

The Good Fight of Faith

A message by Caleb Hyers | Luke 18:1-8

In this message, Caleb Hyers of The Resting Place Apostolic Family in Tampa, FL walks through Luke 18:1-8 and the parable of the persistent widow to show how persistent prayer is how we fight the good fight of faith. The good fight of faith is not a fight for victory. It is a fight from the victory of the cross, and it is for anyone who has ever felt like giving up on prayer. Read the full transcript below to see why disappointment is part of the fight, how rest equips us to wrestle, and why God acts without delay when the appointed moment arrives.

WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMES, WILL HE FIND FAITH ON THE EARTH?

My title today is The Good Fight of Faith. Have you heard that phrase before? It's not from our reading, that phrase, but our reading sent me on a journey, and we're going to land in First Timothy 6 later. The good fight of faith is a popularized phrase, and it gets a lot of different definitions, but I actually found that one of these parables displays the how behind that fight. Like the how-to manual for doing that fight of faith. Wouldn't you want to know what that is?

So my main point today is this: persisting in prayer is how we fight the good fight of faith. Persisting in prayer is how we fight the good fight of faith. You're going to hear me repeat that today, because I want you to walk away with that truth: that it's persistent prayer that keeps you engaged in what is known as the good fight of faith.

Every week I sit down and I say, Lord, what are you saying? I want to hear you. We don't just want to hear good things, because this Bible is full of wonderful, good things that you need. And you should read the whole thing. Read it a few times. Read it in different translations. Read it on the couch. Read it in the car. Read it in the park. I feel like Dr. Seuss. Just read it. And then we could open it and say, okay, Haggai 2, verse 10, and that matters right there. But I want to know what from here the Lord is saying right now, to us. So I endeavored to do that.

As I was poring over the readings and asking the Lord to show me, this phrase in Luke 18 popped out at me. Luke 18, verse 8, says:

When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?

It just kept jumping out at me, and I started to listen, to notice the cues. It was like the Lord was highlighting it. I'm like, okay, what meaneth this, Lord? Why this? And that's at the end of this parable about prayer. Jesus uses a widow in the parable, and we're going to read that together in a minute.

But I want you to understand that when he says, "When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" he is actually referencing his return from heaven, after his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. I know that's a mouthful, but get into the storyline here. This is Luke 18. He hasn't gone to the cross. He called himself the Son of Man many times. It's a reference from the Old Testament. Those who were listening would have heard him say, "When the Son of Man comes," and they're like, "You're here, dude. You're right there. What are you talking about? Will they find faith on earth?" They wouldn't have realized, though we can step into it very easily right now, that he's talking about his return from the heavenly places.

How many know he is in the heavenly realm right now? He took his physical body with him. Yes, he did. He ascended off the earth, and he's waiting there until all his enemies are made a footstool. And praise God, you are not his enemy. So it's our job to participate in the middle here and say, "Come, Lord Jesus. Maranatha." We're crying out for him to come. And when he says, "Will he find faith on earth?" they don't know it, but he is prophesying his return after going to the Father.

So here's the question. What does it look like to have faith while on earth in the context of praying for his return? What does it look like for us to have faith on the earth, in the context of the moment we're in, where we are saying, "Come, Lord Jesus"? He has not returned yet. Some of you aren't sure. He really hasn't come. Believe me, when it happens, everybody's going to know. There will be no doubt. The sky is going to rip open. He's going to be riding a white horse, actually. I don't know if it's going to have wings or not, but it's going to come out of the sky. It's going to be dramatic. There are some thoughts out there, like full preterism, which holds that the whole book of Revelation has already been fulfilled, and it's absolutely nonsense. So I'm just fighting off heresy here.

Anyway, while we are waiting for his return, because it says that as you saw him leave, so he will come, just as he went. So while we're here, what does prayer look like? What does faith on the earth look like? Is it easy? Is it a walk in the park? Is it sunshine and rainbows? Do we pray once and just leave it in God's hands, or is there a wrestle in prayer? Do we keep pursuing the Lord in the face of adversity, or does adversity tell us there's no Lord to pursue? If we get honest with ourselves, sometimes, functionally, the answer to that question changes. So what does faith on the earth look like? We're all down here. We're all in this world. We're living in a fallen world, and it isn't easy down here. I don't know about you.

THE FIGHT IS FROM THE VICTORY OF THE CROSS

Well, I'd like to submit to you that, based on this parable we're going to read, faith actually looks like a boxing match. Faith, really living it out, looks like a fight. A boxing match. That's why it's called the good fight of faith. And let me just say this: the fight is not for a victory. The fight is from the victory of the cross. It is finished, and there's still a fight. He did it all. The fight is this: because we know he has secured the victory, we want to see it enforced.

I think of it like the Emancipation Proclamation. Everybody know what that is? All the slaves in the United States were legally free, and yet not everybody knew about the Emancipation Proclamation. People had to go out and proclaim that there was a new law: you can't own humans anymore. All these people who are working for you, they're free. And sometimes the army had to show up, because slave owners didn't want to let it go. They were losing their entire economy, their workforce. So people had to proclaim and enforce the victory of the slaves being free. That's what preaching the gospel is like right now. He has paid for our freedom eternally, and it's up to us to proclaim that it's already happened, and you don't need to be bound by anything, ever again. But somebody's got to proclaim it, and somebody's got to enforce it.

We are still discovering the depths of the phrase "It is finished." What it is is still a question. We're still finding out. So even if we weren't enforcing the victory of the cross a month ago, today you might be sitting in a new place of illumination and understanding of what the cross has done, and you're called to enforce that as well. I don't want you thinking you're fighting for God to do something. We're fighting because he has done it all.

This is weird. I'm just saying all my thoughts out loud. It's okay. You can be thinkers. That's fine. Contemplators. It's fun.

I want to say that some of us think that if we actually step into faith, if we are in a place of being faith-filled or faithful, our wrestles should end. If we're in faith, the doubts should just fade away. If we're in faith, we shouldn't have questions or challenges. At certain times, some of us have felt nervous about asking certain questions or about expressing our disappointment with God. Are there any honest Christians in here who would say they've been disappointed at times? That's one of the main reasons people stop praying. Victoria and I were talking about this. They stop praying because they have disappointment in their heart. "I prayed for that, and it didn't happen the way I thought it would, and God didn't show up. So why pray? Why even risk my heart again, and pour myself into asking God for something when I don't even know if it's his will for it to happen?" That's real. That's real. And some of us would say that's a lack of faith. I would like to say that's the very fight you're in. It's the actual good fight of faith. There's nothing wrong with it. It's how you're supposed to step into the ring and throw some blows. We're going to see from this parable the opposite of that perspective, the one that says if you have struggles and doubts, you're not in faith. Does that sound good?

A couple more things on this. I'm still in my introduction, just so you know. I'll tell you when my introduction is over, and then we can pay attention to the real sermon.

WE REST SO THAT WE CAN WRESTLE

Here's what I'd like to say. We need to rest in the finished work of Christ so that we can wrestle principalities with Christ. We don't rest to rest. We don't rest to rest some more. We rest so that we can wrestle. Only the rested are qualified to wrestle in the kingdom of God. We enter into God's rest by salvation, not so we can wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers. Amen? The rest of our salvation equips us for the wrestling match against the enemy's schemes.

Only the rested are going to have the perspective that says, "You're not my enemy, but we all have an enemy, and I'm going to fight him off." Only the rested, only the settled, only the peaceful would not turn their guns on each other. How many believers are doing this nowadays, where we just eat our own? We slander and call it godly. We make entire YouTube channels out of it and make a lot of

money. Yes, I'm talking to you. You know who you are. I don't like you, and they know that. They watch, and we've talked. So it's wrong. Repent. Come out of your deception. It's called greed. Anyway. It's wrong. Only the rested in Christ can say, "You are not my enemy. We have the same enemy, and I'm going to fight him off on your behalf. No matter how you treat me, I'm going to fight him off for you." A rested person can say that. Yes, that's true.

Make no mistake, friends. There is a cosmic fight on our hands. Ephesians 6, verses 10 through 12, says:

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

Hello? This is your job description as a Bible-believing person. Make your stand against the schemes of the devil.

We do not wrestle against flesh and blood.

That means people aren't your problem. They're your opportunity for love.

We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

We wrestle from rest. Hebrews 4, verses 11 and 12, says:

Let us therefore strive to enter that rest so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

He's speaking about the people in the wilderness who didn't believe the voice of God that said, "I'm taking you into the promised land." They died off in the wilderness, so they weren't able to enter in. He says, let's not fall by that same disbelief. That's actually saying, believe God. And I love this. We quote that. We're called The Resting Place: "strive to enter that rest." We talk about that. The next sentence says:

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Why is there a sword right after nap time? You think, "I wake up from nap time so refreshed, and now I can just kind of be." No. The rest is so that you get a sword. The rest is what makes you trustworthy to wield the word of the Lord, because the sword of the Spirit is the word of God. That's my introduction. Are we ready for the sermon? Here we go.

THEY OUGHT ALWAYS TO PRAY AND NOT LOSE HEART

Let's look at the context of "When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" Luke 18, verses 1 through 8. It says:

He told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected men. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'" And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

Wow. I want to walk through the language of that parable. I want to look at it in another translation. I want to slow down and contemplate this together, because it shows us that persistent prayer is how we fight the good fight of faith. I hope it's connecting already.

Here at The Resting Place, we have our core values: honor, [inaudible], we pay for our own. And we've found a way to live those values out. We call it the TRP Way. The first thing in our TRP Way, it's on the wall over there, is that we're a people of persistent prayer. That's first on purpose. A people of persistent prayer.

I love how the beginning of this parable says, "Here's why I'm telling the parable." That's not always happening, by the way. It's a rare moment when the author says, "He told them a parable for this reason." Usually it's just a parable, and they go home scratching their head. But this one actually says here's why the parable came to be: so that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.

Who has prayed and lost heart before? My hand is up. In the Amplified Classic, Luke 18:1 says:

Also Jesus told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not to turn coward,

I love that. No yellow bellies on my team.

Turn coward, faint, lose heart, and give up.

We don't need instruction like this if it's always going to be easy. You don't need emergency training if there's no emergency coming. It's useless. This is an intentional effort of Jesus to prepare us for hard times. How many of you want all the promises of God fulfilled in your life? Keep your head up. Keep your head up. I promise you, John 16:33 promises you tribulation, persecution, and trial. Your hands are going down. Who wants all the promises? We say we want all the promises of God. Oh, yes, and amen, in crisis, including tribulation, including trial.

Friends, I know we're having a great little happy time in here. I'm sitting on a stool, you're in a coffee chair, the AC is on, we have lights and sound. This is super cozy. There are places where people are literally giving their lives in order to meet and pray. They are laying down their lives to gather and pray, risking their families' lives to gather and pray. And we don't even understand the sacred act of coming together. We don't even understand how important it is.

I'm going to say this with all love in my heart, friends. Amy set this up. This is Amy's idea. I'm just resonating with it. Blame me if you're upset, okay? She was setting up this whole idea of starting together. The Western church is so bad at starting together. We're so bad at this. But we'll spend four hours tailgating to get into the game. We make sure we don't miss a snap. We make sure we're at work on time. I'm not here to judge you or condemn you. I understand life is hard. I have to get three rambunctious boys in the car somehow, all right? My wife does 90 percent of the lift. That's

why it happens. I understand it's hard, but what are we saying when we can't even begin together to enter the presence of God, when for many other things we beg, borrow, and steal to begin together? Is that not a value issue?

And if you're late today, I'm not talking about you. I'm talking culturally. When I started leading worship, as a volunteer first, but then I got hired as an associate pastor and worship leader at a congregation, the pastor told me, "Oh, yeah, the first song is really a warm-up, because everybody's going to be fifteen minutes late." And I'm like, what is that? This is so messed up. And then we would do things like wait to start. We aren't waiting to start here. Friends, it will start on time every time. Why? Because the Lord is here. We're hosting him. Amen. I didn't have time for any of that. So, hallelujah. I don't even know how I got there, but the Lord took us on a journey, and we're going to follow him right back. I learned a trick once: if you ever get lost on your page or in your sermon, you just repeat the last thing you said. So, he has even promised us tribulation. Like awkward times where your pastor calls you out for being late. It was a promise of God. Here we are, all of them fulfilled.

Persisting in prayer is how we fight the good fight of faith.

WHY A WIDOW?

In this context, Jesus uses a widow. Why a widow? I just sat down and thought about this: why is a widow the picture? In the Amplified Classic again, Luke 18:3 says:

There was a widow in that city who kept coming to him, the unrighteous judge, and saying, "Protect and defend and give me justice against my adversary."

That's a good translation, because in that day widows were the most vulnerable. They had no advocate, such as a husband, to represent them in any legal matter. At that time you needed someone like that to represent you in order to have a legal claim. So she's crying out to the judge not only to give a right verdict but to actually defend and protect her, because she has no protector. Does that make sense? It's a picture of the most oppressed and most vulnerable in the world. It's a picture of individuals who have a great need of God, and they're living in a system that is stacked against them. Is that anybody here? Anybody have a great need of God? You realize you are living in a

world system stacked against you? You absolutely are. And this is also us, in need of our heavenly Bridegroom. We're here waiting for his return, are we not? So we're not technically widowed. We have the Spirit of God. Amen. Praise the Lord. We can commune with God by the Spirit, but we are actually needing protection in a war zone, waiting for our Bridegroom to return. So this is us. We are the widow. If you don't believe me, we're in a world that is a war zone.

Let's look at the language used: "justice against my adversary." That word adversary is a prosecuting attorney arguing a case at law, an accuser or an adversary, one who brings formal charges that are binding, to exact a penalty. That means not just a slap on the wrist. You want the person penalized. HELPS Word-studies defines this word further and says Satan acts as such an adversary, bringing the lawsuit of darkness against believers for their eternal damnation. Do you understand? The adversary here is the Satan. That's how they would have heard it. Jesus is using that word on purpose. It's not just somebody bothering the widow. This is the enemy of her soul.

Did you know that Satan is called the accuser of the brethren? Revelation 12:10 says:

I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God."

I'm not trying to mess with your eschatology or your view of the times today, not today. That's another day. But you need to know that we are in the moment of him still accusing us day and night. He's accusing you day and night. He is bringing a case against you so that you can be damaged and penalized. There's an enemy of your soul.

I know you don't think so, because we live in this very generous bubble of time over here in the United States where there's no persecution. But friends, it is coming. It is coming. If nothing else, Islam is bringing it. I love the Muslim people. I have no problem with them. I have friends who are Muslim. I hate Islam. There are 36 mosques in Tampa Bay. There were 3 twenty years ago. They have a critical mass theory, where all you have to do is get a minority, and then they move and they just pull in one direction. It happened in Dearborn, Michigan. It's happening all over the world. Listen, persecution is coming, friends. Are we going to pray? Are we going to get in the fight? Are we just going to let our great-grandchildren live in an Islamic state? You think it's not possible?

Turkey used to be one of the most Christianized nations on the planet. It is now an Islamic state. Someone did not get burdened in a deep way, and six generations later, that's how that happened. Someone did not fight the good fight of faith. Let it not be said of us.

GIVE ME JUSTICE AGAINST MY ADVERSARY

The picture here, "give me justice against my adversary," is not about praying for things we think we need or things we want, like persisting until the Corvette just drives into our driveway. "I persisted in prayer, and God gave me the Corvette." No. It's a picture of standing against the enemy of our soul. Yes, we should bring all our requests to God. If you really want to pray, ask God, amen, whatever. It's still prayer to bring normal, everyday requests. That's petition. That's good. But Jesus is giving us a different understanding of what is actually happening in the spirit realm when we pray. Do you understand? We're not just sending a prayer request to the Lord. We're actually engaging in a battle against Satan himself. Who's winning, based on your prayer life? I just came with good questions. That's all.

The widow in this parable is petitioning the judge, and he's the one who is actually able to help her against the adversary. I want to point out that the widow doesn't shout at the adversary. The widow's not fighting the adversary. The widow is going to the one who can help her with the adversary. That's persisting in prayer. That's the good fight of faith.

I love how the Amplified Classic renders "so that she will not beat me down with her continual coming." It's even better. Verse 5 says:

Yet because this widow continues to bother me, I will defend and protect and avenge her, lest she give me intolerable annoyance and wear me out by her continual coming, or at the last she come and rail on me, or assault me, or strangle me.

Why does the Amplified Bible say that? Because the Greek term here, translated literally "beat me down by continual coming," is a boxing term. It means to blacken the eye, getting past the guard and blackening the eye. It's a picture of a literal fight, like a boxing match, where one person has to guard their face and the other person is continually punching, until they break through and blacken the eye of the other person. The judge is saying he's going to get whooped if he doesn't give her

what she wants. This is how Jesus taught us to take our standing prayer and never give up. It's not, "Oh, Lord, help, if it's your will." No. It's, "Jesus, I need justice." We must end human trafficking. We must stand against the spirit of death in Islam. We must take this city for Jesus so that people in cages can be set free. There are women and children in cages right now. If you think I'm being intense, you haven't seen the half of it. You haven't seen the half of it. While we sit here, if this doesn't provoke prayer, I can't help you. I cannot help you. What are we going to do about it? Selah. I won't watch my children live in a world like that. It will be a footnote in Tampa's history: it used to happen here. There used to be trafficking. There used to be mosques on every corner. There used to be 36 of them. That's the story my life is going to tell.

God is the one who brings justice. We don't force it. Our effort matters, but our effort isn't the reason it happens. Does that give you a little bit of peace? I want you to sit in a little bit of conviction every now and then, just a couple of times a year. Just once a week. This is the good news. Luke 18, verses 6 and 7, Amplified, says:

Then the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says, and will not our just God defend and protect and avenge his elect, his chosen ones, who cry to him day and night? Will he defer them and delay help on their behalf?"

Obviously not. This isn't just answering a prayer request, y'all. This is God coming to our defense and protecting us against Satan. This is our strong and mighty Warrior King coming to fight for us. That's what he's saying here. This is the Lord of glory actually stepping into our situations and defending us when we're most vulnerable, when we're in the most trouble. And our job is to persist in prayer and give God some faith to find on the earth.

CRY TO HIM DAY AND NIGHT

It says we should cry to him day and night. I'm going to move along, because I'm finishing this sermon. I'm sorry. We're going to have time for everything today. The Lord will bend time. It says, "cry to him day and night." This is a clear call to vocal prayer, friends. The language in the Greek necessitates out loud action. I don't have time to go into it. Why does it have to be out loud?

Because you communicate with God in silence, but you fight the devil with your voice. Heaven hears you when you pray in your head. Heaven and hell hear you when you cry aloud. Hell hears me right now. That doesn't mean we shout at the devil. It means we cry out to God day and night.

One time I was leading worship and I totally wasn't into it. While leading worship, that happens. I was totally not into it, just waiting for the song to end. Straight up. This was like fifteen or sixteen years ago. Don't worry. I was tired, I don't know. And then the Lord interrupted and said to me, in my hearing, "I put your thanksgiving on the loudspeaker of hell." What do you think I did? "Thank you, Jesus!" I was all in, 110 percent. I'm here to give hell a headache. That's the truth. Absolutely.

He says he will give them justice speedily. That word speedily is important. In the Amplified, "he will defend and protect and avenge them speedily." That word speedily there is Strong's 5034, and it's the Greek word tachos. It's where we get tachometer from, like on a car. Let me read you the definition of that:

Tachos, not tacos, tachos, highlights the swift, unhindered action of God and his servants.

Did you hear that? Swift, unhindered action of God and his servants.

Each occurrence in the Bible underscores certainty of divine purpose rather than mere speed in human reckoning. The term therefore conveys assurance that when the appointed moment arrives, God acts without delay.

When the appointed moment arrives, God acts without delay. That's what he means by speedily. It's also in Revelation 1: he's returning soon. He comes quickly. We think of that in relative terms, like, "Soon I will be interceding in deep prayer with my whole soul for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in a couple of hours." That's soon, I know. You didn't see that coming. I'm messing with you. Soon I'll be doing that, because they need prayer. Let's just be honest. But that's not what this word, tachos, speedily, quickly, means. It means that when it starts, it will happen all the way. It will happen quickly. It will happen all at one time.

So here's where the tension lies. God is not delaying, but he's saying we should keep praying. What is that tension? The call to keep praying and not give up could feel like we need to convince God to come help us. That's not it at all. The call to keep praying and not give up is a call to engage the enemy on the front lines and enforce the victory of the cross, crying out for justice, so that when the

appointed time comes, God, who is looking for faith on the earth, will answer speedily. Does that make sense? It's not about trying to convince him to be here. It's about remaining in a place of faith until the appointed moment comes.

We don't know the appointed time of a lot of things. How many of you know? Much of the prophetic gets it wrong with timing. They usually hear the word of the Lord. They don't usually hear the timing. We usually think we've got the word of the Lord, and we're pretty early sometimes, most of the time. Prophetic means future. We're ahead. It's telling you beforehand, right? So the appointed time comes, and in that moment we're still in a place of faith. That's the fight: to be found in faith when the appointed moment comes. Does that help anybody? You might say, "God didn't answer me." Well, he didn't answer you the way you were thinking, and it hasn't happened yet. But something's going to happen. Stay in faith. Stay in the good fight of faith. He will answer speedily. He's our just God.

That comes from First Timothy 6:12:

Fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called,

Listen, take hold of the eternal life. That's active.

To which you were called and about which you made the good confession out loud in the presence of many witnesses.

Did I skip that part? No, I said it: giving hell a headache. Pray out loud, especially the men. You need to pray out loud with your families, for your families. Open your mouth. I don't care if it feels awkward. It might feel like a struggle. It might be a little punchy, a little dodgy, a little weird. You might get popped in the mouth a little. That's okay. You need it. Men need a fight. I'm trying to give you one. Why are the women out-praying the men? Don't call yourself the spiritual head of your house and let your wife out-pray you. That's stupid. It's not true. It's not true. Are you offended by this? Are you leaving me as well? I haven't even said "eat my flesh" yet. So, all right.

WE'RE PETITIONING THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE OF ALL

Persisting in prayer is how we fight the good fight of faith. Here's the best news ever out of this parable: we're not petitioning an unrighteous judge. We're petitioning the righteous judge of all. We don't need to wear God out or try to beat him up. We need to take our stand against the enemy.

I don't have time to explain this, but I'm going to say it: spiritual warfare should feel more like passion and love for Jesus and less like hate for the enemy. If you are constantly talking to the devil, you're not petitioning the judge. Let him do it. Even in Titus, it says, "The Lord rebuke you, Satan." If the enemy needs a rebuke, ask the judge to give him one. A lot of us are wasting time with a bunch of shambalama shouting at the devil, and he's like, "Oh, I needed your attention. All I need is your attention. I've got you." He's an attention monger. I was going to use a different word. He wants the attention, okay? That's all he wants. If he gets your eyes off of Jesus and onto him, he wins. Are you in a place of rest when you're looking at the devil? No. You shouldn't be unaware of the enemy's schemes. That should be in your peripheral vision, but your eyes should be locked on the author and finisher of your faith, looking to Jesus. That's the fight.

We don't need to shout at the enemy. We need to cry aloud to our Abba Father, and he defends us quickly. We need to keep coming to the author and finisher of our faith. We need to keep seeking our heavenly Bridegroom, the judge of all the cosmos, no matter the circumstance. We need to persist in prayer so that the fight of faith will be found in us. Consistently communing with Jesus blackens the eye of the enemy. It gives the enemy a black eye.

When things don't work out, we turn our gratitude and prayer to Jesus for all he has done. Most of the things you were worried about ten years ago worked out. Almost all of them. Probably most. Oh, I'm going to say all of them, right? What you were stressed out about a decade ago worked out. I wonder how that happened. There's a righteous judge who's working on your behalf. Amen. When we're tired, we want to quit. We need to keep on trusting God in prayer to come through at the right time. Here's what that looks like. It looks like saying, "Lord, it doesn't look like anything's happening, but I trust that you're working. I know you are good." You declare who he is. You do it with your mouth. Is this helping anybody? Is this good? When everyone else seems to leave us alone and we're in seasons of isolation and trial, we give glory to God in prayer for his eternal plan

through our lives, because this lifetime is a blip on your eternity. It's a blip. So you should zoom out a little bit. When you feel like the season is going a little long, when you're thinking, "You're taking a while to answer my prayer, Jesus," zoom out. He's working on an eternal timeline.

Persisting in prayer is how we fight the good fight of faith.

We're going to take communion today. I love how Romans 3:26 says:

God is both just and the justifier.

Jesus is the righteous judge. Amen. He's the one who advocates for us like a defense attorney. Amen? And he's the one who took the fall for our crimes. He's the criminal in the courtroom, too. He became sin. Wow. He is just and the justifier. That's the beauty of communion. What are we doing? We're remembering his sacrifice. We approach the table of the Lord with great gratitude for our God, who is the righteous judge who justified us. And every time we take communion, we are persisting in a spirit of prayer. Why? Because First Corinthians 11:26 says:

*As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.
Until he comes.*

When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth? He might come during communion. Let's fight the good fight of faith today by continuing to proclaim that he is coming, and in so doing, may he find faith on the earth. We're going to have our staff come up and get prepared for the time of communion. If you all would stand with me, that would be great.