

MORNING SERMON OUTLINE
ALWAYS PRAY; DO NOT LOSE HEART
The Parable of the Importunate Widow
Luke 18:1-8

1. Opposition and one of its effects, losing heart

Our Lord knew that His followers would be opposed by the devil & a hostile world. He speaks to encourage us.

"I send you out as sheep among wolves" – Matt. 10:16

"In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." – John 16:53

"Your adversary the devil prowls about...seeking someone to devour"
1 Peter 5:8

In THIS parable He pictures His beset church, not as helpless sheep, but as being like a widow – in those days, defenseless, vulnerable, and under attack from an opponent. Who can help her?

What effect might constant pressure from opposition have?

- weariness, discouragement, "It's too much; I want to give up."

You may have experienced this with your personal struggles with sin and temptation – & antagonistic people.

And churches down through the centuries have also.

2. Don't lose heart; persist in praying.

We might come up with a list of things to think or do as remedies.

But our Lord commends as most important: **PRAY**, pray **persistently!**

Models for us: the widow in the parable.

The church in Acts – 1:14, 2:42, 4:24-30, etc.

The Apostle Paul – Eph. 1:16, Phil. 1:4, Col. 1:3, 1 Th. 1:2,
& his admonitions – "devote yourselves to prayer" Col. 4:2,
"pray without ceasing" 1 Th. 5:17

& Christ Himself while here on earth – often in prayer

Not our "last resort" when all else fails – but our constant awareness that apart from God's grace & the Spirit's work in us, we really can do nothing in our own strength or wisdom.

3. God hears His elect and delivers them.

Is God an unjust judge? No! Our Lord is arguing from worst to best:

If an unjust judge will finally grant a widow's persistent prayer, how much more will God hear & help His praying people.

"His elect" – He **chose** us (an eternal commitment); and from that choice all else flows – the incarnation, atoning work, resurrection, & reign of His Son as our Savior & King.

Christ assures us: God will speedily bring about justice for His elect.

Really? (1) It is a spiritual war, not fleshly. See Phil. 1:19,20

(2) He will bring judgment on His & our enemies – in Christ, by converting them, or in just punishments (2 Th. 1:6,7).

4. Jesus challenges us with a question:

When He comes again, will He find us believing and praying?

Yes – Matt. 24:21f,24, but don't take it for granted – Lk. 21:34-36