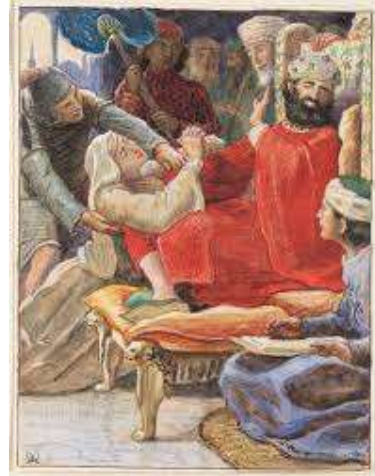




ST NINIAN'S UNITING CHURCH
PRAYERS AND REFLECTIONS
15 October 2025
Scripture: Luke 18:1-8



Prayer

I love your law, Lord God. I meditate on it all day long.
Your commands are always with me and make me wiser than my enemies.
May I always meditate on your statutes and obey your commands.
Your words are sweet to me, sweeter than honey!
May I worship you always.
Amen

(drawn from Psalm 119:97-99, 103)

Thanks & praise prayer points

- For the word and promises of God, given to us through scripture.
- For the prophets of ancient times and today, who faithfully proclaimed God's word and law.
- For my church community, and its faithful witness to our word and sacrifice.
- For all people who have shared their Christian faith with me over the years, sharing your love and helping me in your journey.

Forgiveness prayer points

- For not trusting in God's love and care, and letting doubt fill my heart.
- For not persisting in prayer and not trusting that God will give me what I need.
- For hurting others, though words spoken or not spoken.

Words of Grace

Hear God's words of grace to us.

"I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts.

I will be their God, and they will be my people.

And I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Amen

(Jeremiah 31:33-34)

Reading: Luke 18:1-8

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. ² He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. ³ And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'

⁴ "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!'"

⁶ And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸ I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

Reflection

The parable of the widow's persistence is introduced as a parable about prayer and not losing heart. But it moves to become a story about justice and ends with a question about faith.

The parable introduces a judge who neither fears God nor respects people. The unrespected or ignored people are represented by the widow, whose relentless pleas for justice are so bothersome that the judge eventually gives the justice she demands.

We might sometimes hear the instructions in this reading as an assurance that God will give us what we ask for persistently in prayer. But Jesus is not saying this. Rather, Jesus says what God wants to give us (justice) and we are to understand that this is the best possible gift that God can give his children, who are precious to God.

Finally the parable ends with a question that reaches beyond the parable, and indeed beyond the resurrection into the future: “And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

We may find the beginnings of an answer in the Gospel itself where several people are commended for their faith:

- the centurion who believes Jesus will heal his slave, even from a distance;
- the sinful woman who anoints Jesus’ feet and loves much;
- friends of the paralytic who are willing to dig through a roof;
- the bleeding, unclean woman who touches Jesus’ clothes in the crowd and is healed;
- the Samaritan leper, whose gratitude turns him back to Jesus where he falls at his feet in thanksgiving;
- and the blind beggar later in this chapter who sees Jesus for who he is and calls to him.

A beginning of the answer appears to be that the Son of Man will find faith, but it may be in unexpected places. Faith may most likely be found not among the ‘religious professionals’ or the ones certain of their own righteousness, but among the outsiders, the unlovely, the unclean, the ones certain of their sinfulness.

Perhaps the parable also suggests that a sign of faith will be a willingness to persist in prayer, as we see in this widow who persists against all odds in her fight for justice against the powerful judge. Our willingness to persist in prayer is not a promise that God will reward that prayer, but a sign of our own faithfulness and commitment to the love God extends to us.

Amen

Intercessory Prayers

Christ Jesus, when we turn to you, hear the prayers we offer.

We pray for all governments in all places, may they rule with justice and integrity, ensuring none is left behind due to disadvantage.

We pray for all leaders in the church, that they may lead your flock on earth with wisdom and integrity.

Be with all those who are suffering from illness of body, mind or soul, and bring them healing and peace.

Be with those experiencing homelessness, displacement or conflict, and grant to them shelter and peace.

We pray for all of those who pray, that they may remain persistent in their faith and commitment to you.

And we ask your blessing upon us, who turn to you in prayer and seek your comfort, as we pray the prayer you taught us:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.

Amen.

Song: Sweet Hour of Prayer



Sweet hour of prayer
Sweet hour of prayer
That calls me from a world of care
And bids me at my Father's throne
Make all my wants and wishes known
In seasons of distress and grief
My soul has often found relief
And oft escaped the tempter's snare
By Thy return, sweet hour of prayer
Sweet hour of prayer
Sweet hour of prayer
The joys I feel, the bliss I share
Of those whose anxious spirits burn
With strong desires for Thy return
With such I hasten to the place
Where God my Savior shows His face
And gladly take my station there
And wait for Thee, sweet hour of prayer
Sweet hour of prayer
Sweet hour of prayer
And wait for Thee
Sweet hour of prayer