**The Parable of the Persistent Widow and the Unjust Judge**

**Luke 18:2-8**

NIV: **2**He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. **3**And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’ **4**“For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care what people think, **5**yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually come and attack me!’”**6**And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. **7**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? **8**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?”

NLT: **2**“There was a judge in a certain city,” he said, “who neither feared God nor cared about people. **3**A widow of that city came to him repeatedly, saying, ‘Give me justice in this dispute with my enemy.’ **4**The judge ignored her for a while, but finally he said to himself, ‘I don’t fear God or care about people, **5**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!’”**6**Then the Lord said, “Learn a lesson from this unjust judge. **7**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? **8**I tell you, he will grant justice to them quickly! But when the Son of Man[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke18&version=NIV;NLT;KJV#fen-NLT-25664a)] returns, how many will he find on the earth who have faith?”

KJV: **2**Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: **3**And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. **4**And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; **5**Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. **6**And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. **7**And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? **8**I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

The theme of the parable appears to be in Luke 18:1. The lesson of the parable is in verses 7-8.

Some have question if this Persistent Woman parable really refers to prayer. Even though Luke makes it clear in verse 1, the parable itself never mentions prayer. However, the parable immediately following is the Pharisee and the Publican which is clearly about prayer. The Parable of the Friend at night carries a similar theme and is also about prayer.

An important question is asked in the last verse, “where will He find faith on earth?” The type of faith that will pray without ceasing. How often do we give up praying when we don’t see the results soon enough? The Lord is not slow in fulfilling His promises.

2 Peter 3:9 - The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

**Background:**

Some of the notes below are taking from an article on GotQuestions.org at this link: <https://www.gotquestions.org/parable-persistent-widow-unjust-judge.html>

In the Jewish community, a judge was expected to be impartial, to judge righteously, and to recognize that judgment ultimately belongs to God ([Deuteronomy 1:16–17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut%201.16%E2%80%9317)). Thus, the judge in this story is incompetent and unqualified for the job. Justice was not being served.

Deuteronomy 1:16-17 (NIV) - **16**And I charged your judges at that time, “Hear the disputes between your people and judge fairly, whether the case is between two Israelites or between an Israelite and a foreigner residing among you. **17**Do not show partiality in judging; hear both small and great alike. Do not be afraid of anyone, for judgment belongs to God. Bring me any case too hard for you, and I will hear it.” (Moses speaking to Israel)

According to Jewish law, widows deserve special protection under the justice system ([Deuteronomy 10:18](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut%2010.18); [24:17–21](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deuteronomy%2024.17%E2%80%9321); [James 1:27](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James%201.27)). But this unjust judge ignores her. Nevertheless, she refuses to give up.

Deut 10:17-18 (NIV) - **17**For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. **18**He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing.

Deut 24:17-21 (NIV) - **17**Do not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. **18**Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this. **19**When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. **20**When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. **21**When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow.

James 1:27 (NIV) - Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Similar theme to the parable of the friend at night (Luke 11:5-13):

**5**Then Jesus said to them, “Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; **6**a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.’ **7**And suppose the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ **8**I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke11&version=NIV;KJV;NLT#fen-NIV-25414e)] he will surely get up and give you as much as you need. **9**“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. **10**For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. **11**“Which of you fathers, if your son asks for[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke11&version=NIV;KJV;NLT#fen-NIV-25417f)] a fish, will give him a snake instead? **12**Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? **13**If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

**Theme and Lesson:**

God expects us to keep on asking, seeking, knocking, and praying until the answers come ([Matthew 7:7–8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%207.7%E2%80%938)). Disciples of Jesus are people of persistent faith.

Matthew 7:7-8 (NIV) - **7**“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. **8**For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

But be careful: James 4:3 - When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

Persistent Prayer 1 Thess 5:17

Jesus presents a final quiz on the matter at the end of the parable of the persistent widow and unjust judge. He asks, “But when the Son of Man returns, how many will He find on the earth who have faith?” ([Luke 18:8, NLT](https://biblia.com/bible/nlt/Luke%2018.8)). Just as Paul stresses in [1 Thessalonians 5:17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%205.17), continual devotion to prayer should be a way of life. The Lord wants to know if He will find any faithful prayer warriors left on the earth when He returns. Will we be among God’s people still praying at Christ’s second coming, “Your Kingdom come, your will be done” ([Matthew 6:10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%206.10))?

The question in the last verse is powerful. Will you believe God for your justice? Will He find faith in you to pursue Him in persistent prayer (where are the prayer warriors)? How often do we give up when we don’t see immediate results?

1 Thess 5:16-18 - **16**Rejoice always, **17**pray continually, **18**give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

Other Notes:

<https://www.gotquestions.org/parable-persistent-widow-unjust-judge.html> - “We do not always get immediate results when we pray. Our definition of swift justice is not the same as the Lord’s definition. The parable of the persistent widow demonstrates that effective prayer requires tenacity and faithfulness. A genuine disciple must learn that prayer never gives up and is based on absolute trust and faith in God. We can fully count on the Lord to answer when, where, and how He chooses. God expects us to keep on asking, seeking, knocking, and praying until the answers come (Matthew 7:7–8). Disciples of Jesus are people of persistent faith.”

<https://www.gotquestions.org/pray-without-ceasing.html> - “It is easier for Christians to feel secure by presuming on—instead of depending on—God’s grace. Too many believers become satisfied with physical blessings and have little desire for spiritual ones. When programs, methods, and money produce impressive results, there is an inclination to confuse human success with divine blessing. When that happens, passionate longing for God and yearning for His help will be missing. Continual, persistent, incessant prayer is an essential part of Christian living and flows out of humility and dependence on God.”