

WAITING ON THE LORD

We are living in the day of ever increasing impatience. Everything we do we must do quickly. Present day technology has contributed much to this situation.

Travel is one example of this. Today we can go wherever we want to in the world in such a short period of time. A man in Chicago considered flying to Los Angeles to visit his brother. He had never been out of the city before, and knew nothing about time zones. He called the ticket office at the airport and inquired concerning the departure time of a Los Angeles bound plane. The helpful ticket agent paused a little as she quickly looked at the schedule, and then replied, "The first plane in the afternoon departs at 1:00 P. M." "And what time does it arrive in Los Angeles," the man replied. "At 1:05 P. M.," the clerk answered, not stopping to explain there was a two hour time difference. Then she questioned, "Do you want to reserve a seat?" There was a little silence before he was able to answer, "No, ma'am, I just want to see that plane take off!" In this "jet-set" age, whenever we are hungry, we can prepare a meal in a matter of a few minutes, thanks to the microwave. Or, there is the choice of instant noodles, instant potatoes, instant cereal, instant soup, instant--almost everything! Better yet, save your energy and eat at a fast food restaurant.

Oh, oh, some of the ketchup dripped off your french fries, staining your pants. They will have to be dry-cleaned, and you need them tomorrow. Have no fear, just take them to One Hour Martinizing.

No use to waste that hour. Does your car need some maintenance? Try Quicklube, or SpeedyLube. You not only have time to get your car serviced, you will have time to drop off those pictures that need developing at the One Hour Photo Shop in the mall nearby. (You can pick them up after you have picked your pants up at the Cleaners.) By the way, the mall also was designed to save you time. You can pop in and out of the stores without walking or driving a great distance.

By now, you've got the idea. We seem to be a people that are always on the go. Whatever we do, we must do it in a hurry. Unfortunately, this often spills over into our relationship with God. We have a tendency to always say hurried-up prayers. Sometimes there may be reason to doubt whether our life is centered around Jesus, or the time clock.

The person who can bless the food the fastest is almost a hero. The elder who can pray over the offering or dismiss the service in the fewest of words will probably get the most opportunities to do so. It is no wonder that many of our prayers never receive answers!

THE IMPORTANCE OF WAITING ON THE LORD

There is a saying that anything that is of value is worth waiting for. Certainly this is true of the promises of God. Before Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, he commanded his disciples that they should not depart from Jerusalem, "but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:4).

We have reason to believe that Jesus gave this command to about five hundred brethren (I Corinthians 15:6), yet we read that only about one hundred and twenty of them "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" (Acts 1:13-15) until they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4).

What happened to the other three hundred and eighty men? Perhaps some never went back to Jerusalem. Probably some of them prayed a day or two and decided it wasn't for them. Possibly some of the group left and went back home only hours before the outpouring of the Holy Ghost took place!

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF "WAITING ON THE LORD"?

As we saw in the above incident, they obeyed the command to wait for the Holy Ghost by continuing in prayer and supplication until they received the promise. Their faith in the promise of the Father was active, not passive.

Many of the promises of God require a time of waiting upon the Lord. For instance, when praying for people to be saved. God often has to bring people into certain circumstances that their heart will be open to the truth. Not all of us were raised in Christian homes. Certainly many of us were saved because when the good seed of the word of God came to us, our hearts were ready to receive it.

Often we try to force people to accept the truth when their heart is far from being ready to receive it. It would be much better if we would "wait upon the Lord" by offering intercessory prayer for them, while awaiting the "ground" to be better prepared to receive "the seed of truth."

Abraham was seventy-five years old when God promised to give him a son by his wife Sarah. "And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise" (Hebrews 6:15). Paul encourages us to take heart from Abraham and others like him. "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Hebrews 6:12). He further exhorts us: "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Hebrews 10:36).



Waiting is not easy, for some of us, but it is necessary. David, who knew so well how to get answers from God gives us these words of advice:

"Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD" (Psalm 27:14).

But what do you do while you wait, David? Do you fret and worry whether the answer will come or not?

"I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope" (Psalm 130:5).

Thanks David, I needed that! Many of the prophets also had something to say about the importance of waiting upon the LORD, for example, Jeremiah, Micah, and Isaiah:

"The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD" (Lamentations 3:25-26).

"Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me" (Micah 7:7).

"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 be faint" (Isaiah 40:31).

DON'T LOSE HEART!

"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9).

The margin of my Bible renders the last phrase "if we don't lose heart!" There is a song we sing in Malaysia that says it like this:

"Don't grow weary in doing well, don't surrender in the fight,
Keep on stormin' the gates of hell, keep on doin' what you know is right"

For there will be seasons of testing, and there may be weeping for a night;
But soon we'll be reaping the blessing, if we keep pressing on toward the prize."
(Words and Music by Don Harris and Martin Nystrom, Hosanna! Music)

Every single promise in the book is for us to claim, but often we must have patience and keep praying until the answer comes:

"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint (*lose heart) (Luke 18:1). *Bible margin.

Jesus continued in the next several verses to tell his disciples about the widow who came to the judge day after day with the same request, "Avenge me of my adversary." Finally, the judge said, "I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me."

"And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily" (Luke 18:7-8).

Weary one, have you been crying to the Lord day and night for the salvation of a lost husband, son or daughter, or another person whom you dearly love? Maybe the answer seems like a long time in coming, but don't lose heart! When the Lord does it, He's going to do it speedily!

Child of God that is patiently waiting for the Lord to heal you of your sickness. You have prayed and fasted, and searched your heart. Yet the answer delays. Many have prayed for you, yet the heavens seem brass concerning your illness. Not only the "steps" of a good man are ordered by the Lord--but the "stops," also. Sometimes only health problems will slow us down to learn some glorious truth that God wants to show us. Don't lose heart!

Discouraged pastor, does it seem like the outpouring of the Holy Ghost is for everybody else but you--as if the Lord is not hearing your earnest cry for spiritual rain? Continue to seek the face of the Lord, and don't lose heart! Revival is on the way!

"Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? art not thou he, O LORD our God? therefore we will wait upon thee" (Jeremiah 14:22). ds