

Sermon Notes: Oct 19, 2025

Focus: Stubbornness and the persistent widow as a metaphor for stewardship

Scripture: The Widow and the Unjust Judge in Luke

[Lectionary Readings](#)

The persistent widow is a metaphor for stewardship, justice, and care. She keeps showing up: unashamed, unapologetic, invested. Jesus tells this parable for people like her, those who have no choice but to keep advocating for themselves against the indifferent and the powerful who exploit them. That's the road of faith and prayer.

If her persistence can move an unjust judge; and God is not unjust, then what do we do? Maybe we learn to be a little more stubborn. Faith is persistence in caring. Stewardship is the conviction that our faith, our traditions, and our community are worth showing up for, over and over.

Stewardship is long-haul faithfulness, not a one-time burst. It's the steady gift of our time, our prayers, our advocacy, our service. That's how the kingdom grows. That's how we grow. Persist. Push. Repeat.

Can you live as if God's gifts are enough: trusting what you have, giving thanks for it, and using it faithfully? I once saw an email address that read *wretire@---.com*. "Waiting to retire." It struck me as so sad, like even their email had given up. But we don't wait. We advocate and even when people are only motivated by shame. The unjust judge was afraid the widow would give him a "black eye" (a black eye to his reputation), so he relented.

I was stuck on how to connect the persistent widow to our stewardship season until I stumbled on a podcast called *Wild Card*. It had to be serendipity, because I usually avoid the genre of "two white women keeping it real." But I like Brené Brown and her work. Bonus she's an Episcopalian. A Texas Episcopalian, no less, so I listened. What I loved most was her link between faith and stubbornness. Some of her expressions of faith aren't mine, but I deeply value her insight. She's finding her way with honesty and heart.

Excerpts of Podcast interview with Brené Brown

Rachel: What are you stubborn about?

Brené: My faith.

Rachel: Stubborn is an interesting word to associate with your faith. Tell me why. Tell me what, specifically.

Brené: It's a stubborn love. I get very frustrated with my faith.

Like. No, I'm not doing this anymore. I don't believe in this. Then I'll search for confirmation bias. I'll read really terrible things about organized religion. And then I'm like, yeah, but that's not my faith. Or I'll say, well, faith can't answer this. Then I'll say, oh, man, it's not faith's job to answer it. It's faith's job to pose the question. So I think

I'm very stubborn in my belief that we are inextricably connected to each other by something greater than us. I call that thing God.....

Rachel: Has the doubt ever won out in any chapter of your life?

Brené: Yes. But it just led me into my faith even deeper.

My faith just says (the Richard Rohr and Anne Lamont faith), my faith just says, your doubt is the most holy thing about you. We're not about certainty over here. Go get that from the political b**** world. We're all about doubt. You're in the right place, welcome.

I went to church for a long time, and I only went for three reasons. Pass the peace, sing with people I can't stand. And take communion with people that I want to just knock their block off. And so everywhere I turn, there it is. It's so unrelenting.

Rachel: You would identify as a Christian?

Brené: I would identify as a member of the Episcopal Church, which is code for something. I don't know what it's code for. I think it's code for, I guess if you had to get really down to it, I'm probably like a mystical catholic who prefers the church sans the guys leading it.

Rachel: But how do you separate that?

Brené: I have a hard time separating a lot of things, and it's made me close the door on that part of my life, and I feel like some regret over that. I think we all know that as history has shown, men with a lot of power are going to burn everything to the ground before it's over, and then we'll rebuild. And they just don't get my church. Maybe they can have the church. What they don't get is my relationship with God. That's not burn-a-down-able...

Rachel: What feels unreachable to you?

Brené: Oh, my faith. God. That's my favorite part.

Rachel: Wait, that you never get there?

Brené: Yeah.

Rachel: Well, that seems frustrating.

Brené: No, it is like pickleball. It's like the pursuit of mastery.”

From Wild Card with Rachel Martin: Brené Brown, Oct 2, 2025

I can't stand pickleball, but I understand the pursuit of faith, mastery and excellence. I hope that we can all find something we love so much as to be annoyingly persistent and relentlessly advocate for like the widow in the story. May your stewardship be an expression of stubbornness in the belief that your faith, your church, your relationships, and your passions are worth fighting for.

If you love someone, something, and some vision enough, you will bang on any judge's door for as long as necessary.

Todd