Prayer That Works- Part 2

# The Power of Persistent Prayer

## (Luke 18:1-8)

We are continuing our message series, Prayer That Works, and I have a word from the Lord that is burning in my heart. Today’s message emphasizes the power of persistent prayer, and I believe it will speak directly to your life and stir something deep within your spirit.

So, if you have your Bibles and want to follow along, turn with me to the Gospel of Luke, chapter 18, where we’ll read verses one through eight together. Here’s what the Word of God says in verse one:

“Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up” (Luke 18:1).

Luke, the disciple who wrote this Gospel, explains that Jesus shares this story to teach His followers to pray regularly and never give up.

“He 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).

If this were a movie, this would be the opening scene. We meet the two main characters. First, a corrupt judge—someone who doesn’t fear God or care about people. Then there’s a widow—vulnerable, overlooked, with no social standing—but she keeps showing up, asking for 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).

The judge hesitates for a while, but finally gives in—not because he has a change of heart, but because she won’t give up. She’s persistent. And Jesus says, “Listen to what the unjust judge says.”

In other words, Jesus is telling his disciples, 'Pay attention to this.' Learn something from what even an unjust judge understands.

Jesus continues:

“Will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:6-8).

There is so much packed into those words. First, Jesus makes it clear that God is nothing like the unjust judge. He hears His people. He responds. He will not put us off. But then Jesus asks a piercing question: when He returns, will He find anyone with the kind of faith that prays like this widow?

Today, I want to talk to you about the Power of Persistent Prayer. This matters because the Bible says:

“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us” (1 John 5:14).

That’s our confidence—He hears us. The very first time we pray in faith, God hears. And he never forgets. He told His people:

“Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!” (Isaiah 49:15).

God doesn’t need reminders. However, in this passage, Jesus highlights the widow’s relentless persistence as an example of how powerful it is when we refuse to give up in prayer.

That’s important, because we learned last week:

“The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (James 5:16).

God’s Word shows us that prayer is powerful. It connects us to God, releases His power, aligns us with His will, transforms situations, strengthens our spirit, brings peace, grants forgiveness, and opens heaven’s help for us and others.

That’s why the Bible says:

“Pray continually” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Prayer isn’t just for emergencies. It’s meant to be part of our daily routine—our lifeline, our connection, and our source of power.

But here’s something we often overlook when it comes to prayer: it’s not just about praying—it’s about what prayer has to overcome. Prayer isn’t merely a peaceful activity. It’s warfare. It’s confrontation. It’s a spiritual push against resistance, both in the natural and in the unseen realm. The Bible says:

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12).

This means there are real spiritual systems and strongholds—layers of darkness and resistance—that must be broken through. Some battles, especially those rooted in deep bondage or demonic oppression, won’t change without serious spiritual effort. That’s why Jesus told his disciples:

“This kind can come out only by prayer” (Mark 9:29).

In other words, prayer is the only force powerful enough to break through that level of resistance.

There’s no point in praying if you’re not willing to stand your ground and confront the enemy. Prayer is how we push back against darkness. It’s how we rewrite the story. No matter the diagnosis, news, or situation—prayer has the power to change it. Prayer alters atmospheres, moves mountains, opens doors, brings prodigals home, restores what was lost, and breaks what’s been bound for too long.

That’s why we focus on prayer that works—because you will break through with prayer, faith, and action. You can have works without prayer, and you can have prayer without works, but neither is complete on its own. The two must go together. Your life should reflect what you’re praying for, and your actions should serve as evidence of your faith.

In other words, God wants to see your prayers come alive through how you live. Don’t just talk about it—live it out. Let your choices, your words, your attitude, and your obedience reflect what you’re asking God to do. Prayer and action must work together in harmony, because the Bible states:

“Faith without works is dead” (James 2:26).

So yes, God hears your prayers—but He’s also seeking actions that match them.

Let’s take a step back and look at the bigger picture of the system this widow faced. She lived in a society sharply divided between the powerful and the powerless, the influential and the overlooked. She was part of the group that had no voice, no access, and no favor. The entire system was stacked against her.

Some of you know exactly what that feels like—like you’re constantly paddling upstream, fighting the current, trusting God for something no one in your family has ever experienced. You’re asking for breakthrough in a place where there’s no history of it, and that requires a different kind of perseverance. It demands deeper faith and a fire in your soul that refuses to give up.

That’s what this parable is all about. It’s about persistent prayer that refuses to stop. It keeps pushing forward. It doesn’t walk away after one attempt. It knocks, and knocks, and knocks—until something gives way. Because this isn’t just about praying; it’s about confronting a broken system, pressing against spiritual resistance, and refusing to give up until breakthrough comes.

The good news is that we serve the God of breakthroughs. He’s the God who makes a way where there is no way, the God who shows up in the midnight hour. So even when the odds are stacked against you—even when you’re facing rulers, authorities, powers of this dark world, generational strongholds, and unseen resistance—just because the system is against you doesn’t mean you can’t break through.

The Scriptures are full of stories of people who fought back through prayer. Whether it was a desperate parent crying out for their child or a prophet standing alone for truth, there’s always someone who refuses to give up. What makes this parable so powerful is that Jesus chose a widow—a woman with no power, no platform, and no voice—to teach us how to pray.

The judge in the story held all the power. He didn’t fear God or care about people. He could decide the case however he wanted. All we know about the woman is that she was a widow. We don’t know her name or background. But in that culture, being a widow meant she had no husband, no legal standing, and no voice in court. Yet Jesus, teaching His disciples—men who would face rejection and hardship—uses her as an example of the kind of prayer that overcomes opposition.

This woman had no rights, social influence, legal support, or political power—but she had persistence. She didn’t stay silent. She didn’t walk away. She didn’t give up. She kept showing up. She kept making her case. She kept pushing the issue.

Her appearing before the judge meant she had already tried everything else. She had begged her opponent, sought help from her friends, and tried to solve it herself. But nothing worked.

That’s the point where most of us would throw in the towel and say, “Well, I tried. I guess it just wasn’t God’s will.” Right? “If God wanted it to happen, He would’ve done it by now.” But not this woman. She was relentless. Others may have given up, but she kept pressing on with unwavering resolve.

Jesus chose this widow as His example because His disciples understood what it felt like to be rejected. They had been ridiculed for following Him, pushed aside, misunderstood, and mocked. And Jesus Himself was about to go to the cross—to be betrayed, denied, and crucified. So He gave them this image of persistent prayer. Prayer that refuses to give up. Prayer that pushes until the heavens respond.

This woman continued to press the judge because she couldn’t find justice anywhere else. She had no backup plan. She had no advocate. But she had persistence. And Jesus is teaching us to do the same when it comes to prayer.

When the wind is strong, opposition fierce, pressure heavy, and the system stacked against you like it was against Job—you still declare:

“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15).

In other words, no matter what the enemy has done or what the world throws at you, I still believe that God will work it out.

Someone here—whether you’re listening, reading, or holding on by a thread—has every reason to give up. Maybe you’ve been tempted to quit, walk away, or say, “I just can’t do this anymore.” But Jesus is saying, stay in the fight. Stay in prayer. Keep pressing in until the breakthrough comes. Stay until the healing manifests, the job is secured, the court case is overturned, the door opens, the prodigal comes home, the dream is revived, your strength is renewed, the fear breaks, or the fire in your soul is reignited. Don’t quit. Don’t back down. Keep praying, keep pushing, and don’t stop until the breakthrough arrives.

The widow in Luke 18 possessed something we often overlook as an advantage—she began from a place of weakness. That might seem contradictory, but there’s a certain strength in starting from the bottom. She had already been ignored, overlooked, and rejected—so when the judge dismissed her, it didn’t break her. Instead, it motivated her to push even harder.

On the other hand, people who’ve always had privilege often don’t know how to fight. They’ve never had to. So when trouble hits, they panic because they’ve always relied on comfort, position, or resources. But if you’ve been through something—if you’ve been broke, gone to bed hungry, stretched every dollar, prayed over every meal—you know how to survive. You know how to fight. That’s why David said:

“It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees” (Psalm 119:71).

In other words, if I hadn’t experienced the pain, I wouldn’t have discovered the power. If I hadn’t been challenged, I wouldn’t have seen God’s glory. He allowed the rejection so I could learn to rely on Him. And now that I’ve overcome it, all the praise goes to Jesus!

If you want to break through strongholds in your life, you need to be persistent. You can’t be passive and wait for change to come to you. You have to step into the fight and do your part. Whether you’re praying for restoration in your family, breakthrough in your finances, or freedom from addiction, persistence is necessary. It’s not optional—it’s essential.

This widow approached a judge who was far above her. He wasn’t from her world. She didn’t have his status. She wasn’t in his circle. She had no connections, no influence, no leverage. But she kept coming.

She kept stepping into a realm that didn’t match her background, resources, or resume—but she did it anyway. Because she understands something we must remember: when the system is against you, you appeal to a higher authority. When the judge is unfair, you don’t stop—you go higher. You rise above rejection, resistance, and go straight to the throne of God.

Because true justice doesn’t start with worldly systems, legal decisions, or human authority—it starts with God. He is the supreme authority. And when you pray, you’re not just speaking into the air—you’re stepping into the courts of heaven, where your Advocate waits to act on your behalf.

This widow was there during the judge's morning coffee, lunch, and when he headed home for the day. She was relentless. And Jesus reveals what the judge was thinking when he said:

“Because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice” (Luke 18:5).

In other words, “I’ve got to do something, because she won’t stop coming.” Her persistence moved the system. And when we learn to pray like that, we won’t just move mountains—we’ll move heaven itself.

I want to encourage you today—don’t give up or back down because justice calls for persistence. I don’t know what you’re facing—what’s keeping you awake at night, causing anxiety, blocking your way, or heavy on your heart—but Jesus invites you to keep coming to Him, even when it feels like you’re bothering Him.

People around you might not understand. They’re not fighting the battle you’re in. But even when the enemy threatens you, the Holy Spirit laughs—because He knows that when you bother God, something is about to shift.

If you seek God’s help, He will answer. He will rescue you. He will open doors for you. He will make a way where there is none. He will silence the accuser. He will heal your body. He will intervene on your behalf.

So keep pressing in—because when you bother Him, God moves.

While you’re pacing the floor, talk to Him. As you drive to work, keep the conversation going. On the treadmill, let your heart cry out to Him. While you’re folding laundry, cooking dinner, and doing your best to hold it all together, keep bringing it to Him.

Listen again to what Jesus told His disciples:

“Will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly” (Luke 18:6-7).

Jesus didn’t point to a priest, a prophet, or a king—He pointed to a nameless, poor widow. Why? Because He knew storms were coming. He knew these disciples would face persecution, rejection, and hardship as they preached the gospel and built the Church. And He knew that if they didn’t learn how to bother God in prayer, they wouldn’t make it.

So now, as we reach the end of this message, I want to speak to the one standing in the middle of a storm. Your plans have fallen apart. Your strength is fading. You feel like giving up. Maybe your savings are gone. Your body is exhausted. Your prayers feel weak. But I came to tell you—bother Him anyway. Because Jesus said:

“This widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice” (Luke 18:5).

Yes, it’s been unfair. You’ve been overlooked, mistreated, and dismissed. But God says, “If you keep bothering Me, I will make it right.”

This nameless, voiceless, powerless woman refused to give up. She showed up every day, first thing in the morning and late into the night. She was relentless, persistent, and full of holy determination. And Jesus told this story for one reason: to teach us how to pray.

When you pray, pray like a pit bull—grab hold and don’t let go. Hold on to the altar. Hold on to the promise. Hold on to your faith until you see the breakthrough.

You might need to start over. You may have to rebuild or fight your way back, but the blessing remains, because the root is still alive. God’s hand is still upon you. Your blessing was never connected to a title, a building, or a system. Your blessing is found in your identity in Christ.

So don’t lose the very thing that made God choose you in the first place. Continue to fight the good fight of faith. Keep praying and never give up. Keep bothering Him—until your breakthrough arrives.

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