**WAITING AND RECEPTIVENESS**

Sunday School Lesson 3

*THE WORTH OF WAITING*

Luke 8:40

12/12/2021

**Introduction:** In our first two weeks of our lesson series on the worth of waiting, we considered the correlation between waiting and leadership and mercy. During last week’s lesson, we observed that waiting on the Lord shows us the full extent of His mercy, speaks to the mercy available to others, stops us from seeking our own recompense, and stirs up the cheerfulness in our mercy shown to others. For our third lesson, we will be examining waiting on the Lord and our receptiveness. It should barely need mentioning that believers are expected to be receptive to the things of the Lord. We ought to be receptive to the calling of the Lord. We ought to be receptive to the coming of the Lord. We ought to be receptive to the conviction that comes from the Spirit of the Lord. We ought to be receptive the chastening that comes from the hand of the Lord. Receptiveness is vital to our Christian walk. After all, we cannot be saved if we are unwilling to receive the Lord as our Saviour. Is there any place on this earth that the Lord should be more welcome than in the church house and in the hearts of every believer? We are going to see this morning that a willingness to wait upon the Lord helps us in our receptiveness to the Lord. It doesn’t only help us to be receptive, but it also helps the attitude that is accompanied with our receptiveness. Let’s consider the following thoughts:

1. **WHEN WE DON’T WAIT ON THE LORD, THE RECEPTION IS UNPLEASANT.**
2. **Notice that there is disappointment from the Lord when we do not wait on Him (Matthew 26:40; 25:24-27; Mark 14:37).** The word *watch* is used many times in the New Testament, and we should consider its relationship to waiting. When the Bible speaks of one who is watching for the Lord, It is also speaking of one who is waiting for Him. We are commanded to watch for the Lord. We are to be ready for Him. We are to wait upon Him. When we fail to wait upon the Lord, there is disappointment from Him. The Bible gives us the example of the wicked and lazy servant. This servant was given something from the Lord to take care of. The servant did nothing with that which he was given. He definitely was not waiting for the return of his master. He undoubtedly knew what the result of that return would be. When the master returned, he was greatly disappointed in the servant. He expected the servant to be ready for his arrival. The disciples were supposed to wait and watch for the Lord as He prayed in the garden. He was disappointed when He came and found them sleeping. They could not even wait and watch for a single hour. Many of us are guilty of waiting as briefly as the disciples – just a short while.
3. **Notice that there is discipline from the Lord when we do not wait on Him (Revelation 3:3; 16:15; Matthew 25:28-30).** Some don’t wait on the Lord because they know that they are not doing what they are supposed to be doing. As a result, they are not eager for Him to show up. They know that the experience will be unpleasant for them, as He will have to discipline them. This was the case for that wicked servant, and the master very clearly punished the servant for his slothfulness and selfishness. Others don’t wait on the Lord because of a lack of focus, faith, or maybe fear of others; consequently, they also end up in a position of receiving discipline. This was the case for a couple of churches that are mentioned in the book of Revelation. They were not waiting on the Lord as they ought to have been. They should have been looking to Him with anticipation in their daily lives. Yet, they allowed other things to distract them from waiting on Him. The Lord warned them to take notice of His arrival. If He showed up and found them unprepared, He would have to discipline them for their lack of waiting on Him. When we don’t wait on Him, it makes it very difficult to be receptive.
4. **WHEN WE DON’T WAIT ON THE LORD, THE RECEPTION IS HARDENED BY UNBELIEF.**
5. **Notice that those who were not waiting on the Messiah struggled to believe when He arrived (Mark 2:16-3:4; Matthew 3:7-9; 16:3; Jer. 17:23; Jude 1:18).** Were the Pharisees and other religious leaders waiting on the arrival of the Lord? Some think that they were, but that their expectation of the Messiah was different from what they saw in Christ. While I’m sure that’s true to a degree for some of them, I believe that the Bible shows us that these religious leaders were not waiting on the Lord. They were content in their positions. They were content in their power. They were content in their present state. This was the condemnation that John the Baptist had for these men. He rebuked them for their belief that they were following Abraham. They were relying on the past and the Law; they did not need the Lord. They had no reason to wait for Him. Thus, when Christ arrived, they could not see the signs. They were blind to His deity. This is going to happen when Christ returns again. There will be mockers and scoffers in that day. They will not believe or be receptive of it because they have not been waiting for it.
6. **Notice that believers who were not waiting on the Messiah struggled when He arose (Mark 16:14; John 1:41-42).** We need to understand that this is not just a problem for the unbeliever. There are many Christians who struggle to be receptive of the things of the Lord. Their hearts have been hardened by unbelief. Why does this occur? It occurs because they are not waiting on Him. When we wait on Him, it builds up our faith. It strengthens our resolve in Him. Then, when He shows up, our hearts are open to Who He is and what He has to say and do. The disciples were not waiting on the Lord after He laid down His life on the cross. There really was no reason for this, as He told them what was going to happen. They should have been waiting by the tomb. Yet, they were not waiting, so when it happened, they were very slow to believe it. Their lack of faith caused them not to wait on the Lord, and their lack of waiting only increased their lack of faith when it was time to be receptive of what He had done. Let us not be guilty of the same in our own lives. Let’s wait at the feet of Jesus lest we be hardened further in unbelief.
7. **WHEN WE WAIT ON THE LORD, THE RECEPTION IS FILLED WITH UNDERSTANDING.**
8. **Notice that we are in a position of learning while we are waiting on the Lord (Isaiah 26:8; Proverbs 18:13; Romans 12:7).** Waiting is a great place to be for learning. Oftentimes, we do not learn because we are simply not willing to wait to learn. There is no one on this earth who can learn everything all at once. Children are hungry for knowledge, and they often do not like to wait for it. Yet, it is inevitable that waiting take place in order to learn more. Spiritually speaking, when we wait on the Lord, there are many things that we can learn of Him. He shows us His ways. He teaches us the things that we need to know. A fool is one who does not wait, and he answers a matter before he hears it. While the Jews were waiting for the Messiah, they had the entirety of the Old Testament available for them to read and understand. They should have been searching the Scriptures daily to see all of the signs given to them about the coming Messiah. As mentioned, though, many of the Jews were not really waiting for the coming of the Lord. Hence, they did not use that time to learn and understanding.
9. **Notice that we are in a better position of receiving when we have spiritual understanding (Luke 2:25-38; John 4:25; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Acts 17:11).** It is difficult to be receptive to ideas or things that you do not understand. The Bible tells us that the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God because they are foolishness to him. Think of a teacher who is teaching concepts that the students have absolutely no understanding of. That teacher is going to have much work to do. Spiritual understanding is important for us to receive the Word as we ought to in faith. The Bereans received the Word given to them because they had understanding. Simeon welcomed the Messiah (even while the Messiah was only an infant) because he had great understanding. The same is true of the dear widow that came to the temple. There are Christians who are not receptive of what God is doing or saying because it just does not make sense to them. Perhaps the reason it does not make sense is that they did not go to the school of waiting. They missed the lessons that waiting on the Lord wanted to teach them.
10. **WHEN WE WAIT ON THE LORD, THE RECEPTION IS MET WITH UNSPEAKABLE JOY.**
11. **Notice that when the Lord shows up, it is the fulfillment of the expectation that comes from waiting on Him (Romans 8:9; Philippians 1:20; 1 Thessalonians 1:3).** When we speak of receptiveness, we are speaking to our response to the Lord’s presence and speaking. Isn’t that what we are waiting for? We are waiting on Him to speak to us. We are waiting on Him to show Himself to us. We are waiting on Him to come with a shout from the heavens. When we wait on the Lord, He is our hope and our expectation. Thus, responding appropriately shouldn’t be a problem for us. Why would we be upset at the fulfillment of that which we are waiting for? It is hard to understand Christians who struggle in their response to the Lord speaking. Haven’t you been waiting to hear from Him? Why would anyone be disappointed that they knocked, and He answered? It is hard to picture a Christian who will be upset when he stands in the Lord’s presence, and He speaks. Why do we struggle to be responsive now?
12. **Notice that there is great joy and gladness when we receive that which we have waited for (Luke 8:40; Luke 19:6; 12:7; Matthew 21:22; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 3:8).** The Bible speaks of a group of people who were waiting on the Lord. They waited patiently for His return to them. When He arrived, the Bible tells us that they received Him gladly. We also know the story of Zacchaeus. He greatly longed to see the Lord. He climbed up in the tree, and he waited for the Lord to pass by that area. When the Lord finally arrived and spoke to Zacchaeus, the response is to be expected. He came down out of that tree, and he received the Lord joyfully. The blind man waited for the Lord to pass by. When He passed by him, the blind man cried out to receive his sight. The Lord answered his request, and the blind man received the miracle with great joy. When we wait on the Lord, our reception to His appearing and His Word ought to be filled with unspeakable joy and gladness.