

Prayer

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[0 : 0 0] How you guys doing? Good? That was only like three goods. It wasn't a lot of goods. Great, good, good, great. Wow.

If it is your, I met somebody, or each week I've been meeting people for the first time, and so if it's your first time to Watermark, I want to welcome you to joining our family. I think you'll see really quickly is what you see is what you get. It's chaos, community, gospel center.

We want to talk about what it means to have the gospel impact our lives, and our mission is to reach out where God has planted us. We believe that each one of you, God has placed you in places where people don't know the good news that we talk about today, and so that is our hope.

That would be the mission of the church, to reach out to the people in this area of Cybertort and the western side of the island, and so that's what we pray for, and that's who we are. My name is Tobin. I'm one of the teachers here, and we are looking at a passage today that fits into last week.

We're talking about this question that we get often, when is Jesus going to come back again? And last week we talked about when he is going to come back again, and the question was not answered.

[1 : 1 3] It didn't answer when he's going to come back again, but it was the question of he's given us certain things, and what will he require of us when he comes back? And we talked about everything that he's given us, every talent, every gift, our health, our sickness, our houses, our kids, everything.

It's a gift from the Lord, and one day he's going to come back, and he's going to ask us how we use that gift of our children, because the mandate is to set up shop. The mandate is to make his name great.

The mandate is to present the gospel to all of creation, for the king will return one day and come back for his people, and that's what we have before us. We're given our money to make his name great and to do these things, and that will be the question. And so today we get to this topic of another thing that we need to do while we're waiting on him in these hard and difficult times.

And the reason Christ gave the parable is at the very beginning of it. It's the very first sentence, so it's one of those easy parables. There's only two parables in all the gospels where it talks about why he spoke what he spoke immediately before or after the parable.

And this is one of them. We're going to talk about prayer today, and I know that for some of us prayer is a strange thing. It's a weird thing, and sometimes we hear prayer and we shut off and we don't know how to pray.

[2 : 3 6] Sometimes it's really easy to pray. Sometimes it's difficult to pray. It was 1985, and this university student at Auburn University was going on a date, and it was his third date with this girl that he really, really liked, and she had invited him over to her house for dinner to meet the parents.

And so this student thought that he would make a great impression on the parents and on this girl. And so he goes to the florist shop, which is right in the center of the little community of Auburn, Alabama, and he walks in and the florist says, can I help you?

And he said, yeah, I need to get some roses tonight. And the florist goes, wow, okay. I said, I need, he said, he needs two dozen roses.

One dozen roses to give to the wife because he wants to make a good impression on the mom of the girl that he's eating dinner with. And then he has one dozen roses for the girl because it's his third date, and he's hoping maybe they're going to kiss and be able to experience some of that lip action and things like that.

So he needs two of the best florists, and he's explaining these all things to the florist. And the guy's, that's great. Okay, that's good. And so he gets the two bouquets of roses, and he goes to the house of the girl that he's going to go on his third date with, and he meets the mom at the door, and the dad's not there yet.

[4 : 06] And so they're sitting around talking, and the dad shows up, and they have a meal. And the dad asks the son, or asks the student, to pray for the meal.

And the student, who's going on the third date with this girl, who he wants to make a great impression with the parents, and wants to get a kiss from the girl, prays this amazing prayer. I mean, it's like four or five minutes long, and it's talking about God's kingdom, and it's talking about the blessings of this family, and peace on this family, and everything that you can talk about.

And amen, and they eat, and they have a night, and then after the dinner, they go out, and they're walking on a date. And on the way outside the date, the girl, Mary Beth, the girl says, Wow, I didn't know you could pray so well.

I didn't know you were so spiritual. And the student looked at her and goes, I didn't know your dad was a florist. Think about that.

You'll get it. So sometimes it's really easy to pray when you make a bonehead mistake in the dad's florist, and you're in trouble. And other times it's very difficult to pray.

[5 : 21] And that's what we're talking about today. We're talking about the difficult times to pray. And in Luke 18, Jesus tells them why to pray. He says, it's going to be difficult.

And I don't want you to lose heart. I'm going away, and I'm not going to be back for some time. For the sake of arguing, you still don't get this joke, do you? Ask the person next to you afterwards.

Flowers, what is that? Okay. Anyway, for the sake of this sermon, I'm just going to say prayer is just talking to God. It's just sharing your heart, sharing what's on your heart.

God already knows what's on your heart, and so prayer is just talking to God and letting him know just what's going on in your heart. It doesn't have to be repetitive. The Scripture says not to be repetitive, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

But he says it's just sharing your heart. It doesn't have to be lengthy. Sometimes people get into prayers, and they pray long prayers. And Scripture doesn't say that we're to pray long prayers because, again, God already knows what's on our heart.

[6 : 20] It doesn't have to be with an amazing accent. It doesn't have to be in a Texas accent. Every culture is allowed to pray, and just because one language is better than other languages in prayer, or maybe not, if you're Australian, that's okay.

You can learn how to do those things. My wife is giving me a look like. But we have a running joke here, so you all know that. But, you know, you don't have to pray in a certain way, and you don't have to use power words.

Have you ever been in a prayer group where you have people, and you said, you've got to say these words, and these words will unleash God's power? And Scripture doesn't talk about that because God already knows everything.

He knows your hearts. He knows your needs. And he just wants you to talk to him. The Old Testament is clear in the people that Jesus is talking to that they're there to pray regularly. Everybody who Jesus is talking to knows that they're to pray regularly.

The rabbis had these rules. The rabbis said, every Jewish person, you have to pray three times a day. Don't pray more than three times a day because you're going to wear God out. If you pray more than three times a day, God just gets tired of listening to all the prayers of all the people.

[7 : 24] And so the rabbis said, just pray three times a day. But Jesus says no because he knew that his disciples were going to enter into difficult times. He knew that they were going to be alone.

He knew that they were going to be in the darkness. He knew that they were going to be living in hostile environment. And because the people were hostile to Christ, they were going to be hostile to us.

And so Jesus shares this parable on prayer. And this is one of those parables that has, it's one of the hardest ones for me to understand why he would pray this way.

It's a cultural thing that he talks about. But for years and years, it really messed me up because he uses these illustrations and these comparisons. But he's not really comparing.

He's contrasting. He's contrasting. And so I want to look at this story really quickly and look at what we can learn from these three people that Jesus is talking about.

[8 : 22] And you see them in your bulletin. The first person we see in the story is a judge. This judge would have been an elder. He would have been a leader in the community. If you came into the city gates, the judge would have been sitting off to the side of the gates where all the business was transacted, where all the legal things happened.

So the minute you walk in, there would have been two or three tiers of gates. And in between these gates, there would have been little stalls. And at these stalls would have been the judges. And so you would come and you would transact business.

You'd ask if you could come in and do business. If you had something legal happen, you would go there. And so the judges were the leaders. And they were seen and they were known by everybody. And they would be very prominent, very powerful, and they would be very important in their culture.

But in this story, Jesus tells the story of a judge who doesn't fear God. He doesn't fear God. The Greek and the Hebrew says that he doesn't worship God.

He has no sense of morality. He has no moral compass. I don't know if you've ever met a person like this, but Jesus uses this example of the judge that he doesn't fear God.

[9 : 28] He doesn't worship God. We also learn that he doesn't respect people. He doesn't feel compassion. He doesn't feel love. He doesn't feel moved.

In the Hebrew, it actually says he feels no shame. Now, that doesn't really mean a lot to many of us coming from a Western culture. But these words that Jesus spoke of this judge, the minute he shared them, everybody in the group who was listening to him would have been dumbfounded.

Because Leviticus says those are the two requirements of any leader in any community. And they would wonder how someone could be made a judge if they didn't fear God and they didn't love people or respect them.

I mean, in Jesus' day and in a culture, shame and respect were everything. It's where how things got done in the culture. If I did something wrong in Jesus' day, they wouldn't say, Tobin, that's bad.

How come you did that? But they would say, Tobin, that's shameful. You brought shame on yourself. You brought shame on your family.

[10 : 43] You brought shame on your city. I don't know if you've ever experienced that, but it happens a lot in Asian cultures. And so shame, or to say somebody had no shame, was one of the worst things you could say about a person.

Because it meant they had no honor either. So if you have no shame, you have no honor. And so we have this business leader. We have this, and I know that's hard to imagine in politics with somebody with no shame and no honor who doesn't fear God and doesn't fear people.

But it happened in Jesus' day. It probably doesn't happen in our day. That's a joke, too. We'll catch you up at the end of this, okay? Where we're going to go in here is I want to look at these passages really quickly.

I want to look at three people. I want to look at the judge. I want to look at the widow. And I want to look at us. And then what I want to do is I want to lead us into a time of prayer. Because it's about prayer. And then we're not going to come up and do announcements at the end.

It's going to be just like last week. I'm going to lead us into a time of prayer. And at the end of the prayer time, I'm just going to say amen. The worship team is going to stay up here, and they're going to continue playing music.

[11 : 50] If you want to sit here and spend some time with God, we want you to do that. We want to create an environment for you to do that. There will be leaders and elders and staff up here who will all be happy to pray with you if you need someone to pray with you.

If you don't need those things, then we'd ask for you, after you've listened to the music for a couple seconds, just to get up and walk out slowly and allow the people here to worship the Lord. So that's where we're going, okay?

So we're looking at this judge, and this judge is bad news. He does shameful things, and it doesn't bother him. He has no sense of honor in his soul. He can't determine what is right or wrong because that isn't even an issue for him.

He just thinks of himself. He doesn't think about protecting the people that he's been given charge of. All he cares for is himself. And basically the scripture says that the only thing that's going to move this guy is a bribe.

You're not going to say do the right thing. You're not going to say shame on you. You're not going to say God is watching. You're dishonoring God. None of those things are going to work on this guy. The only thing that's going to work on this guy is a bribe.

[12 : 51] That's how low and that's how bad he is. The interesting thing is in verse 4 and 5, he even says that of himself. He says, well, I don't really fear or worship God and I don't really respect or feel shame or pride towards people.

I mean, he even admits that he's like that. And all the people who heard this in Jesus' day would have been dumbfounded. But not really.

Because the scriptures tell us and other things tell us that most of the judges in Jesus' day were corrupt. If you went to Jerusalem, people didn't have shame. They didn't have honor.

That most judges, as you read extra-biblical accounts, they didn't take cases and do the right thing. In fact, we were told that you could bribe a judge for a steak dinner. And so the people hear this and they're dumbfounded, but the people hear it and they look all around them and they say, yeah, welcome to my world.

That's what I live in right now. I'm surrounded by people with power, but they don't care. They don't have compassion. They don't love. They don't think about me. Then the story has this other person.

[14 : 05] It's a widow. Verse 3, there's a widow in the city and she keeps coming to him. Now, you've got to think about this. In Jesus' day, the widows were the lowest part of society.

So the minute they heard widow or they saw widow, they realized that this woman had no power. She was helpless. She was innocent. She could do nothing. I mean, the fact that she's coming to court without a man because a woman would never go to court.

And the only reason a woman would go to court is because she has no husband or no man to represent her. That means that she's really, really bad off and she's poor. She can't pay a bribe.

But Isaiah says that according to the law, the widows and orphans are to have their cases heard first among the people of God. But the people don't care about that in this story.

All the judge cares about is money in himself. Her only tool, her only hope is perseverance and persistence.

[15 : 12] Have you ever been in a place like that? Where you had no resources, you had no connections, you had no natural ability, you had nothing going for you.

The only thing you had was God. And the only thing you could do was pray and come before him.

But the passage says that this woman has nothing and so she comes day by day by day by day by day. It's her only tool.

It's interesting to hear the story of this judge in his mind because he's doing these thoughts. And he basically says, you know, he's probably already being bribed by the person. Most people when they read this, they realize and they think that the woman has something legal going on.

That she's owed money, but the judge, the person who owes her the money isn't paying it to her. She's owed something, but she's not getting it. And the reason she's not getting it is because the person who's keeping it from her is actually bribing the judge.

[16 : 20] And so she knows that, but she can't bribe the judge. And she's helpless. She has no power. She has no strength. And so she continues to come to the judge. And the judge basically then says to her and says to himself, and he's not speaking to God.

Even though I don't fear God, even though I don't respect men, yet because of the widow, she comes to bother me, I will give her legal protection. Unless otherwise by continually coming, she will wear me out.

In Greek, the word is she's going to give me a black eye. And it doesn't mean that she's going to punch him because she's powerless, but it means that she's just going to wear him out. You ever have people wear you out?

I mean, I have two kids, right? I'm not going to tell you which ones they are, but one is asking for an iPhone. And they just continually ask for an iPhone. And one's asking for a bow and arrow. So for this whole summer, they have both given me the reasons why they both deserve an iPhone and a bow and arrow.

And why it would be okay for them to bring them back to Hong Kong because they'll use them very well. And I feel like every morning I get this plea. Every morning I get this new idea.

[17 : 31] Every morning I get either a picture of somebody holding a bow and arrow, sitting by my cereal bowl, or someone comes and they write a poem about how great bow and arrows are and how everybody should have a bow and arrow. And if you don't have a bow and arrow, then your parents are bad parents, right?

And so I'm starting to think, am I a bad parent? Because I don't give my kid a bow and arrow or an iPhone. But I know in my heart I want to be a good parent. And I know that if I give that to them, I don't know where I'm going with this, but I know that if I give that to them, that's just bad.

No matter how persistent they are. Verse 6 and 7, Jesus says this. He says, Hear what the unrighteous judge said. Now will not God, Yahweh, bring about justice for his elect, for his children, who cry to him day and night, and will he delay over them long?

It's a double negative saying that in Greek it means he will never delay over his people long, that he will always come to his people. What Jesus is saying in these two verses is this. He's saying that parable that I read to you, that parable that I told you in the beginning, is just the exact opposite.

I mean, God is not like that unjust judge. And you are not like that poor widow. I mean, you might feel like it sometimes.

[18 : 49] You might feel like you have no recompense, but that's not true. Because if you're a child of God, if you're his chosen one, if you're his people, the Bible says that he's picked you, and he's chosen you, and he's been with you, and he pursues you from the beginning of time.

Before creation was made, God knew your name. Do you know that your name, according to Isaiah 49, is written on God's hands? That's another sermon. But as God's children, your name is written on God's hands.

And so Jesus goes to tell them that everything you heard before is not how God is. Because you know that God cares for you. You know that God takes care of you.

You know that God provides for you. You know that he's given his son for you. Isaiah 49 is this amazing story, and it basically says this, that God is to you like a nursing mother is to a newborn child.

And the psalmist says, how can a nursing mother leave her newborn child? I don't know if you've ever had experience with nursing, but we've been experiencing that in our church a lot.

[20 : 09] And there are certain things that happen biologically, hormonally, physically, to women on their third day. And there's this sense of urge to go after that child to meet those needs that are in the woman.

I know I'm explaining too much. Someone will explain that to you later on today also. But the passage says that God's love for you and his desire for you is the same.

Do you realize that? That God is passionately pursuing you. He desires a relationship with you. And there's no way that he's gonna give up on you.

There's no way that he's going to do that. The passage says that God always answers prayers. The God never delays when he can give you an answer.

The unjust judge delayed, even though he could fix things. But Jesus says God is not like that. God cares for us. And either his answers are yes, no, or wait.

[21 : 15] But when his answers are wait and no, they're always for a very good reason. It's always for our good. Good. Have you ever prayed for something and you gotta know?

Are you waiting for something right now? Jesus says, and the Bible says, that God is pursuing you.

That from eternity past, he has your best plan for you. And that whatever he gives you is the perfect thing. It's what you need.

Whether the answer is a yes or a no or a wait, God is not like the unjust judge who is selfish and just wants a bribe, but that he loves us and he sacrifices everything for us.

The passage says that God isn't like the judge who waits because Jesus says in verse 5, 6, and 7 that one day God will come back and he will pass judgment and he will make all things right and he will fix all things in our life.

- [22 : 32] All the pain, all the frustration, all the hurt, all the things that have been done wrong to you, all the brokenness, that God says that he will come and he will be the judge of those things and he will fix those things and make them right.

The passage says that we're not like the widow because we're not all by ourselves. We're not powerless. We're not weak. We don't have somebody who stands up for us.

But unlike the widow, Jesus says we have a God in heaven who stands before and judges and proclaims justice in all of our lives. And then ultimately that judge is gonna come forth and you're going to experience him.

And all the pain and all the suffering and all the unknown that we feel now will all be cleared up and will all make sense. And that's why Jesus shares this passage because he says it's about hope. Because he knew 2,000 years after he came out of the grave that you and I would be sitting here and he knew that you would be wondering when is he gonna come back again?

Why are things so difficult? What's going on? Why is my life so terrible? And Jesus' message to his disciples and his message to us is that the answer to these things is to pray and to seek his face because we have a judge and we have a father who has gone before us and who is working in our lives.

- [24 : 14] I wanna ask some questions. And the question is this. What do you think of prayer? Do you pray?

When do you pray? Do we believe that God is good? There's something that really bothers me here.

What bothers me is this. Why did Jesus compare God to an unjust judge? I mean, he could have done a more positive parable. It could have been a more uplifting thing.

It could have been a more encouraging thing. Why does he choose to judge and compare God to an unjust judge? Well, you might say it's because that's just the exact opposite and God's just the exact opposite of the unjust judge.

But I think there's something else there. I think that Jesus compares God to the unjust judge because more often than not, if we're honest, that's how we see God.

- [25 : 31] I mean, we're afraid to come to pray to him because we feel like he's unjust. We worry about, should we pray these things? Will he listen to me? Have you ever thought, well, I don't know if I should pray because God's just gonna do whatever he wants anyway.

I don't need to pray. And Jesus says, if we walk around with life like that, our view of God is just like the unjust judge.

But he shares that God is not like that and he desires for our best in our life. The passage says that if you want to see what your thoughts of God are, look at your prayer life.

We talk a lot about, hey, how you tithe up here represents what you feel and understand about the gospel. But what Jesus is saying here is how you pray determines a lot to people about how you view God.

When we pray, do we come to him as a loving father or do we come to him as an unjust judge? The Bible says that our prayer life is a key mark of our relationship with God. And so as we come to him, is he Abba Father or is he the unjust judge?

- [26 : 53] I don't know where you're at in your prayer life, I'm sure that some of us in here have never prayed before to God. You've heard the old story that there's never atheists or people who don't pray in classrooms and foxholes, but I'm sure that there are some people here who've probably never prayed to God.

I'm sure there's some people in here who probably prayed to God, but they feel like God has stopped listening to them. And so they've become discouraged and they've just stopped praying.

And the thoughts that they have and the thoughts that I have is what's the use? Why should I keep praying? Because God's not going to listen to me. But what Jesus is trying to share to us in his passage is that's normal.

And that it's okay to feel that way. And the truth is that none of those things are true, even though you might feel like them. The early church fathers called prayer the breathing of your soul.

That when we prayed, our soul was breathing. And I thought about that a lot because if you look at me up here, you don't know what's going on. Am I praying or am I not praying?

[28 : 10] If you watch someone out there and their kids are running around and it's a dad and he has five kids, you can bet that he's praying. But if he doesn't have five kids and he's sitting there, you don't know what's going on in his life.

And the scripture says that as we breathe and we pray, we come to the Lord, our lives change. I don't know when you're praying and you don't know when I'm praying.

But the passage says that we know when we're not praying. Christ goes on and he says this as he's talking to his disciples. When you fear, you're not praying.

When you fear, is this going to work out? What's going to happen here? What's happening in my life? When you fear, what we're saying is, God, you are not good. I don't believe that you have my best interest in heart.

The Bible says when we're frustrated, we're not praying. When we're frustrated about how things are going and things aren't going the way we want and we wonder why aren't these things happening here?

[29 : 25] Scripture says that we have a good God who judges all things, who oversees us. He's in control of all those things and if we get frustrated, we don't believe that he's good.

We believe that he's unjust. When we worry, the Bible says we don't see God as good.

We see him as unjust. If we're worrying about our life, if we're worrying about things happening, if we're worrying about the future, if we're worrying about our job, if we're worrying about relationships, the Scripture says that all these things we shouldn't be doing because if we understood that we had a just God who takes care of us and watches over us, then we wouldn't have to worry about those things.

The Bible says that all of these reactions that we've done, all of these things we've done, basically say, I don't believe that God is good. Instead, I believe that God is unjust and I'm not going to follow an unjust God.

And what Jesus says in this passage to you and to me and to his disciples is that everything that you read in verses 1 through 5 is just the opposite.

[30 : 47] The God is pursuing you. He's taking care of you. He desires your best. He always comes to us. One day, in the book of Revelations, we are told that the judge will come back and make all things new.

Verse 8 says that when the Son of Man comes back, will he find faith? Translated, what that means is one day, God is going to come back and he's going to make all things right.

The question is, what will we be doing? What will we be doing? Will we see him as a good God and just and walking and trusting and praying every moment of every day?

When I was talking through this with a friend, he says, well, how do you pray? And to be honest with you, I just pray usually four words or five words. Lord Jesus, I need you.

And so that's how I pray through my day. I walk through my day and I say, Jesus, I need you. And I start thinking about what's going on in this situation. Lord, I need you to help me in this area.

[32 : 03] Lord, I want your kingdom to come in this area. Can you help me make this come? The early church fathers prayed a prayer that said, Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of the Most High God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

What Jesus is saying here to us is that in the end times, God will come back and he'll make all things new. and the question is, will he find us praying to him and trusting him in that situation?

Or will we be treating him as an unjust God? What I'm going to do is I'm going to lead us through a prayer time. I'm going to ask the worship team to come forward now. Again, after this time, we're just going to pray.

I'm going to pray some prayers for us and after this, you will be dismissed. We'd like to try to maintain an attitude of prayer. prayer. But I want you just to follow me.

Let's pray. Father, we come before you as your people and we read passages like today and we wonder why it is so hard in our world in the darkness, in a world that seems not to care about you, to walk with you.

[33 : 35] We get discouraged. We fear. We get anxious. We get angry. We get depressed.

We realize that all of these things, all of these things point to our view of you and that view is that you're not good and you're not in control and that you're unjust. So, Lord, we come to you and we just need you.

Father, we just pray that you would enter into our hearts and our minds right now that you would show us areas of our life where we are not walking the way that we should. Lord, I know that there are some of us in here who've probably never, ever prayed to you.

Lord, I pray for my brothers and sisters in here and we're thankful that they are here. My prayer for them is that they would know that they have a loving God, a good God, who created them from the beginning of creation, knew them before the world was made, who desires a relationship with them just as a nursing mother desires to be with her children whose name you want to write on your hands as your child.

Lord, I pray for those in here who have never prayed to you. I pray that they would pray just as I had prayed a long time ago. Father, if you're real, I don't know if you're real, but if you are real, I pray that you would make yourself known to me this week.

[35 : 05] Help me to be open to what I experience. Help me to be looking for you speaking to me through creation and through friends and through classmates and through people in the workplace.

Lord, if you were real, would you speak to me and show me yourself? Father, for some of us in here, I just realize that as we think about this passage and try to get our head around what does it mean for us to live with a just God instead of an unjust God in our life, I realize that for many of us in here, we have a wrong view of you.

the reason we strive and we move and we worry and we're anxious and we're very competent and we're very busy, the reason, if we're honest and truthful in our hearts, is because we see you as unjust.

We don't really believe you're going to give us what we need. We don't really believe that you're good. and that belief shapes our soul and our thoughts shape our actions and we might say that we love you but our hands show something different.

So Lord, I pray for those of us in here who've done this and your word says that we will always do that you've given us this passage because you know that that is our nature to be discouraged, to walk away Father, I pray for us.

[36 : 48] I pray that we would realize that we serve a God who loves us beyond belief, who's given his son, who's given everything, who provides all that we have and that one day we'll make all things right.

Father, we're so thankful that you are a God of second chances and that you pursue us over and over and over.

So I pray for us, Lord. I pray for those of us who are in that situation and we don't even realize it. I pray that we have a spouse or a friend or a good mate who the next time we start to worry, start to get anxious, start to fear, start to panic, that they would lovingly turn towards us and say, you know, our God is a good God and you can trust him because he's there for you.

Lord, we just confess and repent of our seeing you wrongly. And Lord, I pray for those of us who have just given up on prayer.

I think of my good friend who's just losing a battle with cancer, spouse, and they've prayed and they've prayed for so long and they still have not seen you move and they wonder if you're there, do you care?

[38 : 17] Lord, I pray for those of us who've given up. I pray that we would see anew and afresh who you really are. I pray that we would be able to read your word and realize that your son came for us to give us hope in a new life and sonship.

Father, I pray that you would speak to us now. Lord, I was really challenged one time in my life when someone looked at me and said, Tobin, who do you think's been more faithful?

God to his people? God to his people? He's been faithful to his people and I realized just at that moment that God has always been faithful and he continues to pursue us as his people.

God to his people. Father, teach us to pray right now as we come to you.

Show us how we can honor you and bring glory to your name. Show us what it means to pray for your kingdom and that your will would be done. Father, most of us, I just pray for our hearts.

[40 : 16] Some of us are blinded to our blindedness and we have seen you as ungood and unjust for so long that we can't even begin to think of you as good and holy and loving and caring.

Father, I pray for some of us who have certain circumstances in their life that they've held onto as proof that you are not good. maybe it's a failed marriage.

Maybe it's poor health. Maybe it's the loss of somebody that they have deeply loved and cherished. Whatever that thing is, Lord, I pray for those brothers and sisters right now that you'd give them the strength just to release that, to realize that they have a judge who is good, a father who cares, who knows them intimately and has come in every area and every form, has promised to provide and those words are not just words but they are lived out on Calvary.

God, help us to whenever we doubt your goodness to look to the cross and realize that you are ultimately all good no matter how we see you.

Father, we need you we need your grace, we need your power, we need your strength.

[42 : 36] Help us to be a people who leave here with hope, a hope that 95% of Hong Kong does not have, a hope in your son and that you are good and that you will make all things right.

As we leave here today, Lord, we pray that we would share that hope with those around us. Teach us to pray help us to realize that you are always answering in a part of all these things and the only thing we probably can learn from the widow is to be persistent because you've called us to be persistent as your children.

So we pray, Lord, persistently that your kingdom would come and your name would be made great and we as your people would be found faithful when you return.

We pray all these things in your son Jesus' name. Amen.