

Waiting Upon The Lord

Isaiah 40:30-31, “Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

This whole 40th chapter of Isaiah is a series of contrasts between the frailty and feebleness of man and the strength and greatness of God. The natural man believes he is capable of living in his own power. He thinks he has the strength to live a life without God. However, man is deceived by sin. His strength utterly breaks down in every sphere of life. The need for sinners is to rid themselves of self-strength, and wait on the Lord.

The key in understanding this passage hinges on the word *wait*. Those who wait upon the Lord receive all the attributes of strength listed in this verse. So if we want the strength in its various forms listed in this verse, then we must first learn how to wait on the Lord. If we don't wait on the Lord, then we won't know the strength of the Lord in our lives.

So what exactly does it mean to wait on the Lord? To answer this question we need to know what the word *wait* means. The Hebrew word for wait in Isaiah 40:31 means: to bind together (perhaps by twisting) to expect:- gather (together), look, patiently, tarry. To wait on the Lord is to stop all activity, quiet yourself, and focus your attention on Him. It gives the idea of undistracted focus, total concentration, undivided attention, quiet enduring patience.

How do we wait upon the Lord? We wait upon the Lord in salvation. We wait upon the Lord in worship. We wait upon the Lord in prayer. Therefore, waiting on the Lord is an important part of the Christian life. The title of my message is simply, *Waiting Upon the Lord*. We must wait on the Lord. There are three things I would like to consider this morning.

1. Waiting upon the Lord teaches us patience.

We live in a world of instant gratification. No one likes to wait for anything. “I want it, and I want it now,” is how most people think today. Everyone seems to be in a hurry. I can’t wait because I need to be some where else.

Waiting is hard for Christians as well. We can be impulsive and impatient in our decision making. Waiting upon the Lord teaches us to be still and know that the Lord is in control. Waiting on the Lord teaches us patience.

Consider how Noah waited on the Lord. He had to wait a long time for the LORD to fulfill His Word. Look at the conditions of Noah's waiting time.

Except for his immediate family, no one in the world believed him.

Everyone in the world mocked him.

No one in the world was sympathetic to his efforts.

Everyone in the world watched as he worked.

No one in the world helped him.

Everyone thought he was crazy.

No one had ever built a boat of this size and dimension before.

No one built a boat so far from water.

No one understood how there could ever be enough water in which to drown all life.

No one could understand how he could get all the animals on board, feed them, care for them, and manage them on the ark.

No one could understand a God of this sort of judgment.

No one could understand a God this holy.

And yet this man of God, Noah, believed for 120 years what God had told him, and he prepared an Ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world! I truly cannot imagine the strength of Godly character that it must have taken-- in the face of both a ridiculing world and a never-before-or again natural disaster of this magnitude-- for this man to say, "**I believe God**, that it shall be even as it was told me" (Acts 27:25). I stand in wonder of what God is able to accomplish with a mere man who waits on the Lord.

Waiting upon the Lord teaches us patience.

2. Waiting upon the Lord teaches us humility.

How can we follow the Lord if we are not waiting upon the Lord? We must learn to humble ourselves so that the Lord will guide us.

C.H. Spurgeon observed, “When we are stripped of self we are clothed with humility and this is the best of wear. The Lord will exalt us in peace and happiness of mind....into knowledge of His Word and fellowship with Himself....O, Lord, sink me in self that I may rise in Thee.”

Christ shows by His example that humility leads to honor. Albert Barnes writes, “Humiliation was a constant characteristic of Christ as a man. He did not aspire to high honors; he did not affect pomp and parade; he did not demand the service of a train of slaves; but he condescended to the lowest conditions of life.

We read in Luke 22:27, “For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.”

The way up in the kingdom of God is down.

Listen to the humble words of John the Baptist in John 3:30, “He must increase, but I must decrease.”

John is saying that the purpose of my ministry is to point men to Christ. When that is accomplished my work is done. I came not to form a party of my own, nor to set up a religion of my own; and my teaching must cease when he is fully established, as the light of the morning star fades away and is lost in the beams of the rising sun.

This proved John's humility and willingness to be esteemed as nothing if he could honour Christ. It shows us, also, that it is sufficient honour for man if he may be permitted to point sinners to the Lord Jesus Christ. No work is so honorable and joyful as the ministry of the gospel; none are so highly honored as those who are permitted to stand near the Son of God, to hear his voice, and to lead perishing men to his cross.

Waiting upon the Lord teaches us humility.

3. But perhaps the greatest thing waiting upon the Lord teaches us is endurance, and this is what Isaiah focuses on in verse 31.

“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

The life of nature inevitably leads downward but there may be another life within the life of nature, which shall have the opposite motion, and tend as certainly upwards. What is that other life? The life in Jesus Christ.

What is the condition of the inflow of this unwearied and immortal life into our poor, fainting, dying humanity? It is simply to trust in Jesus Christ the Redeemer of our souls.

Alexander Maclaren writes, “No matter where we stand on the course of life, there may come into our hearts a Divine Indweller; who laughs at weariness and knows nothing of decay; and He will come if, as sinful men and women, we turn ourselves to that dear Lord, who as the Son of God makes us partakers of His strength and grace.”

Christ says in Revelation 3:20, “If any **man** hear my voice, and **open the door**, I will come in to him...

Here is the promise. Christ will give Himself to you, and in the very heart of your decaying nature will plant the seed of an immortal being which shall, like His own, shake off fatigue from limbs, and never tend to an end.

Proverbs 4:18, “But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

We read in Isaiah 40:30, “Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall.” Isaiah reminds us that sooner or later everyone one of us leaves behind our youthful strength, our unworn freshness, our confidence, our wonder. But we shall carry Christ; and in Him we shall possess the secret of enduring life that will never end.

“They that wait upon the Lord shall **renew** their strength.” The word "renew" rendered literally is "change" -- they shall change their strength. It is a word used to denote a change of garments. They shall lay aside their strength and put on, as a garment, strength from God.

Isaiah describes the strength and endurance that comes to those who wait on the Lord.

1. Waiting on the Lord empowers us to soar.

“They shall mount up with wings as eagles.”

This implies the steady upward flight towards the light of heaven. They who wait on the Lord, who have Christ in their hearts, soar to sweet communion with God.

Strength to soar means the gracious power of bringing all heaven into our grasp, and setting our affections on things above.

Paul describes how Christians soar in Colossians 3:1-3, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

The eagle reminds us that for Christians this world is not our home. We are pilgrims and sojourners passing through.

We read in Hebrews 11:10, “For he (Abraham) looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

Life on earth is too wretched unless we mount up with wings as eagles and look to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of Our Faith.

Are you soaring and looking unto the Lord?

Waiting on the Lord empowers us to soar.

2. Waiting on the Lord empowers to run.

That is to say there is power waiting for you for times of trial and difficulty in your life. Things will come into your life unexpectedly and catch you by surprise. However rough the road, and severe the struggle, and however swift the pace, you will be able to keep it up because the Lord is your help and strength. A very present help in time of trouble.

Hebrews 12: 1-2, “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

I remember running in the Boston Marathon in 1996. There was a part in the race called Heartbreak Hill (the 18 mile marker). When I got there I was so tired and weary. And looking up at the hill made things even worse.

My mind told me to stop but my legs wouldn't listen. I dug deep down into whatever reserve energy I had left and made my final push. It was enough. I made it up that hill. The rest of the race was all downhill from there. Christ empowers us by his grace to run the race, and make it up our Heartbreak Hills.

We read in 2 Corinthians 4:16, "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."

Are you running with the Lord? Though it may be with panting lungs and throbbing heart, and dim eyes and quivering muscles, yet if you wait on the Lord you will run and not be weary.

Waiting on the Lord empowers to run.

3. Waiting on the Lord empowers us to walk.

That is to say patient power for persistent pursuit of weary monotonous duty. That is the hardest, and so it is named last.

Many a man finds it easy, under the pressure of strong excitement, and for a moment, to keep up a swift pace, who finds it very difficult to keep steadily and at unexciting work. Only one thing will conquer the disgust at the wearisome and monotonous tasks of life-Walking with the Lord. They shall walk along life's common way in cheerful godliness because Christ is with them.”

In Luke 24 we read about two men walking to the city of Emmaus. A stranger came up to them and walked with them (The stranger we are told was Christ but the two men did not know it). Christ observed that these men were so sad, and wanted to know why?

One of them, Cleopas, answered the stranger and explained what had taken place the last few days regarding Jesus Christ, a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.

When Cleopas was finished, the stranger answered them and explained that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and rise on the third day, and he opened the Scriptures, and beginning with Moses taught them about the Messiah.

Later, Christ revealed Himself to the two men and their eyes were opened and Christ vanished from their presence.

And then we read, “And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?”

Christ walked and talked with these two men by the way. Are you walking with the Lord? Do you hear Him speaking to you in His Word?

Waiting on the Lord empowers us to walk.

In closing, we see in Isaiah 40 the importance of waiting on the Lord. Waiting on the Lord teaches us patience. Waiting on the Lord teaches us humility. Waiting on the Lord teaches endurance. Are you waiting on the Lord? Let us pray!