



Sermon Series: Mysteries: The Greatest Stories Jesus Told, part 10

Sermon Title: How to Persevere

Speaker/ Date: Armin Sommer, November 8, 2020

Luke 18:1-8

In this parable we find Jesus' teaching about the cataclysmic times just before Christ's return. The judge in this story is unjust and isn't at all like God. It's a story, not of comparison, but of contrast.

An essential lesson in the Christian life is about perseverance.

Big Idea: Your power to persevere depends on prayer.

1st Reason: Prayer Fuels Faith.

This is a parable about prayer. But not a prayer of needs, or wants; rather, it's about prayer for a tenacious faith in the face of present ordeal.

We may face ordeals in the weeks and months ahead, that are unprecedented. So this message for us is about perseverance.

The two people in this story are at opposite ends of the spectrum of power. The judge has great authority and exercises it however he wants. The widow is the epitome of poverty, with zero influence. Someone in town has taken advantage of her. She is in the right, but without the power to fight. The judge regards her with contempt, and her only defense is her perseverance.

Luke 18:4b-5

The judge is acting entirely out of self-interest. He's actually afraid that she might assault him. He's afraid she'll give him a black eye. This powerless woman, out of sheer persistence, gets results from a crooked judge.

Fortunately, Jesus tells us that the more you pray, the stronger your faith will become. You may wonder, "*Why does God allow such stress in my life?*" Part of the answer: *He wants to strengthen your prayer life.*

2nd Reason: Prayer Fuels Faithfulness

The word persevere means, lit., to “remain under,” to be steadfast. That ability is connected to your prayer life; to pray that you might endure to the end. One of the marks of those who are truly saved is that don’t turn from the Lord. They remain under his mighty hand and remain within the body of believers. **1 John 2:19**

Steadfastness serves as a “confirmation” of your salvation. **2 Peter 1:10**

It’s what the widow in Luke 18 displayed. **Luke 18:6–7**

God wants us to call on Him. **Hebrews 4:16**

A helpless widow, with no power other than persistence, got help from a reluctant jerk who just wanted to get rid of her. How much more will receive the attention of our loving heavenly Father who is waiting for you to cry out to Him? Therefore, cry out over and over till the answer comes. **1 Thess 5:17** says, “Pray continually.”

God is unfolding His plan in His time. **Luke 18:8**

Our faithful perseverance is bringing glory to Him. And it has as an impact on those who watch us. You can’t see the timeline. But He has one. So our best strategy... **1 Peter 5:6**

When God brings about final deliverance, we will not complain about His timing, for it will all become clear, with no more mystery.

Let’s make this practical.

Pray for one another’s needs –not just in times of trouble. It’s the relationship, not the list, that He longs for. He wants to hear the list, yes. But He wants to captivate your heart more. God wants you to converse with Him... along with the highs, lows, and in between.

Here are some suggestions about how to pray:

- For faithfulness (of ourselves and others) in the face of persecution.
- For boldness and clarity in telling others what Jesus did for us.
- For God’s power to be revealed in ways that grab the attention of an unbelieving world.
- For Jesus to come quickly, bring an end to rebellion, and to finish His plan.

The ultimate question is not whether believers will fail, but whether or not we will fail to pray.

Big Idea: Your power to persevere depends on prayer.

Discussion Questions:

- **What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?**
- **Compare the judge and Jesus. In what ways are their roles similar? In what ways are their roles different?**
- **What is the role that the attitude of a person's heart plays in how he or she responds to situations that require perseverance?**
- **1 John 2:19 teaches that one of the marks of those who are truly saved is that they don't turn from the Lord. Explain why this is or is not a good indicator for identifying true followers of Jesus.**
- **Why did Jesus teach His disciples about how to pray during his second coming if He knew they weren't going to be on earth during that time?**
- **Have you ever prayed about something over and over only to have God say "no"? How did that impact your faith?**
- **Describe a situation in your life when God did the seemingly impossible on behalf of someone for whom you were praying (or for yourself).**
- **How would you counsel a follower of Jesus who admits he or she doesn't have a healthy prayer life?**