

Prevailing Faith (Luke 18:1-8)

Then Jesus told them a **parable** about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. ² He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. ³ In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my opponent.' ⁴ For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.'"

⁶ And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? 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?" (Luke 18:8b)

The parable draws us in. We know injustice all too well. There is a world full of it. Too often the 'little person' loses their fight with the big 'powers'.

We hope the widow prevails. We would love to see it happen. And she does. Oh yes, her persistent hope, and prevailing faith, and wonderful integrity overcome the Unjust Judge. His love of ease, his preference for sleep, and for an end of annoyance motivates him. He is full of self-preservation. He gives up on this annoying case. The 'little' widow with a little faith and a lot of tenacity, wins. Christians should likewise persist in prayer, and not lose heart.

Jesus then reminds his listeners of the True and Living God. This Judge gives justice, quickly. This Judge hears the prayers of the needy. 'The Lord is just in all his ways, and kind in all his doings. The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfils the desire of all who fear him; he also hears their cry, and saves them.' (Psalm 145:17-19). This is our God. And God speedily responds, though it may not seem that way to us. God is just, kind, living and active.

Jesus then moves on to his main point: **And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find *faith* on earth?"** To trust that God is fair, kind and good is one thing. To refuse to capitulate to the 'easy' ways of a faithless humanity is another. Jesus came that we might have life, and life abundantly (John 10:10). The thief comes to destroy faith. The destruction of 'the faith' (18:8) is a thing. The abandonment of 'the faith' is a thing. Don't embrace that as eschatological inevitability! It is not.

The prevailing of faith, and truth is what matters. Jesus came, that truth might prevail. Jesus was sent that God's Word might prevail. The faithfulness of Jesus has prevailed over all circumstances. He has prevailed over the destructive power of human sin and evil. He has prevailed over our sins, and speaks 'peace be with you' as he forgives us. He has prevailed over the powers of darkness, and he has prevailed over death itself. We are those who learn his different way, and witness to his different, redeeming life.

Anne Sullivan, and Helen Keller are wonderful examples of people with difficulties, prevailing over their circumstances. As we pray, we are exhorted by Jesus to do so. Do not lose heart.

P. T. Forsyth helps us here: 'We say too soon "Thy will be done"; and too ready acceptance of a situation as His will often means feebleness or sloth. It may be His will that we surmount his will. It may be His higher will that we resist His lower... let us submit when we **must**, but let us keep the submission in reserve rather than in action, as a ground tone, rather than the sole effort. Prayer with us has largely ceased to be wrestling. ...We give in and lie down'. Far better to stand up.

Prayer: Oh Living Lord, in our personal life, in your church and world, you are able to supply us with **prevailing faith**. Help us to remember your parable, and be like that widow. Trevor

Prayers: Dear Lord we pray for prevailing faith for our farmers. We pray that you would crush their temptations to sheer despair, and replace it with prevailing faith, persistent hope and the sustaining love of Christ Jesus himself. We pray for mercies, and a way forward for all who call on your name, in truth. We ask for patience and real help, and a new season of refreshing rains. We pray for our nation, to rediscover, and re-embrace the generous, eternal plan of God.

Dear Lord Jesus, we pray for courage to persist and not lose heart, in our life, our health and family trials, that we may be a blessing in all the world, and witnesses to your triumphant power!

O Lord, remember that we are dust, that we rely upon you, and may your mercies flow anew.