

TEXT: Isaiah 40:31

TITLE: WAITING FOR THE LORD

**BIG IDEA:**

**THE KEY TO PERSEVERING STRENGTH IS WAITING FOR THE LORD**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Last week at the end of the message we rushed over what is one of the most precious gems in the prophecy of Isaiah – **40:31**. So this week we are going to slow down and catch our breath and just meditate for a short time on the encouraging truth in that closing verse. Especially in this Christmas season which is so often characterized by activity and hustle and bustle and busyness ... we need to slow down and learn what it means to “*Wait for the Lord.*”

Last week: (:12-31)

**WE CAN PATIENTLY WAIT FOR THE LORD FOR SUSTAINING STRENGTH AND PERSEVERANCE BECAUSE OF HIS ULTIMATE SUPREMACY AND SIGNIFICANCE**

2 Presuppositions already addressed:

*“He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly”*

[I don’t fall into either of these 2 categories where someone might imagine that they don’t need strength from the Lord – you are in denial if you think you can handle all that life throws at you by yourself]

- **We all need strength** -- We all face hard times and need persevering strength which we do not have in ourselves
- **Only the Lord can provide that strength** -- The Lord is awake and active and reigns supreme; He cares about the difficulties His children are facing; He has the power that is sufficient to grant us persevering strength

Waiting for the **First Coming of the Messiah**

Waiting for the **Second Coming of the Messiah**

**I. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “WAIT FOR THE LORD?”**

**A. What It Does Not Mean – 3 things**

*“Yet those who wait for the LORD”*

1) **Acts 1:11** – Inactivity – Like waiting for the bus at the bus stop; Instead the reason you need persevering strength is to fulfill the Great Commission of kingdom objectives; not “Let go and Let God”; not sitting around and doing nothing; **Neh 4:9** – understand the threat and both pray and set a guard on the walls --

**Wiersbe:** God knows how we feel and what we fear, and He is adequate to meet our every need. We can never obey God in our own strength, but we can always trust Him to provide the strength we need (Php 4:13-note). If we trust ourselves, we will faint and fall; but if we wait on the Lord by faith, we will receive strength for the journey. The word “wait” does not suggest that we sit

around and do nothing. It means “to hope,” to look to God for all that we need (Is 26:3; 30:15). This involves meditating on His character and His promises, praying, and seeking to glorify Him.

2) **John 18:10-11** – Fighting in the Flesh – Peter slicing off the ear of the one coming to arrest Jesus – high priest’s slave Malchus; our weapons are not fleshly (**2 Cor. 10:4** “*for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses*”; described as “*weapons of righteousness*” – **2 Cor. 6:7**)

3) Looking for signs – cf. Gideon’s fleece – I will act only after the Lord has clearly demonstrated what course I should take by means of supernatural signs  
**1 Cor. 1:22-25** “*For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*”

We have the power of God and the wisdom of God available to us right now through the crucified Christ

## **B. What It Means or What It Involves: 5 Things (from studying same phrase in OT)**

*wait* – *qavah* – wait, hope, expect; to look eagerly for; to lie in wait for; linger for

### 1) Requires Courage Over Time

**Ps. 27:14** “*Wait for the LORD; Be strong, and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD.*” – **Sense of Patience** – Waiting requires Time

Understand the delay involved from the human perspective; that is why we need courage and fortitude

We are an instant society – want instant gratification

Look at how we pray – we rush into the Lord’s presence with our list of demands like we are talking to Santa Claus; where is the waiting on the Lord; listening to His voice; worshiping Him; seeking courage from the Lord

Stop rushing into God’s presence with our babbling and our demands – **Eccles. 5:1-2** “*Guard your steps as you go to the house of God and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil. Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore let your words be few*”

Balance that caution with the exhortation in Hebrews to come boldly before the throne of grace and to make our petitions known

### 2) Requires Confidence in the Lord’s Promises in His Word

**Ps. 130:5** “*I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, And in His word do I hope.*” – **Sense of Dependence and Faith and Confidence**

**Young:** those who fully believe in God’s power to deliver, and manifest their confidence in Him by **patiently** waiting for Him to bring His promise to fulfillment.

### 3) Relinquishes Control to the Sovereign Lord

**Prov. 20:22** “Do not say, ‘I will repay evil’; Wait for the LORD, and He will save you.” – **Sense of Submission**

The Lord knows what is best in every situation; let Him handle things

**Oswalt:** This expression implies two things: complete dependence on God and a willingness to allow him to decide the terms.

### 4) Rewards Consecration in Submitting to the Lord’s Plan and Obeying His Direction

**Ps. 37:34** “Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.” – **Commitment to Obedience**

We have not yet received our reward; we live in Hope

### 5) Rewrites Circumstances from the Perspective of Enjoying the Lord’s Favor

**Is. 8:17** “And I will wait for the LORD who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob; I will even look eagerly for Him.” – **Sense of Expectation**

The words of **William Cowper's** great hymn could have just as well been written to Israel as to modern believers...

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
But trust Him for His grace;  
Behind the frowning providence  
He hides a smiling face.

Blind unbelief is sure to err  
And scan His work in vain;  
God is His own Interpreter,  
And He will make it plain.

**Motyer:** **Hope** (with its biblical dimension of certainty) is one facet of *qavah*, which also includes ‘**waiting**’ (**patience**) and ‘resting’ (**trusting**). The participial form points to those in whom this relationship (of expectation, patience and trust) with the Lord is unchanging.

## **C. Scriptural Examples**

- **Luke 2:25-35** Simeon – “looking for the consolation of Israel”

**MacArthur:** A messianic title, evidently derived from verses like Is 25:9; 40:1,2; 66:1-11

- Abraham had to wait for the Son whom God had promised
- Noah had to wait for God to bring promised judgment and destruction through the Flood
- Samson –

**Dr. Alan Cairns:** Source of Samson’s great strength was not natural but supernatural; endued with strength by the Lord for service; mark of his Nazirite separation unto God was his uncut hair; mark of his compromise with Delilah was his shaven locks; lost the presence and power of

God; Judges 16:20 – thought he could go out as before but did not know that the strength of the Lord had departed from him; became object of derision and ridicule; time in prison for Samson was a time of waiting upon God; the hair growing again with all that it symbolizes

- **Farmer** waits on the Lord for the sunshine and rainfall needed for a fruitful harvest; **James 5:7-8** “*Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. You too be patient; strengthen your hearts for the coming of the Lord is near.*”

**Heb. 10:23** “*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*”

## **II. WHAT DOES THIS NEW STRENGTH PROVIDED BY THE LORD LOOK LIKE?**

### **A. Defined as “New Strength”**

“*Will gain new strength;*”

Cf. **Lam. 3:22-23** “*The Lord’s lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.*”

Each day we need new strength; yesterday’s strength does not get us through today

**Wiersbe:** The word “*renew*” means “*to exchange,*” as taking off old clothing and putting on new. We exchange our weakness for His power (2 Cor. 12:1-10). As we wait before Him, God enables us to soar when there is a crisis, to run when the challenges are many, and to walk faithfully in the day-by-day demands of life. It is much harder to walk in the ordinary pressures of life than to fly like the eagle in a time of crisis. [quote from **William Carey:** “I can plod”]

### **B. Illustrated with 3 Images for Emphasis**

**Grogan:** The three-fold description forms a climax, not its opposite; for the exceptional flying and the occasional running do not require, as does the constant walking, an ever-flowing stream of grace.

Just speaking of steady, forward progress – of victory in the Christian life

- **Supernatural Strength** – these effects are not natural
- **Persevering Strength** – overcoming whatever obstacles or trials or temptations you face in your Christian life so that you can live the Victorious Christian Life – why do most Christians seem to live a defeated life? They have not learned the secret of Waiting for the Lord; they are unwilling to take the time to practice the discipline of Waiting for the Lord

#### 1. Flying -- Soaring Effortlessly Over Obstacles Like Eagles

Answers Challenge of **Degree of Difficulty** – How high is this mountain?

“*They will mount up with wings like eagles,*”

- Eagles are admired the world over as living symbols of power, freedom, and transcendence.

- Some eagles are built with short wings and long tails enabling them to hunt in the tight confines of a forest, while others are have short tails and broad long wings allowing them to soar high above open plains and water.
- Eagles build their nests on high cliffs or in tall trees.

**Young:** With apparently no effort the eagle mounts high into the sky; so the people of God will mount up from the depths of their griefs and difficulties.

2. Running -- Running the Marathon of Life's Challenges with Perseverance  
 Answers Challenge of Duration – How long is this trial?  
*“They will run and not get tired,”*

In the Gospel of Mark we have studied the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ; He seems to minister non-stop; immediately He goes from one interaction and one crisis confrontation to the next; like the Energizer bunny – unending resources of strength and resilience

Why don't we get burned out in our service to the Lord? Why doesn't our tank run dry?  
 I know just how far I can push my car's fuel tank – can go 25 miles below the absolute 0 mark – but then I need to stop and get fuel  
 Waiting for the Lord is our spiritual refueling – can't just charge through life without receiving new strength

By God's grace He gives us the ability to run and not get tired; Jesus understood the secret of getting alone with His heavenly Father and spending time waiting for God

3. Walking -- Walking Through the Tedium of Life's Routine With Enthusiasm and Vitality  
 Answers Challenge of Dullness – Can I continue to plod along and put one foot in front of another?

*“They will walk and not become weary.”*

Sometimes this is the most difficult; to keep being faithful plodding along at our daily repetitive tasks

**Calvinistic doctrines:** The perseverance of the saints; or the perseverance of God on behalf of the saints – His grace is sufficient for all we need

**Phil. 4:13** “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”

**CONCLUSION:**

Lord communicates the same truth in **Matt. 11:28-30** *“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”*

Appropriate verse to help us deal with the busyness and hectic pace of the Christmas season

We are going to make **Is. 40:31** our **year verse for 2015** – giving us a couple of week headstart on the New Year

Ultimately, we are waiting for the Lord's return ... maybe it will be in 2015

**Rev. 22:20-21** *“He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming quickly.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.”*

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### DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) When do I tend to be presumptuous or self reliant rather than waiting on the Lord?
- 2) How can I adapt my prayer life to wait on the Lord more diligently?
- 3) Am I truly boasting in my areas of weakness as Paul describes in 2 Cor. 10-12?
- 4) What examples can I find of believers I know who seem to soar like eagles?

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### QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

**Preceptaustin.org:** The **TWOT** explains that...

Waiting with steadfast endurance is a great expression of faith. It means enduring patiently in confident hope that God will decisively act for the salvation of his people (Ge 49:18). Waiting involves the very essence of a person's being, his soul (nephesh; Ps 130:5). Those who wait in true faith are renewed in strength so that they can continue to serve the Lord while looking for his saving work (Isa 40:31). There will come a time when all that God has promised will be realized and fulfilled (Is 49:23; Ps 37:9 [Ed: When? In the Millennium]). In the meantime the believer survives by means of his integrity and uprightness as he trusts in God's grace and power (Ps 25:21). His faith is strengthened through his testings, and his character is further developed (Ps 27:14). Israel is encouraged to hold fast to love and justice, i.e. they are to follow the law faithfully and maintain consistently the standards of justice, at the same time preserving an attitude of godly love (Ho 12:6; cf. Ps 37:34; Job 4:6). During times of visitation and judgment, the righteous must exercise great faith (Is 26:8; La 3:19-33). Thus Isaiah confidently asserts,

I will wait (chakah) for the LORD, Who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope (put my trust in [Is 8:17NIV]; Lxx = peitho [word study]) in Him (Is 8:17). [(Ed: Note the clear association of waiting and hoping/trusting.)]

When God arrives on the scene with redemptive power, the response of those who have waited will be jubilant joy and great singing (Isa 25:9). (Harris, R L, Archer, G L & Waltke, B K Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. Moody Press or Logos software version)

Quoting **Spurgeon** writes that...

Everything comes to the man who can wait. It is only a matter of time. Patience beholds great wonders. In spiritual things, if we watch and wait, we shall see glorious things.

God waits to be gracious, and the gracious wait on God. God, who feeds his ravens, will feed his doves.

Knock at mercy's gate, but wait till it opens to you. Too many prayers are a sort of runaway knock, for they are not attended with expectant waiting upon God.

Fret not in a hurry. Tarry a bit and see what time will do. "The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it."—James 5:7. In spiritual things we must learn to wait patiently.

"Our husbandmen for harvest wait and stay;  
Oh, let not any saint do less than they!"

Patient waiters are no losers. Everything comes to the man who is able to wait for it.

With patience I the storm sustain,  
For sunshine still doth follow rain.

Pray and stay are words for every day. Good words and wise. Practice both. Worship and wait. God's answers are not always immediate. His delays are not denials. Erskine rightly says:—

I'm heard when answered soon or late;  
And heard when I no answer get:  
Yea, kindly answer'd when refused,  
And treated well when harshly us'd.

#### **FOUR WAYS OF WAITING ON THE LORD:**

(1) First, waiting on the Lord means to long for the Lord. Look at **Psalm 62:1**. "*My soul waits upon God; from Him cometh my salvation.*"

(2) Not only does waiting mean to long for the Lord, but it means to listen to the Lord. Here's a great verse. This is one for the refrigerator door. **Proverbs 8:34**: "*Blessed is the man that hears Me [now underscore that, that hears me], watching daily at my gates, waiting, waiting at the posts of my doors.*"

(3) Waiting on the Lord means to look to the Lord. In **Psalm 104:27**: "*These wait all upon thee, that thou mayest give them their food in due season.*"

(4) And here is the clincher...Waiting on the Lord means to live for the Lord. Let me give you the verse that points that out and makes that true. **Proverbs 27:18**: "*Whoso keeps the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof; so he that waits on his master shall be honored.*"

#### **Dr. Alan Cairns: Waiting on the Lord – the Source of Unfailing Strength**

1) We wait as **sons** upon the **Father** -- We come to God as sons; having received the spirit of adoption;

2) We wait as **servants** upon the **Master** – until He has mercy upon us; turn our eyes upon Him; crucify and deny self; looking for provision as well; outside of what the Lord gives us we have nothing; the arm of flesh will always fail you; What do you need this morning? We are not coming to an idol;

3) We wait as **supplicants** upon our **Advocate and Mediator** – widow constantly appealing to

the unjust judge; prayer is waiting upon the Lord;

- involves silence; cf. **41:1** “*Keep silence*”; involves my shutting up long enough to hear what God has to say to me; don’t be a babbler; must understand something of the greatness of God, His Holiness and Majesty;

- involves patience; we always want the Lord to be in a hurry; the only people who have to be in a hurry are those who don’t have everything under control; can’t give your children everything they ask for when they ask for it or they will be spoiled monsters; “*I waited patiently for my God*;”

- involves dependence; even for our next breath; no self-made man; commitment of trust;  
- involves confidence; my expectation is from Him; my hope is from Him; **Ps. 130:5**; we may in a dark night but the morning is coming;

*Renewing* = exchanging old fallen strength for new spiritual strength

- Spiritual victory – overcomes the course of nature; not natural for man to mount up as eagles; Why do so many Christians live defeated lives? Because they are not waiting upon the Lord! The key to growing as a Christian; “*Walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh*;” If I have time to drink, I have time to wait on the Lord in prayer for victory
- Spiritual vigor – we are not victims of our circumstances or upbringing; sanctification is real; not by strength of character or will that we are sanctified; **2 Cor. 12:9** “*My grace is sufficient for you*.” **Phil. 4:13**

How is this strength manifested? **Job 39:27**; 3 things about the eagle who dwells securely on high:

- Its vigor
- Its vision
- Its victory over all its enemies

We need to learn to dwell on high; Eph. 1 – all spiritual blessings; we should be soaring but we are chained down by our sins; need to wait upon the Lord; we need to exchange human strength for divine

May God make us Waiters upon the Lord

**Alistair Begg: The Discovery of Strength**

Who is the Lord upon whom we are called upon the Wait?

- Creator
- Conqueror
- Controller
- Comforter

What does it mean to wait upon the Lord?

- Life of unfaltering obedience
- Unwavering trust
- Uninterrupted communion

What is involved in the renewal of strength?

Very practical verse; How is it possible for strength to be renewed

**I. The Problems we Encounter = Self Reliance**

- We fail to recognize the finite limitations of our own capacities; **40:7** – we are as frail as the summer flowers;

- We are willing to worship tottering idols; **28:15b** – we have made lies our refuge and



taken falsehoods as our hiding place; some of the lies that confront us so that we fail to discover the renewal of our strength:

- mankind can work things out for himself; **Is. 2:22; Jer. 17:5**
- mankind possesses the weapons to do the job; **Is. 31:1**
- riches solve the riddles of our lives; **Ps. 52:7**; dependence factor is revealed here; **Prov. 18:11; Hos. 10:13; Jer. 9:23** – brains, bodies and bucks
- flimsy walls – **Ezek. 13:10**; shaky foundations – **Matt. 7:26**; short beds and narrow blankets – **Is. 28:20**

## **II. The Process we Experience – We die in order to live; embrace weakness to gain strength**

- NT illustration – **2 Cor. 11:30** *boast of the things that show my weakness*; **12:9ff**; God's power is made perfect in weakness; must acknowledge our helplessness before God to discover the renewal of our strength; our self reliance prevents us from seeking renewal of strength
- Contrasting messages: Tough Times Don't Last but Tough People Do vs. Tough Times Do Last but Tough People Don't – society set up like big, tough Goliath; church set up like David; **Ps. 44:6; 1 Sam. 17**;
- Don't pump yourself up but deny yourself

## **III. The Promise we Enjoy**

- **Ps. 84:7** -- growing in strength
  - **Ps. 119:28** – renewal of strength is by God's Spirit through God's Word
- “Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus”