

Sunday 19 October 2025
The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity

Liverpool Parish Church

OT: Genesis 32:22-31

NT: 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

Gp: Luke 18:1-8

Persistence and patience, sticking at something to achieve a goal.

Thanks to all those who sponsored me for my half marathon last Sunday, I managed to raise £1272.49 for Cancer Research UK. A charity close to my heart. So, I set my mind to achieving a goal, to run a half marathon and to raise £500. Through training, publicising my run, and prayer, I was able to achieve a personal best in the half marathon and raise money for valuable research, to hopefully one day find an actual cure for cancer. I exceeded the target and I'm very grateful.

In Luke 18:1–8, Jesus tells a parable “Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them about their need to pray always and not to lose heart”. This is not just a lesson in spiritual discipline—it’s a call to persistence in prayer for tired hearts. In a world where injustice often prevails and hope feels fragile, Jesus invites us to a faith that refuses to let go. The parable centres on two characters: a widow and a judge. The widow is persistent, the judge indifferent. Yet her persistence prevails. Jesus uses this story to teach us about the nature of prayer, the character of God, and the kind of faith He longs to find in us.

In the ancient world, widows were among the most vulnerable. Without a husband to protect or provide, they often lacked social standing, economic security, and legal representation. The widow in this parable is nameless, faceless, and seemingly powerless. Yet she is the hero of the story.

She comes to the judge repeatedly, demanding justice. We don’t know the specifics of her case, but we know her determination. She refuses to be silenced. She keeps showing up. She keeps asking. She keeps believing that justice is possible. Her persistence is not passive—it’s active, bold, and relentless. She is not waiting quietly for things to change; she is pressing forward, knocking on the door of justice until it opens. How often do we give up too soon? How often do we pray once or twice and then lose heart? The widow reminds us that faith is not just belief—it’s tenacity- it is being a dog with a bone. It’s the refusal to let go of hope, even when the odds are stacked against us. At this moment in time, there are plenty of things for us to be praying for; peace in our world, an end to poverty, an end to global warming, a need for justice and an end to homelessness and all forms of abuse. Lots to be persistent in prayer for.

The judge in this parable is described as someone who “neither feared God nor had respect for people.” He is the exact opposite of justice. He is corrupt, indifferent, and self-serving. He does not respond to the widow out of compassion or duty—he responds because he’s tired of being bothered. Jesus uses such a negative figure to teach us about prayer, because He’s making a contrast. If even an unjust judge can be moved by persistence, how much more will a loving and righteous God respond to His children? There are many negative characters in our world today that we could associate with the judge.

Jesus is not saying God is like the judge. He's saying God is nothing like him. The judge acts out of annoyance; God acts out of love. The judge grants justice reluctantly; God delights in doing what is right. Sometimes we project human indifference onto God. We think He's too busy, too distant, or too uninterested in our lives. But Jesus reminds us that God is attentive, compassionate, and eager to respond. He is not worn down by our prayers—He is moved by them. God wants to hear our prayers, even though he knows what we will ask for before we ask. He likes to be in communication with us, to be in a relationship with us.

The heart of the parable is found in verse one: “Their need to pray always and not to lose heart.” Prayer is not optional for the follower of Jesus; it is essential. But Jesus knows that prayer is hard. It requires faith, patience, and vulnerability. It means opening our hearts again and again, even when answers seem delayed or denied.

Persistent prayer is about staying connected, staying hopeful, and staying faithful. Prayer is not a transaction—it's a relationship. It's not about getting what we want—it's about becoming who we're meant to be. When we persist in prayer, we are shaped by it. We learn to trust, to wait, and to hope.

Jesus ends the parable with a haunting question: “When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?” This is a challenge. Jesus is asking us to examine our hearts. Will we be found faithful? Will we still be praying, still believing, still hoping? Faith is not just a moment—it's a journey. It's not just a feeling—it's a commitment. It's the willingness to keep going, even when the road is long and the answers are slow. In a culture of instant gratification, persistent faith is countercultural. It means choosing trust over cynicism, prayer over despair, and hope over resignation.

The context of this parable is important. In the previous chapter, Jesus speaks about the coming of the kingdom of God. He says, “The kingdom of God is among you” (Luke 17:21). It's not something to be seen—it's something to be experienced.

The widow's persistence is a sign of the kingdom. Her refusal to give up is a reflection of God's reign breaking into a broken world. She embodies the kind of faith that brings heaven to earth. When we persist in prayer, we participate in the kingdom. We become agents of hope, justice, and transformation. Our prayers are not just words—they are seeds of renewal.

Luke 18:1–8 is more than a lesson in prayer—it's a call to resilient faith. It's a reminder that God is not indifferent, that justice is possible, and that persistence is powerful. The widow teaches us that faith is not passive—it's active. The judge reminds us that God is not like the powers of this world—He is better. And Jesus challenges us to be found faithful—to keep praying, keep believing, and keep hoping.

So, let us be like the widow. Let us pray without ceasing and be persistent. Let us trust without wavering. Let us hold on to faith that won't let go.

Mthr Jennifer Brady