

# CAPITOL STUDIES

MARCH 11, 2026 • WEEK 9



## LUKE FOR LEGISLATORS SECOND SESSION

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### *Theme Verse*

#### Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man has come to **seek** and to **save** that which was **lost**.



## Persist in Prayer



CHUCK SWINDOLL OBSERVES that “In false religions, prayer is merely part of a transaction, a process in which the petitioner attempts to bend the will of his deity to give him what he wants. ...[I]t reduces the deity to the level of a vending machine.... Prayer before God, however, is the opposite. The God of the Bible cannot be bribed or manipulated. He needs nothing, so we can offer nothing that might convince Him to do what we want. And He knows our hearts, so there’s no use trying to inform Him or appear worthy of favor. Furthermore, He’s completely sovereign, so He will not abandon His agenda to serve ours. Thus, prayer before God is not an exercise in manipulation but a necessary part of a relationship. He is a relational Being who desires personal interaction. Unlike pagan prayer, which is simple yet demanding, prayer with God is complex yet effortless: complex because He is a personality, not a vending machine; and effortless because He welcomes us into His presence.”<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

In light of the afflictions and hardships of life, and the evidence of approaching judgment which Jesus had just described in His earlier discourse on the Second Coming (Luke 17), Jesus shares another parable with His disciples. One of His greatest desires is that they be prepared for life in a hostile world. He knows that they will face difficult days and even persecution in the days ahead and wants them to grasp the necessity and power of prayer. He wants them to know that, through prayer, they can stay connected with Him, even after He is gone back to heaven.

### I. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PRAYER

*Luke 18:1-2*

*Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, <sup>2</sup>saying, “In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man.”<sup>2</sup>*

It’s easy, when trials come our way, to “lose heart.” But Jesus stresses that in all situations, at all times, we are to pray. When we stand in need of something, knowing we cannot supply it in ourselves, we can and **must** pray. It is a command. It is an obligation. It is our lifeline.

Another translation of the words “to lose heart” is “to give up.” “The word ‘give up’ describes the temptation to quit in despair when we are tired. Giving up is motivated by weariness that comes from living in a sinful, hostile world, feeling worn out by injustice, mistreatment, misunderstanding, and personal failure.”<sup>3</sup> Has your world ever felt like that? Then this parable is for you.

Like the parable of the unjust steward in Luke 16, Jesus starts with a negative example. Notice how the judge is described. He “did not fear God and did not respect man.” Even he admits he has no moral scruples. He thinks only of how he himself will benefit. He cares about no one else.

### II. THE REQUIREMENTS OF PRAYER

*Luke 18:3*

*There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, “Give me legal protection from my opponent.”*

#### A. Prayer Should Be Direct and Definite

It seems that widows in Israel had a very hard lot. They were often taken advantage of because they did not have a husband to pay their debts or provide for their needs. This widow’s only hope is through legal action, and she is not afraid to pursue it. She comes to the judge and pleads her case clearly and concisely.

#### B. Prayer Should Be Sincere

The judge is likely thinking something like, “I know I won’t get any bribes from you. You’re on your own, lady. I have other clients that are



profitable.” But the widow speaks from her heart. She has no other hope. “Please help me!”

### C. Prayer Should Be Persistent

She doesn’t give up. Day after day she comes. She keeps on asking until her case is resolved. “Shortly after the Duke of Wellington led his troops to victory in the decisive battle against Napoleon and the French at Waterloo, he was asked to compare the courage of the two armies. ‘My soldiers were not braver than the enemy!’ he observed. ‘But they were brave five minutes longer.’”<sup>4</sup> That one extra prayer time may make all the difference. Persevere in prayer!

## III. THE REWARDS OF PRAYER

*Luke 18:4-5*

*For a while he was unwilling, but afterward he said to himself, “Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, <sup>5</sup>yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.”*

In Greek, the words “wear me out” mean to “give a black eye.” The judge is saying, “This lady’s going to ruin my reputation if I don’t do as she asks. I will **have** to take legal action against her opponent.” Because of her persistence, the poor widow is rewarded. She continues to ask and receives what she desires.

Unlike the unjust judge, Jesus **wants** us to come to Him. He is not wearied by our many petitions. He says, “Ask, and it **will** be given to you; seek, and you **will** find; knock, and it **will** be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7). This verse could very well be rendered, “Keep on asking. Keep on seeking. Keep on knocking—and the answer will come.”

## IV. RESIGNATION IN PRAYER

*Luke 18:6-8*

*And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge said; <sup>7</sup>now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? <sup>8</sup>I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?”*

“Unjust judges do justice for unjust reasons.... How much more will a judge of just character give justice to the exploited and abused?”<sup>5</sup> “If this widow could get justice from this hardened, crusty, uncaring old judge, doesn’t it follow that the loving, tender, gracious Heavenly Father will hear and answer His own children whom He has chosen when they cry out to Him for relief?”<sup>6</sup>

Some prayers will not be answered the way that we wish. They may be delayed. They may be answered in a different way from what we desire. “The fact is that if God is indeed a wise Father, that as long as He is the Supreme Sovereign of the universe, there will be certain things that we





ask for that cannot be granted. Past experience tells us this is so.... Not a few times do we find ourselves thanking God because He did not answer some prayer in the past. This happens because we cannot see into the future, we do not understand the past, and we only know a little piece of the present.... Therefore, the perfect prayer is the outpouring of a strong, intense desire, but **with the humble resignation** ‘Not my will, but thy will be done.’”<sup>7</sup>

## V. WHEN WE ARE TEMPTED TO GIVE UP

### A. God Loves and Cares for Us

“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39).

Cast “all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

“But Zion said, ‘The LORD has forsaken me, and the Lord has forgotten me.’ ‘Can a woman forget her nursing child, and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but **I will not forget you**. Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands” (Isaiah 49:14-16).

Even if you are suffering terribly, keep in mind that God is totally unlike this uncaring judge! God cares for you!

### B. God Never Delays His Answers for Lack of Care or Power

He is omniscient: He knows all our needs. He is omnipotent: He has the power to meet all our needs. He is omnipresent: He is always near to answer every need. He is “able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think” (Ephesians 3:20).

“For nothing will be impossible with God” (Luke 1:37).

### C. God’s Delays Are Always for Our Good

“‘For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope’” (Jeremiah 29:11).

“For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known” (1 Corinthians 13:12).

“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).

“Remember that God’s delays are not the delays of inactivity but of preparation. God is always answering prayer, otherwise Romans 8:28 could not be in the Bible. God works in all things at all times, causing all things to work together to accomplish His purposes. The moment we



send Him a request that is in His will (see 1 John 5:14–15), God begins to work. We may not see it now, but one day the answer will come.”<sup>8</sup>

#### D. God Will Ultimately Bring Justice for His Chosen Ones

“Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord” (Romans 12:19).

“[W]ith the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:8b-9).

#### E. We Will Likely Suffer Trials in This Life

“[O]thers were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (men of whom the world was not worthy, wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground” (Hebrews 11:35-38).

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you” (1 Peter 4:12-14).

“The Lord has promised that He will not leave us or desert us” (Hebrews 13:5b).

#### F. We Should Persistently Bring Our Heartfelt Needs to God

“Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

“With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit” (Eph. 6:18).

“But what does it mean ‘always to pray’ or to ‘pray without ceasing’? It certainly doesn’t mean that we should constantly be repeating prayers, because Jesus warned against that kind of praying (Matt. 6:5–15). Rather, it means to make prayer as natural to us as our regular breathing. Unless we are sick or smothering, we rarely think about our breathing; we just do it. Likewise with prayer—it should be the natural habit of our lives, the ‘atmosphere’ in which we constantly live. Prayer is much more than the words of our lips; it is the desires of our hearts, *and our hearts are constantly ‘desiring’ before Him*, even if we never speak a word. So, to ‘pray without ceasing’ means to have such holy desires in our hearts, in the will of God, that we are constantly in loving communion with the Father, petitioning Him for His blessing.”<sup>9</sup>





## G. We Can and Must Trust God Because He is Our Father

“Just as a Father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him” (Psalm 103:13).

“Sometimes He is waiting, like a patient farmer, until the fruits of godliness, faith, and humility in our hearts are ripe before He grants the answers.”<sup>10</sup> Jesus says that when He returns, He will be looking for faith on the earth, but the implication is that there will be little. Will He find you and me steadfastly waiting in faith?

“If you faint in the day of adversity, Your strength is small” (Proverbs 24:10 NKJV).

“But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31 NKJV).

## CONCLUSION

Prayer is not an optional activity for the more committed. It is a necessity for every believer because it acknowledges our total dependence on God. Not to pray is arrogance, because I am really saying, “Thanks, God, but I can handle this by myself.” But the truth is, I can’t handle anything by myself apart from God’s grace and power! And so, at all times we ought to pray.”<sup>11</sup>

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## FOOTNOTES

1. Charles Swindoll, *Insights on Luke*, Zondervan, 2012, pg. 419-420.
2. All Scripture quotations, unless noted, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, 1995 Update.
- 3, 4. Gary Inrig, *The Parables: Understanding What Jesus Meant*, Discovery House, 1991, pg. 149-152.
5. David Murray, *Luke: Stories of Mission and Mercy*, Crossway, 2022, pg. 152.
- 6, 11. Steven J. Cole, “Lesson 81: Persevering in Prayer (Luke 18:1-8),” 1999, *Bible.org*.
7. Neil R. Lightfoot, *The Parables of Jesus*, ACU Press, 1986, Volume 1, pg. 63-66.
- 8, 9. Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Victor Books, 1996, Volume 1, pg. 247-249.
10. Andrew Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, Spire Books, 1967, pg. 88-89.



