

MINNESOTA VALLEY CHURCH; October 19, 2025
19th Sunday after Pentecost; Singers: Osthus.Reynolds

PRELUDE: Carol Gustafson

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

CALL TO WORSHIP: From Psalm 121

PASTOR: My help comes from the LORD,

ALL: The Maker of heaven and earth.

PASTOR: He will not let your foot slip--

ALL: He who watches over you will not slumber;

PASTOR: The LORD will watch over your coming and going

ALL: Both now and forevermore.

NIVHYMN #204 "Come, Christians, Join to Sing"

CONFESSION OF SIN: *Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed. Therefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy and ask You for Christ's sake, grant us forgiveness of all our sins, and by Your Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of You and of Your will and true obedience to Your Word, to the end that by Your grace we may come to eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE:

READER: Glenn Gustafson

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: *Genesis 32:22-30 That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two maidservants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. 23 After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. 24 So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. 25 When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched*

the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. 26 Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." 27 The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. 28 Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome." 29 Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there. 30 So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."

EPISTLE LESSON: *2 Timothy 4:1-5 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-with great patience and careful instruction. 3 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. 5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.*

READER: Here ends the reading of God's Word.

CONGREGATION SINGS: God be praised, for His glad Tidings!

CONFESSION OF FAITH: Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd;

I shall not want.

2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures;

He leads me beside the still waters.

3 He restores my soul;

He leads me in the paths of righteousness

For His name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
My cup runs over.
6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD
Forever.

GLORIA PATRI: Ambassador Hymnal p. 4 (please put on screen)
*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was
in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen,
Amen.*

OFFERING PRAYER

Worship Songs: Chosen by Carol

SERMON: “STUBBORN FAITH,” Luke 18:1-8, Pastor Tom Olson 10.19.25 *Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen*

JACOB: Do you remember the Old Testament account of Jacob wrestling with the angel? For half the night he tried to get rid of his attacker until he realized he was wrestling with God. Then he hung on to the angel until he got a blessing. That is a picture of STUBBORN FAITH. With faith in God and patient trust, you have a rare commodity I call, STUBBORN FAITH. Stubborn is used in the good sense...like RELENTLESS. It is a faith that hangs on to the promises of God when everybody else is telling you to give up.

PARABLE: Today in Luke 18, Jesus tells us a parable about STUBBORN FAITH so that we might be encouraged to join the small band of believers that hangs on to the promises of God until the answer comes.

I. STUBBORN FAITH KNOWS WHERE THE POWER IS

Luke 18:1-3 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 about men. 3 And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'

JUDGES: One thing that we learn when we read the news is the amount of power a judge has. When a judge makes a ruling, it is final, unless it is appealed to a higher judge. If the appeal is not allowed, the lower court judge's ruling stands. Once the Supreme Court rules, the decision is final unless the Supreme Court reverses the ruling. The ability to appoint judges is one of the greatest responsibilities that a president has.

POWER: This woman knew where the power was in her community to give her justice. We are not told what her concern was. It could have been an inheritance she was not allowed to have. It could have been a property that someone swindled out of her. It could have been an assault against her that was never dealt with.

CORRUPT: This woman knew that her only hope of justice was the judge. As is too often the case, the judge in this town was corrupt. Jesus said, ***“He neither feared God or cared about man.”***

TREES: A friend of mine is a surveyor and he was called upon to survey a property where the neighbor stole 15 acres of trees for logs worth about 30,000. But it was in Appalachian Mountains. The local judge was deeply connected to the thieving land owner and loggers and local surveyor. The defrauded land owners spent over \$30,000 fighting the case in court, but the corrupt judge ruled against them and they had to give up.

COMMAND: The Old Testament is filled with God's commands to exercise justice: *Deuteronomy 16:18-20* "Appoint judges and officials for each of your tribes in every town the LORD your God is giving you, and they shall judge the people fairly. 19 Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. 20 Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the LORD your God is giving you."

ISAIAH: God repeatedly condemned Israel for not having corrupt judges. It was one of the many reasons why God allowed Israel to be destroyed twice. *Isaiah 5:22-25* "Woe to those...23 who acquit the guilty for a bribe, but deny justice to the innocent...25 Therefore the LORD's anger burns against his people; his hand is raised and he strikes them down."

GOD: This woman knew that the power to help her was in the hands of the judge. We know that the power to help us is in the hands of God. I love *Psalms 124:8* "Our help is in the name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth." He is the only one that has sovereign power in this life and determines the destiny of our life after death as well. God is the one we need to trust. God's promises are the foundation of that trust. God cannot lie. His promises are true NO MATTER HOW THINGS LOOK.

I like the way this poem puts it. "Judge not the Lord by feeble sense nor scan His works in vain. God is his own interpreter and he will make it plain!" STUBBORN FAITH KNOWS WHERE THE POWER IS. SECONDLY...

II. STUBBORN FAITH IS RELENTLESS

Luke 18:4-7 "For some time he refused. But finally, he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!'" 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?"

PERSISTENCE: This widow did not give up. She kept pestering the judge. She kept demanding justice. HER PERSISTENCE WAS STRONGER THAN HIS RESISTENCE. The corrupt judge admitted that she was wearing him out and he took up her case and gave her justice.

APPLICATION: Jesus makes the point that if an unjust judge will do this for a powerless widow, how much more will God, who is good, bring about justice for His chosen ones He loves. We just need to hang on by faith.

DOOR: This week I heard an amazing statement that speaks to this. Here it is: "We often close the door to God before heaven has time to open it." Have you ever done this in your life? ...you close the door to the provision of God due to impatience. You don't hang on until heaven can open the door at the right time. For some people that means hanging on until the day of death because the provision of God is coming in heaven and not on earth. But for others it means hanging on to the promises of God until the right time comes for heaven to open the door.

FAITH: Hanging on pleases God. Hebrews 11 is the faith chapter and it lists the people who hung on to the promises of God by faith, no matter what happened outwardly. It begins with this powerful statement in *Hebrews 11:6* "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Hanging on is a key part of faith. That is why some people suggest that faith should be spelled P A T I E N C E.

BADGERS: One of my favorite examples of this in literature is from C.S. Lewis's "Chronicles of Narnia." In the book "Prince Caspian," the Badgers were the animals that did not give up on Aslan, the Lion. They believed that He would help them at the right time, no matter how bad the situation was. The dwarfs were giving up hope in the Lion and wanted to recruit the help of the

White Witch. The Badgers stood against them in the darkest hour when help was needed. They knew where the true power and help was to come from. I love their statement, ***“We are Badgers, once more, and we hang on.”***

SWINDOLL: Chuck Swindoll read the story in a sermon about a single woman who was RELENTLESS in her prayer to find a husband. She hung a pair of men’s pants at the foot of her bed and prayed each night that God would fill them with a man. The mother of a young man who was in church the Sunday of that particular sermon wrote Pastor Chuck a note saying, “I am concerned about my son, because he has a girl’s bikini hanging on the foot of his bed.”

RELENTLESS in prayer...of course, praying according to the will of God would be understood in all of this! THIRDLY...

III. STUBBORN FAITH IS RARE

Luke 18:6-8 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?”

CONSUMATION: I know that when Jesus comes back that he will find millions of people with SAVING FAITH in Jesus Christ. That is implied in many Bible verses. But I wonder how many people Jesus will find with the faith described in this parable, STUBBORN FAITH, RELENTLESS FAITH.

IMPRESSED: That is what impressed me so much over the years with the missionary colleagues Sharon had when she served in Africa before I met her.

MISSIONARIES: Many of these missionaries were single women who were Bible teachers of children, nurses, Bible translators, mothers and wives living in primitive conditions. I remember some of them saying that they “received a Bible verse from the

Lord and that they were standing on it in prayer.” It was a Holy Spirit leading to the Word of God and then a RELENTLESS AND STUBBORN persistence in prayer until it came to pass. They hung on. Many had too because they had no money and old age took their strength, so they learned to trust God for provision. Sharon had to do that as well in those days.

SUE: Sue Erickson was that way. She had a list of prayer requests that she had memorized and she repeated them over and over when we got together for prayer...she was STUBBORN AND RELENTLESS with her prayers for judges, leaders, doctors, teachers, pastors and so many concerns like the sanctity of life. She hammered God with them every time she prayed.

JACOB: She was like the angel of the Lord who said to Jacob, ***“Let me go,” but, like Jacob, Sue said, “I will not let you go until you bless me.”*** She and Arvid kept on coming to every prayer meeting on Saturday nights and Sunday morning until it was no longer physically possible for them to come. Nelly Sealy was the same way.

CALL: When Jesus returns will He find prayer warriors like that? Dave Fischer told me that his biggest concern for the call process for a new pastor is that the committee and church be in serious prayer. When we are, God will help us do the right thing and it will result in a blessing from heaven.

I like to put it this way, ***“In the store, you get what you pay for, in the Kingdom of God, you get what you pray for.”***

REASONS: So why is STUBBORN FAITH so rare? I can easily think of seven reasons:

1. Satanic Opposition
2. Lack of Faith
3. Laziness. worldliness, and overscheduling
4. Willful sin in our lives

5. Tension in our home and family relationships
6. Lack of feeding on the Word of God
7. Neglecting meeting together for worship and prayer

TESTED: My faith was tested this week when thieves took \$1,000 worth of items from our home. But I am at the point where I pray for the thieves every day that they would come to know Jesus as their Savior. I know God knows who they are. I would like to get my tools back and car key back, but much more than that, I would like to see their souls saved. Maybe I am the only one in the world praying for them. I want to have STUBBORN FAITH for their souls.

NEED: We need serious prayer warriors that have STUBBORN FAITH that is relentless. Is God calling you to be like the widow? You know the source of power. You are willing to spend serious time in personal and group prayer.

PSALM 37: What will be the result? You will become a PSALM 37 believer. Let me close by reading you a few verses from this amazing Psalm of STUBBORN FAITH:

PSALM 37:1-9

*Do not fret because of evil men
or be envious of those who do wrong;
2 for like the grass they will soon wither,
like green plants they will soon die away.*

*3 Trust in the LORD and do good;
dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.*

*4 Delight yourself in the LORD
and he will give you the desires of your heart.*

*5 Commit your way to the LORD;
trust in him and he will do this:*

*6 He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn,
the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.*

*7 Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him;
do not fret when men succeed in their ways,
when they carry out their wicked schemes.*

*8 Refrain from anger and turn from wrath;
do not fret--it leads only to evil.*

*9 For evil men will be cut off,
but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land*

*And now may the peace of God that passes all understanding
guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen*

HYMN #397 “My Faith Looks Up to Thee”

LORD’S PRAYER: *Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those WHO trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen*

BENEDICTION

CLOSING SONG: **Chosen by Carol.**

POSTLUDE: Carol Gustafson