

Don't Give Up

✠ **Keep praying to the just Judge. (vv.1-5)**

✠ **Keep praying to the God who cares. (vv.6-8)**

In the Name of Jesus, the Way to God through prayer, dear children of the heavenly Father:

Off the coast of England one stormy night a ship went down. There was no Coast Guard, nothing anyone could do until morning when the search for survivors began. They found the fourteen-year-old cabin boy clinging to a rock where he'd been all night. Later they asked him, "Weren't you afraid as the waves washed over you?" "Sure I trembled," he answered, "but the rock never moved."

Christ is the Rock all the crashing waves of life cannot move. Knowing your life depends on Him, how hard will you hang on? Will you wrestle in prayer with God all night if need be, like Jacob who said, "***I will not let you go unless you bless me***"? (Genesis 32:26) Today's call to prayer: **Don't Give Up...**

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When Jesus the Master Teacher wanted to hide something from the self-righteous religious leaders, while at the same time revealing timeless truth to little children, He would tell a parable. Sunday School 101: *A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.* In today's parable Jesus leaves no doubt about what it means: "***Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.***" "***Pray without ceasing,***" we learned in Catechism. Or newer version, "***Pray continually.***" (1 Thessalonians 5:17 KJV, NIV) More literally, "***Pray without let-up.***" **Don't Give Up.**

This might be called a worst-case scenario. For you kids that might be something like getting a flat tire on your bike, but then the other wheel falls off. Or you not only miss a close shot, but then the soccer ball bounces off the goal, bonks you on the head and knocks you out. Worst case scenario.

Being a widow in Jesus' day meant poverty and destitution because there was no husband or son to speak up for her. Judges could pretty much do whatever they wanted, and this one did not want to be bothered. He kept refusing this widow's pleading, "***Grant me justice against my adversary!***" Jesus doesn't say what the problem was – doesn't matter. It was bad, she needed help, this judge kept refusing. End of story? No way! She kept coming to his courtroom, in his face every day. She wore him down. Finally he said to himself, "***I will see that she gets justice so she doesn't wear me out with her coming!***"

"She's pounding me!" is his complaint. Same word as *giving me a black eye*. Is that how we treat God, as if He won't hear until we get angry with Him? From the lesser to the greater, we don't have to. **Keep praying to the just Judge** because He wants us to pray with this widow's *black-eye* intensity.

How much does God care? In Pakistan most people are Muslim and are required to kneel five times a day as prayer is called out from the minarets. Years ago a wealthy woman's grandson became very sick. Five times a day wasn't enough; she finally asked the imam to come and pray for her grandson. He told her to say words from their holy book, the *Quran*. Day after day she prayed, but her grandson kept getting worse. Finally in desperation she did something very illegal. She asked one of her Christian servants to secretly give her a Bible. Privately she read the Bible side-by-side with her *Quran*. She saw how merciful the God of the Bible is. She started praying to God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ, and her grandson got well. Later she wrote a book called, *I Dared to Call Him 'Father.'*¹

¹ [I Dared to Call Him Father: The Miraculous Story of a Muslim Woman's Encounter with God](#), 4/1/03. by [Bilquis Sheikh](#) and Richard H. Schneider.

Jesus taught His disciples, ***“No one comes to the Father except through me.”*** (John 14:6) He taught us to pray, ***“Our Father who art in heaven....”*** This is an entirely different relationship with God none of the world’s religions can match. Just the opposite of the unjust judge, ***“God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only begotten Son so that whoever believes in him will not perish, but will have eternal life.”*** No matter who you are or what you’ve done, Jesus says, ***“I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.”*** (John 10:10 NIV84) Don’t worry coming constantly into God’s courtroom; the Judge is Jesus Himself. ***“What a Friend We Have in Jesus!”*** His holy life, His innocent suffering and death on the cross, His glorious resurrection put God’s justice on your side. Don’t hesitate to pray walking, sitting, or falling asleep. With Micah we cry: ***“Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.”*** (Micah 7:18f NIV84) Like the persistent widow...

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“Listen to what the unjust judge says,” Jesus tells us. Perk up your ears and take this to heart. ***“And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones...?”*** Jesus uses that term ***“chosen ones”*** to remind us that God knew you by name before the world began. He is saying, ***“I loved you then....I love you now....I’ll love you everyday the same and even call you by your name.”*** Especially this is true Jesus says – Listen now. – for those ***“who cry out to him day and night.”*** A better translation than, ***“Will he keep putting them off?”*** would be a statement of fact: ***“And he will have a patient spirit on them.”*** Don’t worry that it might be too late in the day or too deep in the night. God is not some impatient, self absorbed judge hiding away in his courtroom. **Keep praying to the God who cares...**about everything.

Jesus showed God cares when He died on the cross and proved God could help when He rose from the dead. Now this same Jesus reassures us, ***“I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly.”*** 700 years earlier through Isaiah the LORD had promised, ***“Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.”*** (65:24 NIV84) How many times has that happened that God was already answering before you were finished praying?

The classic example from church history was William Tyndale, arrested and put on trial for translating the Bible into English. Since it could not be done with Henry VIII ruling in England, Tyndale had fled to Europe and finished the New Testament in the Lutheran city of Worms, Germany. He kept working for ten more years to complete the Old Testament until he was betrayed in the Netherlands. After months of imprisonment the authorities gave Tyndale one more chance to recant. He refused. So they had him tied to a wooden beam piled with brush and gunpowder, chained and roped by the neck. Given a moment to pray, Tyndale cried out, ***“Lord, open the King of England’s eyes!”*** Then William Tyndale was strangled and burned.² But one year earlier, almost to the day, his friend Miles Coverdale had published a translation that was 70% Tyndale’s, dedicated to King Henry VIII. And in 1604, nearly 90% of the King James Version was Tyndale’s work – the English Bible for nearly 400 years.³

Don’t Give Up – Jesus teaches us. **Keep praying to the just Judge. Keep praying to the God who cares.** But before we close today, Jesus asks a heart rending question which is meant to keep us thinking about this: ***“When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”*** As in the days of Isaiah, society keeps getting worse. Jesus said it would be so right up to the end of earth’s little day. Will you be offended if politics dies? If our culture collapses – in spite of your prayers? If pastors and teachers go astray? Remember: ***“We walk by faith, not by sight.”*** (2 Corinthians 5:7 HCSB) No matter the waves crashing, Jesus’ teaching is right. **Don’t Give Up** on God in prayer. The cross is all the power we need, His empty tomb the proof to **Keep praying....** Solid! Sure! Christ our Rock won’t move. Amen.

² <http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/scholarsandscientists/william-tyndale.html>

³ Morgan, Robert J. *On This Day*. © 1997, Thomas Nelson, Inc. DailyReader © 1999-2001, Wheeler/ Rairdin. Laridian.
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