

Persistent Prayer

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[0 : 00] We're going to turn now to God's Word and to read in Luke's Gospel, where Isaac is going to be preaching from this morning. And Luke's Gospel, chapter 18. If you have one of our church visitors' Bibles, that's page 877.

And we're reading the first eight verses. And Jesus told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.

He said, in a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, give me justice against my adversary. For a while he refused. But afterward he said to himself, though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.

And the Lord said, hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect who cry to him day and night?

[1 : 25] Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?

Amen. And may God bless to us his word. Shall we turn into our Bibles too?

The passage that was read before us from Luke chapter 18 and verse 1. When we come to a passage like this, we are very deeply aware that when it comes to prayer in our lives, how easy it is to give up.

We all strongly believe in prayer. You have heard those words that says, much prayer, much power, little prayer, little power, no prayer, no power.

And then we face life issues. And it is so easy then to give up in prayer.

[2 : 48] Even the Lord saw this and then presented this parable to us. That the disciples of Christ should always pray and not give up.

We all believe that our God answers prayers. Our God is not like that judge we hear in this passage. Hard to get answers from.

Rather, he is the counter example of this judge mentioned in this parable. He is the one who is willing and able to answer our prayers.

The point of the parable is to encourage us in persistent prayers so that we don't give up.

Disciples of Christ should always pray and not give up. This is such an important principle for us today in our family life, in our church lives, and very especially in international missions.

[4 : 02] When we are there to proclaim the gospel to others, prayer is such an important preparation before we do anything.

It is very interesting that the people we prayed for, the areas in India that we prayed for, the Lord eventually took us there to minister among those people.

The other very important part of our prayer life is that we are coming to a God who is sovereign, who decides what he will do.

And yet he has given you and I, mere mortal creatures, mere just specks in this universe, the privilege to ask.

And the strange thing is, this sovereign God answers prayers. I want to encourage you, family of God, this morning to be persistent in our prayers.

[5 : 16] Because God answers prayers. I want to ask you, does this view of God as sovereign and yet answering our prayers reflect your and my prayer life?

Do I see God as the unjust judge who has got his hand clasped tight on the answers that I seek or the one who is ready and overflowing with his blessings?

As a child in the Sunday school, I learned this chorus. God answers prayers in the morning.

God answers prayer at noon. God answers prayer in the evening. So keep your hearts in team.
God answers prayer in the evening.

[6 : 44] God answers prayer in the evening.

God answers prayer in the evening. God answers prayer in the evening. God answers prayer in the evening. God answers prayer in the evening. God answers prayer in the evening.

He unsure prayer in the evening. God answers prayer in the evening. God answers prayer in the evening. God answers prayer in a prayer in the evening. God ■■■■ answers prayer.

in Ranchi, in Jharkhand, among a people group whose language even I don't know as yet. But that is what God does.

Ask when we ask and when we get engaged in what God is doing. Do you know what happens is when we pray, when we are with God and we are intimate with him, then what happens?

[8 : 08] He gives us his heart for his people and he takes us there. But what I want to encourage you by asking is, is that the way we come to God, knowing that he will give us even the ends of the earth as our inheritance?

Does that reflect your praying and my praying? Too often we give up on our prayers and too often our prayers are feeble.

The poet Ann Kelly has very well reflected in his verse, sometimes in the way that we ask. And he says like this, if you had been living when Christ was on earth and had met the Savior kind, what would you have asked him to do for you, supposing you were stone blind?

The child considered and then replied, I suppose that without a doubt I would ask the Lord for a guide dog to lead me daily about.

How often thus, in our faithless prayers, we acknowledge with shame, surprise, we have only asked for a dog on a chain when he might have opened blind eyes.

[9 : 45] this parable family of God is to motivate us to pray and not to give up, not give up on our praying and not lose heart.

The place where we often give up is the area of prayer. The problem is so serious that in verse 8, the Lord says, however, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?

I have to confess to you, family of God this morning, that my prayer life is not what it should be. one of your own men who have inspired us to pray in that part of the land, Robert Murray McShane said, a man is what he is on his knees, and no more.

You can have great knowledge positions, a great reputation, social standing, even honor in the church, but at the end of the day, our estimate in heaven's eyes come down to this level, what we are on our knees, that we are, and no more.

We want to look at three things with you this morning, and I want to bring three applications at the end of it. There are three things we need to understand so as not to give up in prayer.

[11 : 17] Among many others, I want to deal with the three issues where we easily give up. First is, prayer is warfare.

You know, I'm talking about prayer that is beyond the morning prayer before breakfast, or when you get up, or when before going to sleep, you pray, you know, I do not know for how many decades I prayed for cockroaches and, you know, spiders, because I was afraid of spiders and cockroaches. I'm not talking of those prayers, friends. I'm talking of beyond that. prayer is warfare. very especially when you pray for the salvation of people, when you pray for siblings, when you pray for family members that have gone astray, when you pray for the salvation of the lost, when you pray for the wickedness that is there and growing in the world, when you see the whole world order almost becoming anti-Christian, when you see again and again legislations worldwide being passed against the church, so that we cannot express our convictions that are drawn from the inspired word of God.

when you get into prayer against those things. Do you know what is that? That is warfare. And the evil one will open the gates of hell against you.

Prayer is warfare. And that's why when we don't understand that and think that it is just a magic or mumbling of a few words, after which we said amen, then God is obligated to answer us.

[13 : 03] No, that is not the position. That is not what God is speaking to us and teaching us in this passage. And the second thing that we need to understand is that we are weak.

That you and I are weak people at the end of the day. So much buffeted by the circumstances of our lives and our emotions and our feelings. And it is so natural and easy to give up.

And finally, I need to simplify my life to be able to pray. Let us look at the first point.

Prayer is warfare. In Ephesians chapter 6, verse 12, it says, For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Can you imagine how it is? This verse is just loaded, explaining that what our true struggle is. The real battle that is going on in our world is a spiritual battle.

[14 : 21] In India, the demonic is worshipped openly. Certain Hindu gods are called demon gods. The old serpent is worshipped as the snake god.

In the West, it is more subtle. But in both the places, we need the spiritual armor.

Second Corinthians chapter 10, verses 4 and 5 says, For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses, for we are destroying speculations, and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God.

And we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. Paul gives us what the armor of God is. He says, he talks about the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, the belt of truth, feet shod with the shoes of the gospel of peace, the sword of the spirit, and the shield of faith. And then gives the final piece of armor in Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 18. And he says, With all prayer and petition, pray at all times in the spirit.

[15 : 46] And with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the sins. We need this piece of armor.

What is a piece of armor? Prayer. If we are going to overcome the devil, we need all prayer.

Don't let anything distract you from praying. It might be the phone ringing, the doorbell going. It could be anything.

Everything in our life seems to be put before prayer. Then the devil wants it that way. And yet we know that and we can we can repeat it.

Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint on his knees. The issue is not about the information that we have. We have the information. How can I thwart his plans to keep me off my knees?

[16 : 48] I need to understand that this is warfare. warfare. This is spiritual warfare. Satan manipulates the ordinary daily circumstances of our lives in order to checkmate us from getting to God and remaining there.

Family of God, can I urge you prioritize prayer. Prioritize prayer. Pray at a time and a place where disruption is less likely.

For some it is early in the morning. For some it is in the middle of the day. For some it is late at night. But a time before I have found for my own self when life gets going and you get caught in it. Look at the example of our Lord in Mark chapter 1 and verse 35. It says, very early in the morning while it was still dark Jesus got up left the house and went off to a solitary place where he prayed. About 20 years ago I asked my prayer mentor what does very early in the morning means? So he looked at me straight.

[18 : 14] The brother was from Africa. You know very candid speaker. He looked at me and he says morning means 6 o'clock in Israel.

Early morning means 5 o'clock. Very early morning means 4 o'clock. Luke chapter 6 verse 12 says one of those days Jesus went out to a mountain site to pray and spent the night praying to God.

Do you know when you come across these verses and look at the prayer life of Jesus praying through the night?

Why was it so necessary for him? You know why was it so necessary? He was seeking his father's face before he spoke to the people.

Before he spoke to the people about God he spoke to God. Jesus never allowed the multitude or ministry to get between him and his father.

[19 : 40] In India the challenges we face as a church are very peculiar. The hostility and violence against the church on one side and then the demonic oppression on the other side.

We found ourselves as a church inadequate in our prayer life. Disciples of Christ should always pray and not give up.

You are in a warfare zone if you are in that kind of a spiritual atmosphere where everybody is very religious and not yet knows the true and the living God.

What do you do? We found ourselves very inadequate. Do you know as a church with a vision to reach North India our prayer summit which was once in a month was one and a half hour long and it was even difficult to fill that one and a half hour.

We were all so convinced that this is not enough. So we changed our prayer submit from nine in the night to five in the morning eight hours of prayer and from nine in the day to five in the evening.

[20 : 51] The Lord led us there and then I can tell you the amazing results of that that we experienced as a church.

We were praying for specific people groups among whom there were very few Christians and it is so amazing that by the end of the year we had people from those people groups showing great interest and coming to church and many of them baptized God answers prayers sovereign God he answers prayers prayer family of God is so simple so strategic and yet a discipline that is so difficult that the Lord said that disciples of Christ should always pray and not give up prayers are like drones unmanned combat aerial vehicles operated from a remote distance doing maximum damage on the battle lines do do you know right from your drawing room from your studies from your bedroom you can pray for areas of the world and they are not in vain

God listens to them and answers family of God prayer is warfare very especially when you are praying for the nations the second thing we need to understand is that I am weak we are weak creatures it is important that we know ourselves so as to pray and not give up my physical body causes me to give up in prayer my body would rather have an hour in bed than an hour on my maze is that the same for you because there are often no obvious immediate and visible returns for our praying we get frustrated very often we have been conditioned in our world to expect instant everything we want a quick answer anything that cannot be seen is worthless we lose heart and then we do not pray what is the answer to this problem of the weak self

Paul says in the scriptures he talks about the discipline of his body in first Corinthians chapter nine verse twenty seven he says but I discipline my body and make it my slave Paul put his body under his godly mind he subjected it to do what he knew was God's will for him do we do that discipline is the way by which we learn to control our body isn't it amazing family of God when you observe the false religions of the world their discipline and their prayer in India as I said I come from a religious country at 4 a.m.

in the morning you can hear the museum call out to pray Allah God is great therefore come and pray how chilling is that when you hear that God is great what is my response my response is that I need to come and pray at 5 a.m.

[25 : 17] in India you can see the Sikhs rushing off towards their Gurdwaras at 6 o'clock all the temple bells come alive they say that they wake up their gods that's a bit difficult trouble you know if God goes to sleep then I am in real trouble but the issue is this family of God that at 7 o'clock Christians are still turning in their beds still making up their minds should they wake up or not oh what peace we often forfeit oh what needless pain we bear all because we do not carry everything everything to God in prayer we are weak we are weak creatures and therefore the

Lord says that the disciples of Christ should pray and not give up my final point to you this morning is that our lives have become too complicated I need to simplify my life I'm very busy our constant nibbling family of God at the tables of the world leaves us with no appetite for the banquet of God constantly nibbling at the tables of the world our latest gadgets have become our latest curses they were invented to be convenient to our lifestyles but they are certainly not convenient to our prayer life our latest gadgets have left us no downtime we are on electronic leashes all the time there is no time left to be alone to be silent and to contemplate or to pray or to reflect the gadgets were not created to enhance our prayer life the result is that our lives have become a constant frantic hive of constant exhaustive activity as we save all the time and then use it up in some other ways more apps on our gadgets to save more time to do more things on those apples that don't grow on trees things we today have less time to do what we want to do than in any other generation why is that we have become victims of our own success family of

God we have more money to spend than in any other generation ever had there's more experiences that can be bought by that money but we have the same amount of time that all the other generations had before us here is the problem for the Christian all those modern experiences often seem much less attractive are much more attractive and satisfying than prayer fewer Christians have really experienced the true power of prayer and intimacy with God and therefore find no satisfaction in desiring to be alone with God therefore they see little beauty in it and they

don't desire it Wang Mang Dao a Chinese Christian put it this way he said when I was put in jail I was devastated I was 60 years old at the peak of my powers I was a well known evangelist and wished to hold crusades all over China I was an author I wanted to write more books I was a preacher I wanted to study my Bible and write more sermons but instead of serving God in all these ways I found myself sitting alone in a dark cell I could not use the time to write more books they had taken my Bible away I had no one even to witness to as the jailer for years just pushed my meals through the hatch everything that had given me meaning as a Christian worker had been taken away from me and I had nothing to do except to know God for 20 years that was the greatest relationship

I have ever known but the cell was a means to that relationship Wang Mangdao goes on to say I was pushed into a cell but you will have to push yourself into one you have no time to know God you need to build yourself a cell so that you can do for yourself what persecution did for me simplify your life simplify your life family of God three simple applications from this parable to develop our prayer life go to God very simple go to God verse three says and there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea grant me justice against my adversary the widow had a need and took the need to where she knew she could get help when you have a need converse with [31 : 30] God communicate with God talk to God as you talk with others don't try to go somewhere else for help go to God very simple in every situation just cry out to him and you will be surprised that in spite of the billions of people that are on this earth God hears your prayer go to God my second application is go again and again not just one time not just when you have not heard not got an answer go again and again do you know in this passage especially in that era and in the ancient east the widows needed help on a regular basis widows by their very nature were unable to be independent the same is true of

Christians we need help we cannot be independent we have to go back to God again and again for the same things we need to ask for help from God on a regular basis so she kept going to the judge until she got an answer and verse 5 says yet because this widow bothers me I will give her legal protection otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out when we are praying for salvation for someone or a nation we need to keep going to God family of God one of the simple disciplines I have for my desire and obedience for the salvation of people I pray but with that I keep a list of ten people on a card simple card the ten people I want to be saved for them to know about Jesus for them to be part of the church and can

I encourage you I have kept that discipline for the last three decades and I'm not saying this that I am some great guy but everyone I have put on that list in 10 15 20 25 29 years I have seen them come to know Jesus I've been very encouraged but I have not given up as soon as one is saved another one joins 20 20 years why why such a long time

I have no answer why but we persisted in praying and the Lord eventually took us there and made us part of a soul winning effort and that gives great meaning and great satisfaction going again and again and persistently back to God for the same people for the same problem for the same issues you think God is bored no my final application to you family of God is change the world by your prayers change the world by your prayers there are three kinds of people as they say those that make things happen those that watch things happen and those who say what happened people who pray are the ones who make things happen intercessors are the historians of the world intercessors are those who are writing the new history of

God's redemption and salvation this world verse seven 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 the widow got what she asked for persistent prayers get result prayer is not family of God the phone call to the airline or to the service computer agency you know which is put on hold and you hear that ugly music interrupted frequently by the message call this your call is important to us kindly keep on hold that is not what prayer is family of God the word of God says will he keep putting them off the answer is no the answer is no notice the extreme contrast between this judge and our God one is unjust the other is just one is godless the other is God himself therefore godly cares about no one cares about us so much

[37 : 25] God there God God God God God is the life breath of a Christian God will not put us on Bible teaches us that when we come to him in faith he will reward us but yet I think the hardest thing in the world to do is to pray yet perhaps it is the most necessary thing persistent prayer is how we express our faith in God is it not what we see or feel friends it is not what we feel or see but what he

says in his word that is important then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up let us pray father thank you for the encouragement of your word thank you lord that it is not how we feel or what the world says it is not what we see or what other people say but what your word says which is important thank you for the encouragement that we have received from your word today give us the will discipline and the obedience to persist in prayer we bless you and we give you thanks in

Jesus name amen thank you very much for this opportunity for me to bring God's word the brochure of DBI would be available somewhere in the hallway please pick it up if you do not have one already thank you ■ down World Next L Second L Second Gemini As So Beth reserved