He will act quickly, suddenly, and without hesitation. He will avenge His chosen ones. His wrath will come upon the world.

*Rom 12:19-20 Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."*

**2 Tim 4:18** *The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

**2 Th 1:7-8** *And give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.*

**Psa 22:5** *They cried to you and were saved; in you they trusted and were not disappointed.*

**Psa 71:1** *In you, O Lord, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame.*

**Prov 10:28** *The prospect of the righteous is joy, but the hopes of the wicked come to nothing.*

**Isa 46:4** *Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.*

**Jer 1:8** *“Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the Lord.*

### LUKE 18:07 CHOSEN ONES (EKLEKTOS)

“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?” Luke 18:07

The chosen, the person picked out. The chosen ones are the believers, the disciples of Christ, the people who genuinely belong to God (Mt. 24:22, 24, 31; Mk. 13:20, 22, 27; Rom. 8:33; Co1. 3:12; 2 Tim. 2:10; Tit. 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:1; 2:9. Also see where the word is translated “chosen”, Mt. 20:16; 22:14; Rom. 16:13; 2 Jn. 1:1, 13; Rev. 17:14.)

The focus of the word is upon God’s choice. There is no doubt about this, for the word itself means that God does the choosing and the picking out. But note: the choosing is for service, not for salvation or position (Jn. 15:16). The believer is chosen to bear fruit. □

#### IV. ***Luke 18:08 Persevering in Faith and Prayer***

The great tragedy is this: in the last days few will persevere in prayer and faith. Most will fall away. This is the implication of Christ. Note three significant facts.

1. Faith is the one thing Christ is after. He wants trust and belief in Him, in His Word, in His promises and warnings.
2. The greatest evidence of faith is persevering prayer. Faith and persevering prayer are tied together. The person who truly believes will be talking and sharing, communing and fellowshiping, living and moving with God day and night. The person will be praying always.

3. There will be few men of faith and prayer when He returns to earth. There will be some, but the number will be few.

*1 Tim 4:1* The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

*2 Tim 3:1-5* But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy; without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God — having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

*2 Pet 3:3-4* First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.”

*1 John 2:18* Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.

*Jude 1:18* They said to you, “In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.”

*Psa 14:2-3* The Lord looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

*Isa 41:28* I look but there is no one — no one among them to give counsel, no one to give answer when I ask them.

*Isa 59:16* He saw that there was no one, he was appalled that there was no one to intervene; so his own arm worked salvation for him, and his own righteousness sustained him.

*Isa 63:5* I looked, but there was no one to help, I was appalled that no one gave support; so my own arm worked salvation for me, and my own wrath sustained me.

*Ezek 22:30* “I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none.” ■