

Always Pray, Do not Give up!

Luke 18:1-8

Online Sermon: http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

“Faith is the furnace of our lives. Its fuel is the grace of God. And the divinely appointed shovel for feeding the burner is prayer. If you lose heart and lay down the shovel, the fire will go out, you will grow cold and hard.”¹

John Piper

I believe we are in the midst of a battle to “maintain a radical, heartfelt, self-denying faith in Christ” in the midst of constant threats of persecution, sinful temptations, business and injustices.² Since we live in the stench of sin of a fallen world that is not our home, it is imperative that we constantly “breathe in heaven’s air”³ by constantly talking to, listening and obeying God for if we do not do so our attempts at holiness will be swallowed up by opposition to the Light and the everyday business of life!⁴ While Jesus’ command to “pray and not give up” in today’s passage intuitively and spiritually makes sense, then why do most Christians struggle to pray without ceasing? For some it is a sense of unworthiness⁵ but for others when pleas for justice go unheard and answers are delayed despite their crying out day and night,⁶ they quickly become exasperated and leave His throne of grace⁷ to find a timely, likely to fail, “worldly solution.” But from the persistent widow in today’s passage, we will learn that for prayer to be effective it must be given persistently and in faith!⁸ In the following sermon we are going to first learn how our “life psalm” ought to be “alternating verses of praying and praising”⁹ with the

¹ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

² John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

³ Tony Evans, [“Persistence in Prayer,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 1993), Lk 18:1–18.

⁴ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

⁵ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Importunate Widow,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 106.

⁶ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Luke*, ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 497.

⁷ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Importunate Widow,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 100.

⁸ Tony Evans, [“Persistence in Prayer,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 1993), Lk 18:1–18.

⁹ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Importunate Widow,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 99.

assurance that our requests given in the will of God, though they be might be delayed,¹⁰ will be granted in His power and sovereignty! And secondly, we are going to learn that always being in the “energy of prayer,”¹¹ by sending to send silent, short, swift petitions”¹² to our Maker is the key to remaining faithful until Christ returns!

The Unjust Situation

Jesus said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’

Luke 18:2-3, NIV

To understand the first few verses of this parable lets review some background information on each of the participants. In Jesus’ day district judges would go from town to town and charge money to make legal decisions regarding disputes.¹³ The judge would setup his



court in a tent and his assistants would decide which of the numerous cases would come before him. While most cases were “brought before the elders of the local synagogue,”¹⁴ the widow in this parable is said to plead with this kind of Gentile,¹⁵ district judge to have her case tried. While this widow hoped she might get justice against her adversary, by one who was supposed to be unbiased, objective, and neutral,¹⁶ to her dismay this judge was found to be a

¹⁰ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Importunate Widow,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 105.

¹¹ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Importunate Widow,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 99.

¹² Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Importunate Widow,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 98.

¹³ Tony Evans, [“Persistence in Prayer,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 1993), Lk 18:1–18.

¹⁴ Craig A. Evans, [The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Matthew–Luke](#), ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2003), 367.

¹⁵ Craig A. Evans, [Luke](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1990), 269.

¹⁶ Joel B. Green, [The Gospel of Luke](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 639.

“man of the world.”¹⁷ Even though “honoring God and one’s fellow human being was upheld as ideals throughout the Hellenistic world,”¹⁸ we are told this judge’s “conscience was seared in him”¹⁹ for being “self-aggrandized”²⁰ he neither feared God nor cared for anyone except himself. Without any remorse this “Atheist in power”²¹ refused to hear the widow’s repetitive demands for justice²² despite knowing that widows are often the object of God’s special love and care (Luke 2:37, 4:26, 7:12; Deuteronomy 10:18).²³ Since the judge felt he was not “accountable to anything outside himself,” he simply ignored the widow²⁴ to attend to cases of more prominent and better paying citizens.

The second character in Jesus’ parable, the widow, is seen as a hopeless victim.²⁵ “In an age when social services were almost exclusively dependent on human good will, widows, orphans, and the sick and needy were exposed to a precarious social existence” of being dependent on a male family member²⁶ or the community of God’s people.²⁷ The unrighteous judge in this parable showed no interest in hearing the widows case²⁸ for a variety of likely reasons. First, being a woman and a widow, she had little intrinsic value to the community²⁹ and

¹⁷ Walter L. Liefeld, [“Luke,”](#) in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 1000.

¹⁸ James R. Edwards, [The Gospel according to Luke](#), ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 497.

¹⁹ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Importunate Widow,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 102.

²⁰ Tony Evans, [“Persistence in Prayer,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 1993), Lk 18:1–18.

²¹ James R. Edwards, [The Gospel according to Luke](#), ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 497.

²² Tony Evans, [“Persistence in Prayer,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 1993), Lk 18:1–18.

²³ D. A. Carson, [“The Gospels and Acts,”](#) in *NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 1864.

²⁴ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Importunate Widow,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 106.

²⁵ Joel B. Green, [The Gospel of Luke](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 640.

²⁶ James R. Edwards, [The Gospel according to Luke](#), ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 498.

²⁷ Joel B. Green, [The Gospel of Luke](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 640.

²⁸ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Importunate Widow,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 104.

²⁹ Joel B. Green, [The Gospel of Luke](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 639–640.

precious few laws to protect her in what was at that time “truly a man’s world.”³⁰ Second, she



had no husband or kinsmen³¹ to come alongside and assist her.³² And third, being poor she lacked the resources needed to bribe the judge to select her case amongst the likely overwhelming cases waiting to be heard.³³ “The obstinacy of the judge and defenselessness of the widow would seem to doom the widow’s prospects of success.”³⁴ And yet despite having “absolutely nothing going for her,”³⁵ like the hemorrhaging woman of Luke 8:43-48, the widow “assumes unusual responsibility for her own well being”³⁶ by continuously and publicly demanding

her case be heard. One can almost picture her in the court, following the judge in the streets, and standing outside of his home screaming at the top of her lungs “grant me justice against my adversary!”³⁷

The Unjust Judge Grants Justice

For some time, he refused. But finally, he said to himself, even though I don’t fear God or care what people think, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually come and attack me!

Luke 18:4-5

³⁰ Tony Evans, [“Persistence in Prayer,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 1993), Lk 18:1–18.

³¹ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 640.

³² Tony Evans, [“Persistence in Prayer,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 1993), Lk 18:1–18.

³³ Tony Evans, [“Persistence in Prayer,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 1993), Lk 18:1–18.

³⁴ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Luke*, ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 498.

³⁵ Tony Evans, [“Persistence in Prayer,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 1993), Lk 18:1–18.

³⁶ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 640.

³⁷ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Importunate Widow,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 107.

After a period of time of constant badgering the judge finally gave into the widow's request for justice.³⁸ This begs the question: why would he do this for someone who had no



money or status in society to influence his decision?³⁹ After all, in the parable there is no indication that the judge woke up one day and experienced moral reform and started fearing God or that he all of a sudden started respecting people!⁴⁰ I believe there are two reasons why the judge gave the widow justice. First, her persistent cries for justice had the same effect that Delilah's pleas had on Samson (Judges 16:15-16), it wore down the judge's determination to say no.⁴¹ And second, the judge was not only worn out from her badgering cries but also feared that her non-stop pleas for justice were giving him a "black eye" to his business reputation.⁴² After all, who would want their case tried by a judge who seemed not to care about justice? One can almost hear the judge reasoning with himself by stating "people won't call on me and therefore, I won't be able to

make my money. So, just to get her off my back, I will give her what she requests."⁴³ Don't miss the humor and irony that "this uncaring judge, who fears neither God nor man, finally relents, lest he suffer violence at the hands of a widow!"⁴⁴

³⁸ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Luke*, ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 498–499.

³⁹ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 641.

⁴⁰ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Luke*, ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 499.

⁴¹ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Luke*, ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 499.

⁴² Tony Evans, "[Persistence in Prayer](#)," in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 1993), Lk 18:1–18.

⁴³ Tony Evans, "[Persistence in Prayer](#)," in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 1993), Lk 18:1–18.

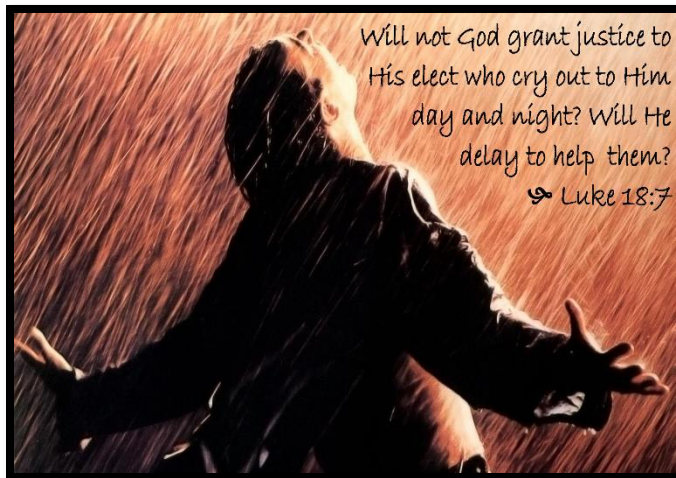
⁴⁴ Craig A. Evans, *The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Matthew–Luke*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2003), 367.

God's Justice

And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 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? ⁸ I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly.

Luke 18:6-8b

This is where the parable takes a surprising turn ... the unjust judge states he believes that God will quickly bring about justice for His chosen ones! We should not be offended that "Jesus compares God with an unjust judge"⁴⁵ but instead notice how the meaning of the parable "hangs on God being different from this judge"⁴⁶ and us being in a better position than that of the widow



to seek justice! "*Men ought always to pray and not faint*" because if an unjust judge will help a helpless woman purely to save his reputation, how much more will not God help His children who He is related to, who are promoting His reputation or the New Testament word for it, the glory of God?"⁴⁷ Furthermore, while the woman was a perfect stranger and had no access to plead her case, we are children of God and though we are sinners and unworthy⁴⁸ we have an Advocate without spot or blemish (1

Peter 2:22)⁴⁹ and the Holy Spirit to groan our case with wordless groans (Romans 8:26-27)! The widow had no promises to stand on but in Christ we have every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3) for the blood of Christ speaks with a voice that will always be heard by the Father!⁵⁰ The widow only had a court of law to seek justice, but we have the throne of grace!⁵¹ The widow cried out of her poverty and alone, but we call out of our riches in Jesus Christ⁵² and as part of

⁴⁵ John Piper, [*Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)*](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

⁴⁶ John Piper, [*Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)*](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

⁴⁷ Tony Evans, [*"Persistence in Prayer,"*](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 1993), Lk 18:1–18.

⁴⁸ Charles H. Spurgeon, [*"The Importunate Widow,"*](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 106.

⁴⁹ Charles H. Spurgeon, [*"The Importunate Widow,"*](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 106.

⁵⁰ Charles H. Spurgeon, [*"The Importunate Widow,"*](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 104.

⁵¹ Tony Evans, [*"Persistence in Prayer,"*](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 1993), Lk 18:1–18.

⁵² Tony Evans, [*"Persistence in Prayer,"*](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 1993), Lk 18:1–18.

the church, the bride of God's very own Son!⁵³ We the reader are left to answer the rhetorical question: "if the unjust judge will finally grant justice, how much more will God,"⁵⁴ whose very character exemplifies what is right, holy, and true,⁵⁵ "the Friend of the needy, the Father of the fatherless, and the Avenger of all such as are oppressed, grant us His children justice?"⁵⁶

So ...Pray without Ceasing!

Before going on to the final part of verse eight lets further reflect on what Jesus meant when He said in verse one to "pray and not give up." Prayer to be effective must be done in perseverance. Robert Foster rightly states that prayer should be as natural as breathing for it is the central avenue in which God chooses to transform our lives. Apostle James believed in continuous prayer so much that tradition states during his time of imprisonment his knees were so worn out from prayer that he could not rise to eat his meals!⁵⁷ One of the reasons we do not receive what we ask from God is because we merely knock once or twice on the gate of mercy⁵⁸ and then due to impatience and a lack of faith we leave and pursue a timely, likely to fail,

"worldly solution." May we have faith that though God sometimes delays in answering our prayers this does not imply apathy or an inability on God's part⁵⁹ but that in His timing and



⁵³ Charles H. Spurgeon, "[The Importunate Widow,](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 104.

⁵⁴ Joel B. Green, [The Gospel of Luke](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 641–642.

⁵⁵ James R. Edwards, [The Gospel according to Luke](#), ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 501.

⁵⁶ Charles H. Spurgeon, "[The Importunate Widow,](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 103.

⁵⁷ Charles H. Spurgeon, "[The Importunate Widow,](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 101.

⁵⁸ Charles H. Spurgeon, "[The Importunate Widow,](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 100.

⁵⁹ James R. Edwards, [The Gospel according to Luke](#), ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 501.

according to His will He will answer our prayers suddenly, and with divine power.⁶⁰ Like the widow in the parable if we are to have our prayers answered we must lean to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). This does not mean we are literally⁶¹ to pray every second we are awake while neglecting all the other commands of God, but merely that we are to “always be in the spirit of prayer,”⁶² and ready the moment the Spirit leads us⁶³ to fall to our knees and make “our requests known to God” (Philippians 4:6-7)! We are to pray in our poverty and wealth, sickness and health, at funerals or maternity wards,⁶⁴ and especially when we need God to illuminate our eyes to see the righteous path He wants us to take!⁶⁵ While prayer is not to be literally continuous, may we purposely be like Daniel and David who set specific times or seasons to pray⁶⁶ and also have the flexibility to drop everything and fall to our knees when God comes knocking on the door of our hearts. Being in the spirit of prayer continuously will ensure that the business of life will not swallow up our time with God who teaches and enables us to be holy as He is holy!

Praying in His Will

Does this mean that those who “carry the weapon of all-prayer like a drawn sword”⁶⁷ will by perseverance always get what they ask of God? After all, in the Sermon on the Mount did not Jesus Himself say “ask and it will be given unto you, knock and the door will be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7)? Does this mean if one were to ask for a million dollars that like a genie in the bottle Jesus would grant one’s wish? We know that rarely would God grant such a request because there are stipulations given elsewhere in Scripture that must be met to receive a YES from our God! First, we must ask in the name of the Lord (John 14:13). Second, James states that when we ask our motives must not be to gratify our own pleasures (4:3). And third, we must ask in accordance with God’s will for the universe in general and for us individually (1 John

⁶⁰ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Luke*, ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 501.

⁶¹ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Importunate Widow,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 98.

⁶² Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Importunate Widow,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 98.

⁶³ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Importunate Widow,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 101–102.

⁶⁴ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Importunate Widow,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 101–102.

⁶⁵ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Importunate Widow,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 102.

⁶⁶ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Importunate Widow,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 101.

⁶⁷ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Importunate Widow,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 99.

5:14). While God loves the “silent, short, swift petitions of the saints”⁶⁸ at His throne of



grace,⁶⁹ because of His promise to always do good to those who love Him (Romans 8:28) we simply will not receive everything we ask for, even if it is done in perseverance! Since only the Creator and Sustainer of all things seen and unseen (Colossians 1:16) knows the “BIG” picture,⁷⁰ effective prayers are those that contain the words “may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).⁷¹ While God is not indifferent to our prayers,⁷² He will say NO when we ask for things outside His will and not good for us! Let us rejoice that

when we pray in the will and word of God and our needs intersect the “highway of His glory”⁷³ God act swiftly⁷⁴ and with the same power that His Spirit exerted when He raised Christ from the dead (Romans 8:11)!

Being Found Faithful

However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?

Luke 18:8b

At the end of the parable Jesus draws the attention away from God being a righteous judge, who through perseverance of prayer corrects the injustices of this world, to His Son returning and being a judge of the person doing the praying! While praying about the specks in

⁶⁸ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Importunate Widow,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 105.

⁶⁹ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Importunate Widow,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 100.

⁷⁰ Tony Evans, [“Persistence in Prayer,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 1993), Lk 18:1–18.

⁷¹ Charles H. Spurgeon, [“The Importunate Widow,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 105.

⁷² James R. Edwards, [The Gospel according to Luke](#), ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 500.

⁷³ Tony Evans, [“Persistence in Prayer,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 1993), Lk 18:1–18.

⁷⁴ Tony Evans, [“Persistence in Prayer,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 1993), Lk 18:1–18.

the eyes of injustice of others is quite comforting, it quite another to reflect on the truth that all will be held accountable for the logs in their own eyes (Matthew 7:1-5)! To keep the ordinary concerns and carnal desires of everyday living⁷⁵ from swallowing up our thirst and desire to be



holy as God is holy, we must not be like Lot's wife and look back⁷⁶ and be consumed by the evil desires that at one time enslaved us but instead must in prayer and with great overtures of grace keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:1-3)! "Since God has proven time and time again to be faithful to His own, His people must likewise be faithful to the end."⁷⁷ To offer oneself as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2) is imperative for if we chose to cherish sin in our hearts the Psalmist states God will not even hear the words of our prayers (66:18).

However, to attain righteousness one needs to pray for the aid of the Spirit, or one simply cannot throw off sin that so easily entangles one's soul. Prayer and faith are inseparable for faith prompts prayer while prayer strengthens our faith!⁷⁸ The answer to Jesus' question on how to endure to the end⁷⁹ is to pray and have faith that God always does good to those who love Him! I would like to finish with one final quote from Charles Spurgeon.

If you are sure it is a right thing for which you are asking, plead now, plead at noon, plead at night, plead on; with cries and tears spread out your case, order your arguments, back up your pleas with reasons, urge the precious blood of Jesus, set the wounds of Christ before the Father's eyes, bring out the atoning sacrifice, point to Calvary, enlist the crowned Prince, the Priest who stands at the right hand of God; and resolve in your very soul that if Zion do not flourish, if souls be not saved, if your family be not blessed, if your own zeal be not revived, yet you will die with the plea upon your lips, and with the importunate wish upon your spirits.⁸⁰

How does one endure until Christ returns: have faith and pray, pray, pray!

⁷⁵ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

⁷⁶ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

⁷⁷ D. A. Carson, "The Gospels and Acts," in *NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 1865.

⁷⁸ Craig A. Evans, *The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Matthew–Luke*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2003), 369.

⁷⁹ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

⁸⁰ Charles H. Spurgeon, "The Importunate Widow," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 108.