

0 (0s):

Yeah. Give a hand for Jason, our tech director. Thank you, Jason. Well, it's good. Just see you guys. My name's Matt Wolf. Today's July 11th. We're supposed to start a new series today, right? Yeah. I hope you guys are excited. It's going to be really good. You know, last two weeks, I haven't been here preaching. We had some great guests, preachers. We had Crick pour your art missionary to Astonia here. Two weeks ago, told some amazing stories. We had Paul mitten, our regional director for the movement. We're a part of converge here last week. It was awesome message. Got to catch it online and it was great. I really appreciate you guys giving me a couple of weeks off. Thank you. I appreciate you giving me that time off. It gives me some time to refresh, get rejuvenated and get really excited about what God is doing here. You know, our mission here is to help people follow Jesus. It's very simple yet.

0 (41s):

It's one of the most important things and I was just rejuvenated. And how important that mission is. I saw one study that said over the last 16 months, this pandemic has been going on that two thirds of all adults in our country have reported increased anxiety, increased loneliness, and a loss of some of their closest friends. Like people right now are, are looking for hope, looking for help, looking for relationships and connection and meaning in life and guess where you can find that

1 (1m 10s):

In Jesus. So

0 (1m 11s):

When we help people follow Jesus, we help people's lives. We help your lives. And our mission is helping people follow Jesus is not just, you know, for us, not just my job as the pastor or us as a staff or an organization, it's your mission to, because we are the church and if we help people follow Jesus, you do as well. And that's what it's about. So I'm looking ahead and I'm going to talk about this a lot, but I'm looking ahead at August, September and October as critical months for our church critical months, I've been talking to a lot of people, even over the last couple of months, people are filling out our new forms online and they're like, I just moved here yesterday. I'm new. Or I've gotten this a few times. We're about to move here in two weeks. We want to find a church because we know we need community.

0 (1m 52s):

Like people are hungry for it. There's a hunger right there for community, for God, for Jesus Christ, for meaning in their life. And we can provide the only hope that that changes our life. Jesus said, follow me. And you will have the fullest life in this life. And in the one to come, we save people, destruction, not just in his life, but in the one to come. Okay. And when we present the gospel of Jesus Christ, that he saves him, forgives him, gives him meaning, purpose and eternal life ahead. It's so significant. So the people that you're going to be around over the next few months, your coworkers, your friends, your family, the people that you don't like very much that annoying guy, okay. You know, all those people need Jesus. And we have a critical opportunity over the next few months to reach those people because they're gonna be hungry.

0 (2m 32s):

Everybody's traveling right now. I get it. It's just like the most traveled summer in the history of ever, right. Everybody's traveling places, going on a vacation, seeing family that they didn't get to last year, but they're going to be coming back in August. They're going to be getting back into school, into the rhythm of life in August, September looking for something. And we have an opportunity to invite them into church, connect with them, get them in a community group, have some relationships and help them find Jesus Christ who will give them the hope and the help they need. Okay. So that's our mission. Are you guys on board? Are you guys on board with this mission? Yeah. Okay. There we go. Let's help people follow Jesus together. That's what we're going to do. And yes, I am excited to, for our new series that starting today, unexpected examples who Jesus points to as the examples in our life, this is gonna be so important to just a short series, just three weeks here in the month of July.

0 (3m 20s):

But it's so good because our society, our culture points to a lot of people at the top, the powerful people, the athletic people that the good looking people, the rich people, they're the ones to look at as examples and imitate. But Jesus is going to point in a different

1 (3m 34s):

At the unexpected.

0 (3m 36s):

And that's what we're going to see here. I remember as a kid growing up, I was a kid of the nineties and there was one person everybody's like, you gotta be like this guy. Do you remember who that was? Be like Mike Michael Jordan. Right? Everyone said, be like Mike. Okay. We had to do it. And we saw Michael Jordan, the greatest basketball player to ever live. And I say that as a Lakers fan Kobe, LeBron, sorry guys, Jordan. Right? His airness could dribble could shoot, could dunk on a whole nother level. Six time NBA champion, right? Multiple MVPs. He is a gold medalist, incredible the best basketball player to ever live. And there was that great Gatorade commercial. Does anybody remember him showed him just like dribbling down at, you know, at the court and, and shooting over people, incredible stuff.

0 (4m 24s):

And then at the end it said, be like Mike, right. Be like Mike. And I remember that as a kid, I remember going out to the park, dribbling, shooting hoops by myself, just imagining myself, you know, shooting at the NBA finals. Okay. Just, just going over, you know, all those places that, that's what we dreamed of as kids. And I was like, ah, but no matter how much I dribbled in shot, no matter how much sugary electrolytes I drank, I could never be like Mike. Right. Nothing could, no Gatorade could make this white boy jumped that high. Right. Let's just be honest. Let's be honest. Okay. Be like Mike, it was like, okay, no one could be like that.

0 (5m 4s):

There are important things we can learn from him from his determination, his drive, his competitive. But people like that, it's like, <inaudible>, that's what our society lifts up. Look at them. And it's not just athletes. Although we're going to hear a ton of stories over the next month for the Olympics. Right. I'd be like Simone Biles. Okay. Look at them. They're incredible. They're in their perseverance and all that stuff. Great examples in our society that says things like, okay, you've got to, you've got to invest like Warren buffet. You've got to be a hard moving person. Build a business like Steve jobs. I was just thinking about this, like 20 years ago, if you would've told me that a billion people will spend a thousand dollars every other year on a phone, I would have laughed you out of the room, right?

0 (5m 44s):

From my like corded phone. That you're right. It's insane. But Steve jobs to build it, look at him, be like him. If you want to be a writer, right? Like Malcolm Gladwell. There's always someone in every society, there's seminars, there's books. Look at this person be like them. That's what our society does. The rich, the wealthy, the powerful, but Jesus points in a completely different direction. And in this section, it's actually a pretty short section in Luke chapter 18. We're just going to cover, I think it's about 18 verses. We're going to look at over the next three weeks, but Jesus points at three different individuals and a group of people in the third week, completely different that the unexpected. And he says, look at them, learn from them. Yeah. Like

1 (6m 22s):

Them, the unexpected.

0 (6m 24s):

And in this first week, we're going to learn from Jesus

1 (6m 27s):

About prayer, how to be like an

0 (6m 30s):

Incredible prayer. And when I first say that, some of you were thinking, okay. So I got to look at the religious people. The, the priests. I remember talking to a pastor when I was just starting out who, who had gone on a 30 day silent retreat to pray with God,

1 (6m 43s):

30 days of silence, some of your life. That's my dream.

0 (6m 48s):

Everyone else is like, that's my worst nightmare. Ugh. And I was like, if does that, wouldn't it mean to be a great prayer? Do you have to be that religious priest that stands up in front of you? And, and maybe you've

heard that person that they quote so much scripture in one little prayer. You're like, that's more scripture than I've ever heard in my whole life. You have that memorize. And you're saying it in prayer or the person that gets up at four o'clock every morning, three hours on their knees, praying for things. But Jesus doesn't point out those people in his teaching on prayer, he's going to point in the different direction. He's actually going to point at a widow, a poor destitute widow who has no advocacy for self, no power, no prestige. Nobody even knows her name, but he's going to look at that widow. And he says, pray like her, because what we're going to learn from her is not that we have to be more eloquent or how many times we have to pray or what position we have to be in to pray.

0 (7m 36s):

And Jesus doesn't care about all, any of those things, what he points out and get this leaning right? This down

1 (7m 43s):

Persistent prayer pays off. Okay. That's

0 (7m 48s):

What he's going to teach us from. This one. Widow persistent prayer pays off. Be persistent. Keep at it. Be relentless in your prayer. Persistent prayer pays off. Can you guys remember that? Say, let's say with me, okay. Could you say that persistent

1 (7m 60s):

Prayer pays off? So we're going to learn today. So

0 (8m 4s):

If you have your Bibles, go ahead and open with me to Luke chapter 18, Luke chapter 18. We're going to be in verses one through eight today. And if you're online or you have your phone, you can use a tablet or whatever. Go to the YouVersion Bible app. You can find a rice, your Denver's event. We have the passage. You can look there and look at notes, fill it out. Luke chapter 18 verses one through eight. By the way, I love kids. I got three of them and they were wild in the back. Okay. We love kids in this church. No, we, we love the sound of kids and the craziness of kids. We love it. I want you to know that I'm serious. I had to take my kids out because my wife Melissa was singing and it was a little wild in the back.

0 (8m 45s):

Sorry guys. Sorry. Back row. Okay. We love kids. Okay. So in Luke chapter 18, we're going to start in verse. So I'm going to read this verse because it gives a summary of what's going on. Verse one, it says, then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always

1 (9m 3s):

Pray and not give up. So Luke is

0 (9m 7s):

Writing this. Luke was a historian, a doctor, a very educated man. And he wanted to investigate for himself who this Jesus guy was. So we went around, travel to locations, interviewed eyewitnesses, wrote down their accounts. This is what Jesus said. This is what he did. And here he is giving a summary. He says, what Jesus is about to say, this is what it's about. It's that we should always pray and not give up to keep praying. Always. There's never a time to stop.

1 (9m 29s):

Just keep at it. Keep at it. Pray prayer pays off. It's what Jesus is going to teach us here.

0 (9m 37s):

And then he says how Jesus taught that verse two. He said in a certain town, there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. Isn't that a great descriptor. It doesn't care about God doesn't care about people. Great judge. No, it's a terrible judge. Doesn't have morality. He doesn't care what God says. It doesn't care. What is right or wrong. He doesn't even care about his opinion in the polls. Okay? He's not afraid of a recall from some angry citizens. It's judge doesn't care a lick about God morality or people. Verse three. And there was a widow

1 (10m 17s):

In that town who kept coming to him

0 (10m 21s):

With the police kept coming in in the Greek. That's saying it's again and again and again, and again, he, she kept coming to this judge with the police grant me justice against my adversary. We're not told what the situation is, who this adversary is, but we're told that she is longing for justice for what is right. Something has happened to her. And she has been wronged. And there is a judge here who we're going to be told. Didn't give her justice. She doesn't have justice from someone trying to take advantage of her, maybe his stolen from her taken from her. And as a widow, she has nothing because she's the one going to the judge. This probably means she doesn't have any sons or any children that are old enough to fight on her behalf.

0 (11m 4s):

So her husband is dead. She's been in grief for that, probably still wearing these dark black robes that widows would have worn in those days. She has no lawyer has no advocate has no children to help her and widows in those days were the poorest of the poor. She had no one to take care of her. There was no social security death benefits. There was no place that you could go like the Denver rescue mission to get a free meal. There was nothing like that. She was the lowest of the low and she was just longing for justice. She wants what's right

1 (11m 31s):

To happen. Someone is taken advantage of her. What is this? It systemic

0 (11m 37s):

Injustice. There's a judge who won't give her justice. Okay? Jesus saying that there's injustice here. The system is broken because there's a judge who doesn't even care at all about God or his law, or about people not giving this woman. The justice she deserves. There is injustice in our Jesus knew it. He talked about it. He pointed it out and God cares about justice. He's a God of justice. And he cares, especially for the lowest, the widows. I just did a quick little search. And my concordance. I wanted to look at all the times that that God talks about widows. Cause he talks about it a lot. I found 38 times. So, so that's minimum.

0 (12m 17s):

There might be some more that I missed 38 times that God says either take care of widows. Or if you don't take care of widows, I'm going to destroy you. That's the kind of stuff that God says. If you read the prophets, he's like one of the problems, the sins with God's people, what did they, weren't taking care of the widows. Here's the poorest of the poor who need justice, who need help. And you're ignoring them. They have no one to help them. But God cares about the widows. It says in the scriptures in Psalm 68, that he is a defender of widows.

1 (12m 46s):

That's like his title defender, widows.

0 (12m 49s):

But what's really interesting. I just want to show you this one verse, God cares about all of the lowly and there's this, there's this three part thing that, that God does. And we see just one verse here in Deuteronomy 27, God says in his law, cursed

1 (13m 4s):

Damn to hell

0 (13m 5s):

Should be anyone who withholds justice from the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. God is serious about taking care of the lowest of the low, the poor, the widows and this interesting, th this, these three-part 400 fatherless widow occurs over and over and over again. In a lot of the 38 instances, I was looking at it. It occurs over a dozen times where it's, that it's called like the triumvirate of justice, the people without husbands, the people without fathers

1 (13m 34s):

And the people without their country, the foreigner, the immigrant, the refugee,

0 (13m 39s):

God cares about those people. A lot talks about it again and again, and again, he says, I care about him. You need to care about them. And if you don't,

1 (13m 46s):

You're on my bedside. So he's saying

0 (13m 50s):

Is he, God cares about this. This is such a big part of God's heart. It's a part of Jesus's heart to come to bring justice to the world. So here is this woman struggling in injustice, struggling in poverty with no one to take care of her, no one to help her. And she keeps going to the judge,

1 (14m 10s):

Help me, help me. Help me

0 (14m 13s):

Request is again and again, and again, bring me justice. It says in verse four, if you continue with me, it says for some time, for some time the judge fused. But finally he said to himself, even though I don't fear God or care what people think, it's not a funny thing to say to yourself. I don't care about God. I don't care about morality. I don't even care what people think yet because this widow keeps bothering me.

1 (14m 43s):

She's so annoying.

0 (14m 44s):

I will see that she gets justice so that you won't eventually come and attack me.

1 (14m 52s):

She just

0 (14m 52s):

Keeps pestering him, badgering him requesting again. And again, help me, help me. Help me. Give me justice day after day, the judge hears her. No, no, no. And finally he's like fine.

1 (15m 3s):

I don't want to see you ever again. I'll give you what you want. Her persistence pays off. Right?

0 (15m 11s):

Persistence pays. What's really interesting there that, that phrase. So as want to attack me in Greek, it's a really weird phrase. It's more like a fighting term. It's like a fighting term. So I think that the new Testament for everyone, a different translation gets it pretty, right? It says that so that she doesn't end up coming and giving me a black eye. It, this is a fighting term gait. She just keeps punching me in hammering away me. There's this little tiny gal. Keep punching me over and over and over. I don't want a black guy. Like I don't, I want to be done with this fight. This is the boxer. That's tiny, but just keeps fighting over and over Oregon like Logan, Paul, I don't even know anything about that, but just keeps fighting.

0 (15m 53s):

This little guy keeps fighting again and again and again and again, Mike, Tyson's like, come on. Okay. I don't, I don't need any of this. I'm done the judge who has all the power, all the authority can do anything. He wants

1 (16m 5s):

Fine.

0 (16m 5s):

I don't want you pestering me anymore. Some of you have kids. That'll just hit you like that. Doesn't hurt. But man, is it annoying? You know, I'm talking about, okay, let's just relent. Okay. And that's what he's saying. I don't care about you. I don't care about God. I don't care about what's right or wrong. But because you're so pestering. So persevering,

1 (16m 24s):

I'll give you what you want. That's what happens in this story. Isn't that interesting. This

0 (16m 29s):

Woman is an example that Jesus points to us and says, be like her, be like this widow

1 (16m 35s):

Because persistent prayer pays off. Persistence is so important.

0 (16m 41s):

Persistence is so important. I have this quote. If I can jump ahead. Maybe from Calvin Coolidge, one of our presidents, he said, nothing in this world can take

1 (16m 49s):

The place of persistence.

0 (16m 52s):

Talent will not, nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with

1 (16m 56s):

Great talent. Genius will not. If we can get the next slide up there. Unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education

0 (17m 6s):

Will not. The world is full of educated

1 (17m 9s):

Derelicts, persistence and

0 (17m 11s):

Determination alone are omnipotent.

1 (17m 14s):

He saw that. He was like, you got to just keep at it. You gotta have grit.

0 (17m 17s):

You gotta stick with it. Persevere never give up. Never surrender. Never, never, never, never give up. That's what he's saying. And in the same way, if that applies to life, I think it applies even more. Jesus says to prayer, this is how we must be in our faith. And following Jesus

1 (17m 32s):

Persist in prayer, persistent prayer pays off. Jesus says it's worth. Keep at it. Be persistent,

0 (17m 41s):

Never stop, never give up. And I think that, that we can, we can see in the same situation, because it says in six, I want you to look at this for sex. And it says, and the Lord said, listen to what the unjust judge says. He's not a good guy. He's a bad dude. And yet he gives justice because

1 (18m 2s):

She kept coming. And verse

0 (18m 5s):

Seven will not. God bring about justice for his chosen ones who cry out to him day and night. Will he keep putting them off? What he's saying is that this is a terrible bad judge. Not a good dude, needs to be recalled, needs to be put in prison for bringing injustice. And yet even he will say yes to a persistent

1 (18m 29s):

Request and God who is a great

0 (18m 33s):

And merciful judge who loves us, who cares about us, who is a defender of Wynn widows, who was a father to the fatherless who is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit, that God who loves us, he'll listen to us

1 (18m 48s):

And be merciful to us if we persist. So keep at it.

0 (18m 52s):

He's saying this woman is the example of how we should be in our faith. How

1 (18m 57s):

We should follow Jesus. Persistent prayer pays off.

0 (19m 1s):

No, I think this is really interesting because in our society just a few years ago, there was a woman who was, was held up as, as a example of persistence. And I'm not trying to get political here at all. So don't hear that. But, but it was back in 2017 with Senator Elizabeth Warren, does he remember this story? Elizabeth Warren. They was just like a routine nomination for a, I think the attorney general for the president. And she was like, opposing it. She was against, it just kept coming. Oh, I want to pose it. This, this, this, and kept talking. And finally, you know, the, the senators were like, no, here's the rules. You can't say that. And then she kept at it until finally like, well, you broke the rules, you're out, you're silenced. And then afterwards, one of the senators was talking about her and was like, you know, we told her not to talk.

0 (19m 45s):

We told her she was breaking the world rules. Never the less she persisted. You remember that?

Nevertheless, you were persisted almost immediately. Boom. Those words went viral. They were tweeted. Everybody was saying it, it was getting printed on t-shirts on bumper stickers. It was like posters chance for women all over the world. Nevertheless she persisted. Okay. She was the example in our society of a woman persisting. But, but if you think about it, this was a Senator, okay. This was a woman with great power. She was one of the most powerful women in our country, a Senator. And I just looked up, I didn't know much about her, but she had graduated college. She had gone to law school. She had been a lawyer and then served as a professor of law.

0 (20m 26s):

She had written over a dozen books and she had a husband and together they are worth over \$12 million. So when she persists, we hold her up as example, maybe rightly so. Right. I'm not getting political one way or the other, but yet Jesus didn't look at a powerful person like that. As the example, he looked at the lowly widow, see her. She hasn't gone to law school. She doesn't even have a lawyer. Nobody will be the defender, no one will care for her.

1 (20m 53s):

Get she he's the example for how we should all be to persist.

0 (20m 57s):

Jesus is saying, nevertheless, she persisted be like that.

1 (21m 2s):

Be like that. Keep at it. Keep persisting. Keep persevering, keep asking, keep requesting. That's

0 (21m 8s):

What God wants us to do. He wants us to pester him in

1 (21m 11s):

Prayer. That's what he's

0 (21m 13s):

Saying here. He wants us to keep at it and keep praying.

1 (21m 18s):

And that's why my big idea today is that persistent prayer pays off very simple. But this is a reminder.

0 (21m 26s):

You've got to keep at it. Some of you have been praying for stuff and you, you give up, I didn't get what I wanted.

1 (21m 33s):

<inaudible> the fat lady hasn't sown yet. Okay. Keep praying. What, what why'd you stop? That's what Jesus saying. Keep at it. Unless

0 (21m 41s):

There's come to a point where there's no way to go forward. Keep praying if you're ever wondering. Well, when is it okay to stop praying for something, man, I've heard the acronym push. Pray until something happens. Okay. Until it's impossible that you can't go any further, keep pushing until something happens until

it's no way ever to happen. And you know, God was saying, okay, not yes to that prayer. And then you move on to the next prayer to be praying for. This means for days, weeks, months, years, decades, we can be praying for the same thing. There are some prayers that I pray over and over, over again. I may pray for the rest of my life until I die. And if I haven't gotten a yes, I'm going to keep praying. And that's how we need to pray. Pray until something

1 (22m 22s):

Happens. Does anybody remember Johnny Carson who in here knows Johnny Carson? About half of you

0 (22m 29s):

Gave before Conan O'Brien who just retired a couple weeks ago before. Jimmy's the Jimmy's right? We all know Jimmy's before Jay Leno and even David Letterman. There's Johnny Carson. Okay. And he was on when I was just a little kid, but I wasn't allowed to stay up that late and see him. But my dad always talked about him, but Johnny Carson, right? He was the guy who made the tonight show. He made late night comedy. What it is today, he was on the air for over 4,500 episodes. Pretty impressive. And he was introduced by his sidekick ed McMahon, who always said, yeah. Oh, that was a good one. That was good. Can we give a hand? That was it ed McMahon in person right there.

0 (23m 11s):

Here's Johnny, you know, just so much energy. And it was just like iconic and no, that didn't come from the shining. Okay. In case you're wondering here's Johnny. He said it every night to introduce Johnny Carson. Well, has anybody in here heard of John searing? Anybody know that name? Nobody. Okay. Well, John searing was in art supply salesman in New Jersey. Yeah. That's why I haven't heard of him. Right. It's a very good art supply salesman. But John searing had a life dream of his. It was like his one thing on his bucket list and it to go to the tonight show and introduce Johnny Carson by saying here's Johnny. That was like his dream. So he wrote a letter to the tonight show and said, Hey, could you please put me on?

0 (23m 55s):

All I want to do is go on there and announce. I just want to say here's Johnny. As Johnny Carson comes out and they sent him back a letter, a nice form letter that says no with a great glossy picture of Johnny Carson. Here you go. Congratulations. But he didn't take no for an answer. So he wrote another letter and then another one, and then another one. And every day he wrote a letter, hundreds of these letters. He started recording himself on a cassette player, introducing Johnny. So they could hear his voice introducing other celebrities so that they could recognize like, and he's got some talent, right? He kept sending it over and over and over again. He sent in over 800 letters, the night Chanel. And finally, what did they say?

1 (24m 36s):

Okay, fine.

0 (24m 38s):

We'll have Yong. So they finally brought John searing to the tonight show. And for the episode, he was all excited to be able to introduce Johnny Carson. But then ed McMahon did it just like every other night here's

1 (24m 48s):

Johnny. And he

0 (24m 50s):

Was a little disappointed. But then they brought him out to be a guest on the show. He was on a TV for an eight minute segment. Johnny Carson interviewed him and said, why are you writing all these crazy letters? Okay, what is wrong with you? Asking these, had them on the segment, like a famous guest. And then afterwards he said, okay, I'm going to go back out behind the curtain. And you're going to introduce

1 (25m 10s):

Me. And he did, John

0 (25m 12s):

Searing went up there and was able to stay here,

1 (25m 15s):

Johnny and out. He came, he got his request answered. Why

0 (25m 20s):

Persistent? When Johnny Carson came out, he said, oh, thank you, John searing. And please stop writing. Stop because of his persistence because he stuck with it and went at it over and over and over again, they finally relented and said, fine. We'll give you what you want.

1 (25m 37s):

See persistence pays off. And Jesus

0 (25m 40s):

Is telling us that persistent prayer pays off. God wants to hear us. Especially when it is about things like justice.

1 (25m 47s):

God is the God of justice. When he sees injustice happening, he's angry. When

0 (25m 53s):

He sees people that are the lowest weight. When he sees people being mistreated, when he sees racism

happening, when he sees things in the system or with people or bad judges or a bad HOA, that's what I'm dealing with right now. Like all these things, it's like injustice. It's not right. It's not what it's supposed to be. We get angry. God gets angry and he wants to fix those things. So we should pray. Even if it seems like there's no way things will ever get

1 (26m 16s):

Better. Keep praying. Persistent prayer pays off. Keep

0 (26m 21s):

Praying. God wants to bring justice. He cares about it. Martin Luther, the great theologian. He said that prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of his willingness. That's what we need to do. We need to think he's a good God. He has some reason it's mysterious. I don't know why he hasn't acted yet, but he has a reason, but he's willing. He cares. He loves, we must reach out

1 (26m 47s):

To pull down that justice lay hold of it. And what I would say is this, for sure applies

0 (26m 53s):

To issues of justice in our society and in our lives. But I think it's any time when something is not as it should be. If you look at life or there's things in your life and you're like, this is not the way it should be.

1 (27m 4s):

Why are things so bad? Why this is this happening? Those are the things God's cares about. And he wants us to pray about. So I don't know what that thing is for you. Maybe it's a relationship. It's not the way I want

0 (27m 16s):

This job is not the way I want. Financially. Things are not way they should be

1 (27m 20s):

What my child is doing. My grandkid. You're worried about him.

0 (27m 24s):

Maybe there's something big that you're concerned about. When you see someone, it could be an issue of injustice or could just be anything that you say that's just not right. That's not the way it should

1 (27m 33s):

Pray about it. Keep praying about it over

2 (27m 36s):

And over and over and over and over and over again.

1 (27m 40s):

Persistent prayer pays off that Jesus wants us to hear

0 (27m 45s):

And this well, he is a matter of faith to keep at it. This is what Jesus says in our final verse. In this passage, verse eight, look at it with me. Verse eight. It says, I tell you, Jesus says he, God will see that they get justice. His people,

1 (28m 2s):

His children, and quickly.

0 (28m 6s):

However, when the son of man comes, will he find faith on the earth? Why does he say that? Well, he's coming back three weeks ago, we had a message called the kingdom come, Jesus is coming back. We don't know when he's kingdom is coming. And when he comes to judge the living and the dead, will he find faith? What is he looking for? As he's pointing

1 (28m 27s):

Out here, people that are still at it in prayer, still

0 (28m 31s):

At it, keep going. Because if they've given up, he said, oh, things will never get better. No, no, no. We still need to pray. Thy kingdom come on earth. As it is in heaven.

1 (28m 39s):

Things are not the way they should be. This

0 (28m 41s):

Thing that I I'm longing for in my heart, I need to God, please help me give my requests. Grant me mercy,

1 (28m 47s):

Keep at it. That's faith to be persistent in prayer.

0 (28m 53s):

Now there's a story. I've been a pastor in a small town. It's one of those pastors stories, preacher stories. You never know if they're true or not. Right?

1 (29m 1s):

But it's a good story. Well, there's,

0 (29m 3s):

You're in a small town and there was a bar there in the bar was, you know, attracting everyone. And, and they're worried about these, these people at the, at the bar. So the pastor said, we've got to pray that this bar

1 (29m 13s):

Is gone. It's out of business. God would drive them from his town. So he gathers

0 (29m 19s):

All his church on a special prayer night. And they, the whole, for the church, praying God, get rid of that bar, get rid of that bar. Will that night lightning struck the bar, burned it to the ground.

1 (29m 33s):

The bar owner finds out about what happened. There's this bear thing. So he sues the pastor in this church.

0 (29m 41s):

He sues and they're, they're going before the judge. And they're just like, what? What's going on? What, what, what happened in the pastor's like kinda backstepping backpack pedaling a little bit. Right? And he's like, well, we did pray for that, but we didn't really think it was going to happen. Okay. And the judge says, you never, I, you know, I never thought I would see the day of a pastor who doesn't believe in prayer, but a bar owner who do, I am shocked by how much you and I pray for things. And we don't even believe it's going to

1 (30m 13s):

Happen. Right. Okay. We

0 (30m 17s):

Might go through the motions and ask for something and pray. But do we really believe God will honestly do we have faith

1 (30m 24s):

That he will, you are commanded

0 (30m 27s):

To pray expectantly in Psalm five, to ask for things to happen and believe that they're going to happen. Not every single one of our prayers is answered exactly the way we want.

1 (30m 36s):

It's just not, God is smarter than us. However, we need to

0 (30m 40s):

Keep praying and believing that God will do something.

1 (30m 43s):

That's what faith is. I believe

0 (30m 45s):

God, that you want to do something that you want to help, that you want to get me out of this situation, even if we have to pray again and again and again, for the same thing I remember for years when Melissa and I were, were dealing with infertility, it took us five years to get pregnant with McKinley. And in that five years, we never got pregnant. Once there's no pregnancy, no miscarriage, nothing. And we prayed over and over and over again, morning, noon, night plus, right. Just kept praying over and over and over again

1 (31m 15s):

Until God says yes. And he gave us our daughter McKinley.

0 (31m 19s):

And that's how we are commanded to pray here again. And again and again, he says your morning and night, what's really interesting in that day, the rabbis who Jesus was actually a rabbi. He was a teacher,

1 (31m 31s):

But, but the rabbis

0 (31m 32s):

Would teach that you're not supposed to pray more than three times a day. If you do more than that, you're annoying. God seriously, but Jesus doesn't put any cap on how often or how much we should pray. In fact, he says, keep at it, keep punching, keep fighting, keep boxing, right? Another jab, an uppercut. Okay. You know, just, just keep it coming again. And again and again, Jesus never says here that it's about the amount of prayer that you have. If you pray over 150 times, then you'll get what you want. It's not about an amount. I think it's more about an attitude. That's why he's focusing on faith here. Whether it be faith on the earth, when he comes back to you says, it's your attitude? Are you persistent? So maybe it's three times a day.

0 (32m 12s):

Maybe it's once a day, once a week, once a month, maybe it's a hundred times a day. Maybe every time you think about it, you need to turn it into a prayer. Maybe you need to put a reminder on your phone to pray for it again and again and again. Maybe you need to slip it in. I love slipping in those, those big prayers at

mealtime. Cause you think it's just like a mealtime prayer, but that's three times a day. You can slip in something else that you're praying for.

1 (32m 35s):

Be persistent at it.

0 (32m 36s):

I can't tell you how often in a day, Melissa and I prayed to have a again and again and again,

1 (32m 42s):

We kept praying, persistent prayer pays off, but wants to answer our prayers. So keep at it and keep at it. Keep at it. Pray until something happens. Keep pushing, keep punching, keep at it.

0 (33m 1s):

And I think this is such a great example, such a great story for us. And I think it really is important because Jesus is someone who shows us

1 (33m 11s):

Persistence.

0 (33m 13s):

I mean, God in his heart is very persistent with us though. We sin though. We turn away from him though. We rebel, even though we know better, we do wrong. And sin, God keeps coming after us.

1 (33m 25s):

He said, Abraham.

0 (33m 27s):

Then he said, Moses, to give the law. Then he gave Joshua. Then he gave the judges and the Kings all to lead God's people back to him and they kept sending and rebelling. He kept sending prophets one after another spokesperson person from God to tell him repent, turn back to me. I love you. And still people bull turned and sin and God was persistent so much so that he sent his own son to the world and Jesus persisted in coming after us and loving us and being with the downtrodden, caring for the widows, the orphans and the foreigners.

1 (33m 58s):

Jesus showed

0 (33m 59s):

That he was persistent. He persevered. He wanted to love and show God's love. And he prayed for us. Did you know that in John 17, God prayed for us. I mean, you and I are living today. People not born. Jesus prayed for us. And he prayed and he prayed and he prayed. He went into the desert for 40 days and he prayed. And when the devil came himself, he quoted scripture and prayed and kept on it. He kept at it. You have to add it on the night. He knew he was going to be betrayed. He braid, he stayed up all night. His friends who he asked, could you please stay up with me and pray with me asleep. But he persisted. He kept praying again and again, and again, God, if it's possible, take this cup from me,

1 (34m 34s):

But not your will your will, but not mine be done. He kept it.

0 (34m 38s):

I want your will. God. He kept praying. He kept persisting to the point that when he was arrested in what's on the cross, when he was dying for the sins of the world, he prayed

1 (34m 46s):

For us. Father, forgive them for, they know not what they do. Jesus persisted. And because of his persistence, we can have eternal life because

0 (34m 57s):

He died on the cross to forgive us of our sins because God persisted in Jesus Christ. We have forgiveness. We have a toner. We have eternal life in him. We have a new life, a new purpose, and we can head out of here following Jesus with the fullest life. Aren't you glad that God persisted and Jesus, who was a lowly man, born in a manger who died the death of a slave, the lowest low. He is our example of persistence. And when he tells us to pray like a widow, a poor destitute woman, we better do it.

1 (35m 28s):

Follow her example, persistent prayer pays off. Now

0 (35m 33s):

I'll never forget. When we first moved here to, we got invited. You, you saw Shannon Blackard on the video that giving video earlier, she and her husband Derek were hosting the community group and they invited our community group. It was like our first month or two here in Denver. They invite us to come over. We went to their community group and we met a woman named Alison lacking. Some of you know, Alison, Alison and Adam actually are, have been a part of our church for a long time. I just moved back to Virginia this summer. And I got permission for her to show up, share the story. But we had an instant connection, Melissa and I with Adam and Allison because they too had struggled with infertility for a long time. And they had prayed and sought treatment, had done everything they could. And finally God gave them their first child Chi through a surrogate.

0 (36m 17s):

They, they, that was the only option that was available to him. They did IVF and they had Chi through surrogate and man, isn't it great that God has given us that advanced medicine that we have today that you can do IVF surrogates. It's incredible. And at the time we met her, I remember cause she was like, yeah, we are having our second child now with a surrogate. And I was like, well, I never really met somebody who had gone through surrogacy. I was like, cool. You know? And we talked to him, we got to really know them. Cause they had struggled with infertility for so long, so many miscarriages. And then I'll remember a few weeks later when I talk with her on the phone, cause we'd heard something happened. And we called her in Alison,

3 (36m 52s):

I was in tears because their surrogate at 17 weeks had her water break. Now I didn't know a ton about that, but I knew that that was bad and it is it's very bad. Okay. The baby survives in those fluids. And I was like, well,

0 (37m 10s):

What, what can they do? And she said, well, they, they have her on bed rest. She's going to be in hospital

3 (37m 15s):

Basically until she miscarries. And I was like, that's heavy. You know that that's really tough. And of course really

0 (37m 23s):

Hit my heart because I know what it's like to experience infertility. And I asked her, I said, okay, well what did the doctors tell you is the chance that this little baby boy

3 (37m 33s):

Will make it to the point of viability? And she said, Matt, it's

2 (37m 38s):

Like 0%. They said

3 (37m 40s):

0%. It's like, well, I said, well, when it's impossible, we got to pray for a miracle. And that's what we did.

0 (37m 49s):

I prayed with her on the phone. We Melissa and I started praying. I'm sure their community group, Adam and Allison were praying nonstop. And I remember talking to her a week later, I said, okay, how are things going?

She said,

3 (37m 59s):

Well, we're at 18 weeks now. Baby's still in there. And now they're saying it's a 1% chance.

1 (38m 6s):

I was like, okay, that's good. We'll keep praying. Then we kept praying. Yeah. I remember

0 (38m 11s):

When the baby made it to about 22, 23 weeks. Cause that's like the earliest that a baby could be born, right? The major complications, but they can survive it. 22 weeks.

3 (38m 19s):

Baby was still in there.

0 (38m 21s):

Random. Keep bringing, made it to 28 weeks, which is kind of a big marker where now there's not going to be major complications, maybe still six months in the NICU, but this, this baby could survive. And I don't remember the exact date, but it was somewhere after 32 weeks at the baby stayed in there. And on this stage I got to dedicate little baby Western and it was impossible, right? 0% chance.

3 (38m 50s):

And yet God came through. I've seen that.

0 (38m 55s):

I don't care if you call it a miracle or not. It doesn't matter to me, but I know it's impossible if not next to impossible. But when those things happen,

3 (39m 2s):

What do we need to do? Pray. Keep praying. Persistent prayer never stopped praying. Pray until something happens. Persistent prayer pays off. And that's trying

0 (39m 14s):

To encourage you guys today and what Jesus is trying to teach us. Look at the example of this widow, she kept punching, kept boxing, kept at it, never gave up. And this judge who was a terrible judge, gave her what she wanted. And God who loves you and is the greatest judge. The most merciful judge in the world who is a defender of widows, a father to the fatherless who was close to the brokenhearted. He will hear your need. He knows what's on your heart. And he wants to help you.

3 (39m 37s):

So keep praying, keep praying and keep pushing and never stopped. Persistent. Prayer pays off.

0 (39m 46s):

So what do right now, okay, I'm going to challenge you guys. Take out your phone right now. I'm watching you guys take out your phone, take out a piece of paper. If you don't have your phone. And I want you to think of the one thing. Maybe it's a dozen things, but at least one thing that's on your heart. It's an injustice you see in the world. It's something bad happening in your life or in your family. Someone you care about. And you're like, I want this isn't right. It needs to be made,

3 (40m 6s):

Right? God. I want you to write down that prayer on your, I don't want you to write it down. What's even better

0 (40m 15s):

Is, is maybe you make a notification or an alarm that goes off to remind you to pray until this becomes just a habit of yours to pray for them.

3 (40m 24s):

It might be something enormous. And you're like, that's impossible. Good. Keep praying. And I want you to just pray him for this over and over and over again, set that reminder. And then right

0 (40m 38s):

Now is the band's going to play in some music under, we're going to take a moment right now and we're going to pray

3 (40m 41s):

For that thing. We're going to pray for that thing. I talked with a woman after for service and there's some major things going on. She just had a good friend of hers. Take his own life. There's some heavy stuff going on in our own lives and in the lives of people we care about and love. We need to persist in prayer

0 (41m 1s):

And I'm going to be in the back in just a minute. We're going to take communion and I'll be in the back. I want to pray with you. If you have something on your heart, I'll pray with you. I'll pray for you. But what we're going to do right now is we're going to pray together. Okay? You can say it quietly. You can shout it out and you can, you

3 (41m 13s):

Can whisper it in your mouth. I don't care, but we're going to pray for that right now.

0 (41m 16s):

Okay? So let's bow our heads and let's pray together as individuals and as a family, for these things

3 (41m 19s):

On our hearts, Lord God, we come to you. The righteous judge, the one whose mercy triumphs over judgment. Hear our prayers. Lord God. I pray with all the prayers that are in this room with the holy spirit who is intercepting these prayers and taking them to your son. Jesus, who was sitting at the right hand of the father, interceding for us, our advocate, our lawyer before the father in heaven, who cares for our prayers, heal relationships.

3 (42m 9s):

Men, the brokenhearted give hope to the hopeless for those who are struggling with addictions. Lord God bring freedom. Set the captives free, bring an end to injustice and racism and any system or process or person who is bringing in justice or evil in this world. Or God we're crying out in these prayers. Hear us, listen, love us and give us a yes.

0 (42m 36s):

Now with eyes closed and heads bowed for right now, there's some of you

3 (42m 39s):

In here who have never made Jesus, your Lord and savior. And what Jesus said it is. God's chosen people, his sons and daughters who God hears our prayers. God answers prayers of his children in a different way, in a special way. And some of you need to become children of God today. And the way to do it is to declare that Jesus is your Lord and savior to declare that you are a sinner and accept his gift of forgiveness and eternal life. So we have a prayer here. We do this every week. It's no magical prayer, but it's a simple way that you can pray to God who hears you and will answer you. So what we're going to do, if you're already a believer in Jesus Christ, say this prayer, say it out loud. So you can give courage to someone who needs to say it for the first time. Would you please repeat after me? Dear father, I admit I'm a sinner.

3 (43m 24s):

I need a savior. Save me. Forgive me in faith. I declare Jesus is Lord. Fill me with your spirit. Help me to follow you and love others. Now with heads bowed and eyes still closed. If you said that prayer for the first time, it meant it. If Jesus is now your Lord and savior, you're a child of God. Please slip your hand in the air. I just want to be able to encourage you. Slip your hand into the air. Praise God. If you're online, go to rise. denver.com/follow praise. God, you are a child of God. You are loved. You are forgiven. You have eternal life.

3 (44m 5s):

You have a judge on your side in advocate in Jesus Christ who will fight for you, who will answer your

prayers. Lord God, we all come to you, father. We love you. And we are glad that you listened to us. We were glad that you sent your son Jesus to die on the cross, to forgive us of all our sins. Forgive us of the times that we have done something wrong and to make things right in our lives with you. I pray, Lord God. We would go out from here in faith today and everyday for the rest of our lives to persevere and to persist in prayer. And that we would know that persistence in prayer pays off.

3 (44m 45s):

Amen. Okay. Band is going to lead us here in a little bit of a song, and then we're going to take communion together. As we remember that Jesus died on the cross for us. So if you have those on your cup, if you're online, I'm saying this so that you can grab some bread, you can grab some juice, whatever you got in the house, a cracker and some Sprite is mine. We're going to remember what Jesus did in just a minute together. Would you please stand as we sing that God is good. God is good.