This morning, we’re going to do things just a little different. In front of us, we have 8 verses of scripture. We’ll read all 8 verses, but we won’t go verse by verse. Instead, we’ll look at the overarching point Jesus is making. What is this overarching point? Well, the Bible tells us in the very first verse – pray and don’t lose heart. I won’t ask for a show of hands this morning, but some have been praying for a long time over family, friends, situations, jobs, salvation. I would say to you this morning, the Lord Jesus knows – pray and don’t lose heart. Luke 18:1-8.

***Luke 18:1-8 Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, 2saying: “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. 3Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, ‘Get justice for me from my adversary.’ 4And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man, 5yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’ 6Then the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge said. 7And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? 8I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”***

***Prayer\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

We’re in Jerusalem, on our way to Jericho with Jesus. The verses open with a powerful statement - *Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.* Jesus is speaking this parable, not to some unbelieving group of people who don’t know Him, don’t know God, and don’t walk with Him. Jesus says “men always ought to pray and not lose heart” to His disciples, those walking with Him. Though encouraging to everyone, Jesus primary target is the believer – Peter, James, John, you, me…. Always pray and don’t lose heart.

Hannah prayed for a child 1 Samuel 1:7 year by year. Abraham was 100, Sarah 90 when Isaac was born. Joseph was a slave in Egypt 13 years. In Luke 1, we meet Zacharias and Elizabeth – Luke 1:6 says they were both righteous and blameless, walking in the ordinances and commandments of God. Yet, they did not have the child they longed for. Luke 1:13 starts *But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard.* Ecclesiastes 3:1 - *To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven.* Regardless of the situation, regardless of the time you have been crying out to God, I encourage you this morning to listen to what our Savior teaches – always pray and don’t lose heart.

In verses 2-6, we learn a few things about the judge and the widow. We learn the judge was unjust, lacked fear of God, and compassion for people. He just wanted to shut the widow up. The widow was relentless. She prayed without ceasing. She knew what she was seeking and pursued it continually. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 tells us to *pray without ceasing*. James 5:16 says in part - *The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.* 1 Peter 3:12 says *For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers*. Answers come in due season for its appointed purpose. Jesus says – pray always and do not lose heart.

Verse 7*And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?* God is not an unjust judge, lacking compassion for people, simply looking to shut someone up. He hears His people – His own elect, the chosen ones. God hears them as they cry out day and night… sounds like they are always praying and not losing heart. Though He bears long with them? Who? The Greek holds the idea of God bears long with those oppressing believers, the wicked, to do His perfect work in their life. The idea here is similar to Romans 8:28 - *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose*. All things work – good, bad, happy, sad, healing, sickness, life, death – all things work together for good to those who love God – in other words – his elect.

Verse 8 starts - *I tell you that He will avenge them speedily.* Vengeance will be sudden. God will avenge speedily! Like lightening flashing, so will be the vengeance of God.

Verse 8 ends - *Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?* Now, mark it in mind that Jesus says – when the Son of Man comes. The Son of Man is standing with the disciples speaking these words, yet He says – when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth? Jesus knew – Troubles, trials, tribulations, and persecutions would come. He is saying – pursue, persevere, pray, believe – pray always and don’t lose heart. God still has His eye on His elect.

Brothers and sisters – I want to encourage you this morning. God still has His eye on the elect. That’s you. Pray always, without ceasing, knowing that He hears. He is not unjust. He is not unaware. He hears you and He hears your prayers. The answer may not be today, but it will be one day. He will answer speedily and more completely and graciously than we can imagine. Pray without ceasing, believing with all your heart that His perfect answer is on its way to you. Pray always and do not lose heart.