

**NEWS AND VIEWS**  
from  
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*“Southern Baptists with the Full  
Gospel for the Whole World”*

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*Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart...  
(Luke 18:1)*

Sometimes we all need to hear a good story. Jesus was the Master of telling God's good story. Faith stories. Jesus told stories about people continuing to trust in the mercy of a mighty good God in the middle of a mess. Consider the widow pleading her case before a judge...one who did not fear God...and because he did not fear God, he did not respect man, or the widow before him. But she began to wear him down with her petition. Jesus contrasts this wicked judge with the Judge who is Righteous. He is telling us that we can expect more blessing from a Judge who blesses. We have a God who is good...and blesses His people. Even in the middle of their mess. At the end of this story, the Lord asks a contrasting question: *...However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth? (v. 8)* A note in my translation says that there is actually a definite article before the word *faith*. A faithful rendition would say *will He find **the** faith on the earth?* There is a particular kind of faith that cannot be faked or fabricated. The faith that is unique and gets God's attention is rare on the earth and cannot be duplicated. Authentic faith is faith that is forged in the fires of trials and testing and disappointment and despair and darkness and death. Real faith is that which God gives us to sustain us through our mess. He grants us faith to believe in His promises. And faithful people grow in their faith because they practice it. Living by faith looks a lot different than people who claim to have faith. The evidence is found in their lives. In the living of life God's people must trust God. If you've ever been in a hopeless and dire circumstance where you could not help yourself, you've been in the middle of a mess. And you desperately needed to hear a good message. I've got a short story to tell you.

One day a certain godly man and his godly wife left a strange land to return to their homeland far, far away. Thinking it would only be a short separation from their three small children, they entrusted their welfare to some of their fellow church members until they returned. Imagine their horror and bewilderment to soon find the door of return closed so tightly that no man could open it. No human effort was successful...yet God's people prayed. When all concerned were tempted to lose heart, God's people prayed. Ten years later the godly man's earthly ministry was suddenly terminated by death, God's people prayed. As his godly widow began her season of sorrow, as the godly man's three young sons matured from boys to men, grieving their father's death, God's people prayed. While the sons' surrogate family continued to faithfully labor under strains that only God knew, God's people prayed. Then out of the ashes of sorrow and the darkness of death God raised up the godly woman into a ministry to other weeping widows, teaching them to trust God and pray and not lose heart. True faith is always forged in the fire of adversity and hammered out on the anvil of life beyond death. Then one glorious day, this godly woman rejoined her three grown sons in the presence of her friends and family who rejoiced with her in the grace of an ever faithful God.

Hallelujah! Abiodun Akinsola joined us to worship our God together at Mount Olivet on Sunday, May 30, 2011. As we worshipped I believe I saw *the* faith that's still alive on the earth. It's alive because God's alive! Thank you, faithful people, for praying to a God who is truly faithful, and continuing to trust Him as He builds our faith in Him!

Blessings to you,  
Pastor Sam