



Living
Missionally
Listening to God's Voice

Message Guide
July 11, 2021

Persistent Prayer, Persevering Faith

LUKE 18:1-8



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LISTENING TO GOD'S VOICE
GCF MISSIONS MONTH

SERMON SERIES

TODAY'S MESSAGE | JULY 11, 2021

Persistent Prayer, Persevering Faith

LUKE 18:1-8

Life is filled with so much problems – family crisis, financial difficulties, sickness, grief, depression, crime, injustice, pandemic, and other issues that cause pain, suffering, difficulty, and discouragement. We seek God's help and sometimes it seems that He is silent, distant, or delayed in His response.

How can we survive the pain when there seems to be no relief in sight? How can we endure the difficulties of life with our faith intact? How can we keep going when things get really hard?

One of the most difficult aspects of the Christian life is being persistent in prayer and persevering in faith when it seems that God is not answering. For instance, in spite of years of prayer and missionary efforts, some of the Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu sections of the world seem as resistant to the gospel as ever and so it is easy to become discouraged about praying for world missions. All of us have requests that we have brought before God for years and yet it seems like God isn't answering! It is easy to dwindle in faith and even to give up praying.

This story gives us three insights that help us answer the question, how can we be persistent prayer and be persevering faith?

Realize where the world is at (v.1).

“One day Jesus told his disciples a story to show that they should always pray and never give up.” (18:1, NLT)

- Jesus knew the weakness of our flesh and that we all are prone to lose heart because of what is happening in our world.
- This instruction to ‘pray and never give up’ fits in with the preceding context where the Lord told the disciples that the days would come when they would long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but they would not see it (17:22).
- The world would go on in its disregard of God, much as it had in the days of Noah and of Lot (17:26-30).
- The days before Christ's coming will be like the days before those two catastrophes. We can expect that most of the world will be engaged in business as usual (17:27) when the lightning of the Son of Man flashes from sky to sky.



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- The Church would be much like this widow, left without her heavenly Bridegroom, much maligned and persecuted by the ungodly. During this time of waiting and struggle, Jesus shows that believers will persist in prayer and persevere in faith.
- Jesus warns us not to be like Lot's wife (17:32). Don't love the world. Don't turn back.
- The parable closes with the question, "When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" (18:8). Will they endure to the end? Will the Son of Man find us trusting him, or busy securing our lives in this world?
- Jesus' answer to the question on how to endure to the end is, to 'pray and never give up'.
- Life is a mess, and you may feel like you're barely hanging on. It's because the kingdom of God is here, but it's not completely here yet, and we're stuck waiting in this mess.

Recognize what God is like (v.2-7).

"There was a judge in a certain city," he said, "who neither feared God nor cared about people. A widow of that city came to him repeatedly, saying, 'Give me justice in this dispute with my enemy.' The judge ignored her for a while, but finally he said to himself, 'I don't fear God or care about people, but this woman is driving me crazy. I'm going to see that she gets justice, because she is wearing me out with her constant requests!'" Then the Lord said, "Learn a lesson from this unjust judge. Even he rendered a just decision in the end. So, don't you think God will surely give justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off?" (18:2-7, NLT)

- The judge in Jesus' story was described as a judge who doesn't fear God, or care about people. He is corrupt, unloving, evil, ungracious, merciless, and unjust. The widow has no chance of getting justice from him.
- In the end, though, the widow wears him down. He decides to give her justice after all, not because he cares about justice, but because he wants her off his back.
- Maybe you're left wondering if the point of the parable is that God is like this judge, and that we have to wear him down.
- As humans, we have a built-in tendency to doubt God's goodness. The heart of our rebellion against God is that we aren't really sure if He is good, and we're not really sure if we can trust him.

"In moments of suffering, it's tempting to allow yourself to doubt the goodness of God. You'll reason with yourself that somehow, someday, this moment of suffering is evidence that God is less than who He has depicted Himself to be. Suffering will tempt you to doubt God's goodness and kindness. Suffering will tempt you to doubt His faithfulness and love.

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Even though you may never speak this aloud, your theology will bring God into the court of your judgment and accuse Him of being unloving and unfaithful to His promises. Here's why doubt is such a deadly trap: as soon as you begin to question the character of God, you'll quit running to Him for help because you don't go for help to someone whom you no longer trust."

-- Paul Tripp, *Suffering: Gospel Hope When Life Doesn't Make Sense*

- The point of Jesus' parable is not that we should think of God like this judge. That's actually the very opposite of the point of this story. The point of this story is that we should understand that God is nothing like the unjust judge (18:7).
- Jesus uses this parable as a logical argument from the lesser to the greater. If this widow could get justice from this hardened, grumpy, uncaring judge, doesn't it follow that the loving, tender, gracious Heavenly Father will hear and answer His own children whom He has chosen when they cry out to Him for relief?
- The reason for the delay with the widow was that the unjust judge was unwilling (18:4), but that is never the reason with our loving Father in heaven. The unjust judge was acting out of selfish motives all the way, even when he finally granted her request. But God always acts out of self-sacrificing love, as seen supremely in the cross of Christ. This judge was only concerned for his own relief, but God acts out of wise concern for the well-being of His people.
- Jesus is saying that God is a good Father:
 - You don't ever have to wonder whether God cares about you and your predicament. He knows, and he cares.
 - You don't have to wonder about whether God hears you or not. God does hear you. He's eager to hear from you. He loves to hear from you.
 - You don't ever have to wonder what God thinks of you. You are the center of your heavenly Father's affection. He cares for you. He is for you.
 - You don't ever have to wonder if God will give you justice and do right. You may need to be patient, but you can be confident that God hears you, and that God cares for you
- God cares. God is deeply invested in us. He wants us to pray and let him know what we're going through. Even though it seems that he's distant or absent, he isn't. He's good, he's gracious, he's loving, and he cares. The key to surviving our current mess is to pray to God, who is eager to hear from us and to set things right.
- But what does Jesus mean when He says that justice will come quickly? We must understand it from God's timetable, not ours. With the Lord, a thousand years are like a day or as a watch in the night (2 Pet. 3:8; Ps. 90:4). Speedily by God's calendar is not speedily by ours! One answer to the problem of delayed answers to our prayers is to get a proper view of God.

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Remember who we are (v.7-8).

“So, don't you think God will surely give justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will grant justice to them quickly! But when the Son of Man returns, how many will he find on the earth who have faith?” (18:7-8, NLT)

- God's chosen people is “the Church” – those who followed Christ as their God, Master, and Savior.
- The Church is like this widow, who not only lost her husband, but then she had to contend with someone who was taking unfair advantage of her. The Bible shows us plenty of saints who “were tortured, mocked, scourged, put in chains and imprisonment, stoned, sawn in two, and put to death with the sword. They went about in animal skins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated, wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised” (Heb. 11:35-39).
 - We sometimes feel like the widow. It sometimes feels like the whole world is against us, and we're barely hanging on. But through this parable, Jesus reminds us that we are nothing like the widow.
 - The widow was helpless, with no one to defend her. Those in the kingdom of God have a helper. God himself has promised to defend us.
 - The widow has no husband. She is alone. Those in the kingdom of God are married to God himself. He loves us. His heart is for us. We will never be alone.
 - The widow faces insurmountable odds. She isn't sure that the judge will give her justice. Those of us in the kingdom of God never have to wonder if God will give us justice. We know that God will do right in the end.
- We tend to forget who we are. We are not helpless. God knows us, and we are His children.

Final Thoughts

Jesus knew that from our limited human perspective, it often seems that God is not answering or even listening when we pray because we do not see things from His eternal perspective. And so, He told this parable to show that at all times we ought to pray and not lose heart.

Like this widow, we should cry out day and night to our Father in heaven. He wants us, like this nagging widow, to keep on asking until we receive what we need. God isn't like this reluctant judge. He cares for us and is more than ready to grant our requests when He knows that we are ready to receive the answer. So, keep on praying and don't lose heart. He will bring about justice for you speedily, according to His timetable, not yours!

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This story gives us three insights that help us answer the question, how can we be persistent prayer and be persevering faith? Realize where the world is at. Recognize what God is like. Remember who we are.

Discussion Questions

1. How does knowing that we live in a messy, broken world, longing and waiting for God's justice, help us be persistent prayer and be persevering faith?
2. Have you ever felt that God is like this unjust judge? Why is a proper view of God essential?
3. How can someone who has gone through suffering and difficulties maintain his or her faith in God's loving care?
4. Why do you think it is important to realize that God's timetable is different from ours?

Download the study guide: bit.ly/MissionsStudyGuides

The Shepherd's Voice

Living Missionally: Listening to God's Voice GCF Missions Month

BY PASTOR PARKIN YOUNG

Good day GCF!

July is Missions Month, and as we celebrate it together, it's my hope that all of us would be able to live out God's great commission as we listen to His voice. This month, we will have different avenues where we, as a church, can listen to God and discern our part in His mission!

As a way for us to listen to Him through the experiences of people in the field, join us at **ChisMissions**: Kapehan at Kwentuhan with Missionaries. It's a one-hour fellowship where we get to hear from featured missionaries and mission organizations that GCF supports. Hear their stories and be blessed by how God has been making Himself known in magnificent and marvelous ways. This happens on all Saturdays of July, at 1:30 PM via Zoom, make sure to save the link bit.ly/GCFChisMissions and the passcode: gospel. We also want to hear from you! We'll have breakout groups right after the sharing from our missionaries. Don't forget to bring a cup of coffee or tea, as we gather together; bring along your Growth Groups too!

Another avenue to learn how to pray is our **Midweek Prayer Service**. Every Wednesday night at 8:00 PM via Zoom, we gather to worship God through His word shared by GCF pastors and elders, and we also get to spend time to pray for one another in Prayer Groups. A great way for us to listen to Him is through His word and through processing it with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Join us every Wednesday night and let's listen to God together!

Being in the Missional Disciple-Making Ministry (MDM) for the past 5 months has been challenging for me, and it has been a roller coaster ride of emotions. One thing that God impressed on me is the importance of family and the support and love they give. This Missions Month, we would also like to invite our Growth Groups to prayerfully consider being a **Missionary Home Partner** (MHP) for our missionaries, because they too need the support and love from a family.



The Shepherd's Voice

That is my heart's desire for our church, that as we continue to send out missionaries, we continue to support them in prayer, asking how they're doing and journeying with them — in the same way our families support us as well. Please contact me or any of the MDM team if you and your GG are interested in being an MHP!

Let's continue to listen to God's voice and learn what it means to be **LIVING MISSIONALLY!**



Cross Cultural Discovery: Myanmar

Personal / Group
Activity

Whether you're alone or with a group, here's a fun activity you can do to learn more about Myanmar culture!



SIGHT

- **Zoom Backgrounds:** bit.ly/ZoomMyanmar
- **Traditional Clothes:** bit.ly/ClothesMyanmar



TASTE & SMELL

Try out the Tea Leaf Salad recipe:
bit.ly/RecipeMyanmar

Worship Through Giving

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:7

If you are led to give, you may do so through the following means:

Account Name: Greenhills Christian Fellowship, Inc.

BDO

BDO Corporate Center
Savings Account: **000661590216**

METROBANK

Ortigas Sapphire
Savings Account: **629-3-62919733-9**

CHINA BANK

Ortigas ADB
Savings Account: **1112-02006218**

BPI

Ortigas Emerald
Peso Savings Account: **9823 0217 01**

UNIONBANK

UB Plaza
Checking Account: **0005-9001-0426**

ROBINSONS BANK

Main Office
Savings Account: **1000-3010-0017-355**

PAYPAL

Please visit **gcf.org.ph/give**

Scan QR code below:

GCASH



PAYMAYA



Send a copy of your transaction document to **finance@gcf.org.ph** so your giving can be properly recorded and an official receipt can be sent to you.

GCF BAYANIHAN FOOD STALLS

The GCF Mercy Ministry continues to accept donations, here's how:

For In-Kind Donations: drop off at the GCF Lobby from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

For Cash Donations: give via the GCF bank accounts (gcf.org.ph/give).

Email your deposit slip to finance@gcf.org.ph with the subject "*For Bayanihan Food Stall*".

For questions, contact the Mercy Ministry at 0917 532 7672 or mercy@gcf.org.ph

COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE EFFORTS

You may also give to support the church family's COVID relief efforts.

Just indicate "**For COVID-19 Fund**" when you email your transaction document.



Church Updates

WORSHIP THE LORD WITH US ON-SITE (10:00 A.M. WORSHIP SERVICE)!

Pre-register and learn about the guidelines at bit.ly/GCFOnSite

REMINDERS OF GOD'S CARE AND FAITHFULNESS DEVOTIONALS

Mondays and Fridays | 8:00 p.m. | Livestream on GCF Facebook and YouTube

MIDWEEK WORSHIP SERVICE

Wednesdays | 8:00 p.m. | via Zoom

LIVEstream (YouthLIVE Worship)

Saturdays | 5:00 p.m. | on youtube.com/user/gcfyouthlive

KidsLIFE ONLINE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sundays | 1:00 p.m. | on Facebook at @GCFKidsLIFE

THE GCF FAMILY'S HOUR OF PRAYER

Thursdays | 8:00 p.m. | via Zoom

LOOK UP AND MOVE OUT

Let us plant churches with a high view of God and a high view of God's word!
Visit bit.ly/GCFChurchPlanting to find out more!

TELECONSULTATION SERVICE

For appointments or questions, please contact:

gcfocstef@gmail.com (9:00 AM – 12:00 NN) • gcfocluan@gmail.com (1:00 – 4:00 PM)

CHISMISSIONS (KAPIHAN AT KWENTUHAN WITH MISSIONARIES)

July 17 | Persecuted Church in the New Normal | Rhods Uy, Open Doors
Saturdays 1:30 p.m. via zoom | bit.ly/GCFChisMissions | Passcode: gospel

HOW CAN WE PRAY FOR YOU?

Message us your prayer requests at:

Facebook: Greenhills Christian Fellowship | E-mail: pray@gcf.org.ph

GROW IN A GROWTH GROUP

OIKOS GROWTH GROUP MIXED (AGE 18 TO 70+)

Tuesdays | 6:30 p.m. | via Google Meet | with Jun Martinez

ONLINE VISITOR'S CENTER

Are you joining us for the first time? We would love to get to know you more!
Visit bit.ly/GCFwelcome



Greenhills Christian Fellowship

Know Christ and Make Him Known

Ruby cor. Garnet Roads, Ortigas Center, Pasig City, 1605

Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

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