**WAITING AND STRENGTH**

Sunday School Lesson 4

*THE WORTH OF WAITING*

Isaiah 40:31

12/19/2021

**Introduction:** For our fourth lesson in the *worth of waiting* series, we are going to look at how waiting helps us to have spiritual strength. Thus far, we have looked at the leadership of the Lord, being merciful, and our receptiveness. In our first lesson on leadership and waiting, we observed how waiting on the Lord shows that we are following Him as our leader. In our second lesson on being merciful and waiting, we observed that waiting on the Lord to recompense causes us to be merciful to others. During last week’s lesson on our receptiveness and waiting, we observed that waiting on the Lord will cause us to respond properly, as waiting produces the understanding that helps us to accept the Word of the Lord. Regarding today’s lesson, we should probably start by acknowledging that we are a weak and fragile people. We are so easily broken by the things that take place in this world. We are so easily defeated by the desires of our flesh. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Needless to say, we are in desperate need of strength. The only place to find the strength that we need to be victorious in this spiritual battle is from the Lord Himself. Thankfully, He is willing to provide us with that strength. He wants to enable us. He wants us to have victory. Yet, we must understand that waiting on the Lord is a requirement to receive the strength that we need.

1. **WHEN WE WAIT ON THE LORD, IT GIVES US OPPORTUNITY FOR RENEWED STRENGTH.**
2. **Notice that there is much rest to be found when we are waiting on the Lord (Psalm 37:7).** Waiting is a great place to find rest. Waiting on the Lord does not necessarily mean that we are sitting by idly doing nothing. Some Christians would probably like that to be the meaning of waiting on Him. We know that we are to be laboring for Christ. Waiting on the Lord is simply allowing Him to lead and guide us in all the things that we do. This waiting still gives rest to us because our work for Him is really His work through us. How can I get tired when He is ultimately the One doing all of the work? I am just an empty vessel that has surrendered to the will of the Father. I don’t do the work of Christ in my own flesh because it is not profitable. When I share the Gospel, it is the Holy Spirit and the Word working through me. Many Christians get burnt out in their service to the Lord because they are trying to do the work of themselves. The Christian who lets the Lord do the work through him is the one who will find the most rest in his service to the Lord. Every person in this world needs rest. We do not just need that rest physically. We also need rest spiritually.
3. **Notice that the rest that comes from waiting provides the opportunity for strength to be renewed (Isaiah 30:15; 40:29-31; 41:1).** Labor and effort must be balanced together with proper rest in order to continue. Nobody is able to work all of the time without rest except for our Lord. Is there any better time to regain your strength than while you are resting? The Israelites had several battles recorded in the Old Testament where they were in dire need of rest. They could not continue any longer in the battle. Their strength was gone. As noted above, waiting on the Lord provides rest because we are allowing Him to work through us. That rest should then lead to renewed strength. Some people think that the answer to getting strength is asking the Lord for it. While that is true to a certain degree, the Bible tells us that the answer to getting strength from the Lord is to wait on Him. That’s not referring to waiting after asking. The waiting should already be occurring. Waiting is what gives the strength. If we find ourselves in a place where we have no strength, we should ask ourselves if we have truly been waiting on Him. Perhaps, we will discover that we have been working so hard through ourselves instead of waiting on Him.
4. **WHEN WE WAIT ON THE LORD, IT GUARDS US FROM THE STRENGTH OF OTHERS.**
5. **Notice that while we have adversaries who are stronger than us, there is no one who is stronger than the Lord (Psalm 24:8; 89:8-13; Isaiah 40:10; Nahum 1:7; Luke 11:21-22).** Unfortunately, we can likely find many people who are stronger than us in this world. The Bible speaks of the strong man being usurped by a stronger man in Luke 11. If we rely upon our own strength, we will certainly fail. Thankfully, the Lord is stronger than all. There is no man that could even come close to the strength of the Lord. Even more so, there is no god that can remotely compare to the strength of the Lord. He stands alone when it comes to strength. Knowing our frailties, it ought to be obvious to us that we greatly need the strength of the One who is stronger than all. The Lord is my salvation. The Lord is my deliverer. The Lord is my strong city. The Lord is my strong tower. He is my very present help in time of need. When we claim His strength instead of our own, is there anyone who can defeat us? When we claim His strength instead of our own, is there anyone who can even remotely get close to breaking down His defence?
6. **Notice that the strength of our adversaries causes us to wait on the Lord as our defence (Psalm 59:9).** The psalmist realized that he was in a very difficult position. He found himself surrounded by his enemies. They had all risen up against him. These adversaries were all mighty in their strength. Even worse, they had combined their strength with preparation and planning. They had also started whispering loudly to anyone who would listen to them and join forces against King David. The heathen was against him. The psalmist had no choice but to acknowledge the strength of the enemy. It was both obvious and likely overwhelming to him. What could he do to have victory against such an enemy? He could only wait on God. When we see the strength of the enemy, it should force us to wait on the Lord to battle for us. Who would want to go into a battle alone with an enemy much stronger than them? Historical records are filled with stories of battles where foolish men attempted to win them on their own. We also have many stories where men waited for a strong defence, and their waiting won the battle!
7. **WHEN WE WAIT ON THE LORD, IT GRANTS US STRENGTH OF THE HEART.**
8. **Notice that waiting on the Lord requires us to be of good courage (Psalm 27:14).** In Psalm 27:14, the Bible commands us to wait on the Lord. It then tells us that we must be of good courage. I believe this is a necessary action when it comes to waiting on the Lord. Imagine an enemy charging at you in battle. You have been instructed to stand there and wait for further command. The closer the enemy gets the more difficult it will be to wait. It would require good courage to be able to stand in the face of your enemy and continue to wait for your orders. Some might be tempted to flee. Others might be tempted to engage in the battle without waiting on the orders to come down. The Lord tells us to wait on him. It does not matter what we are seeing. The storm may be brewing all around us. The world might convince us that defeat is imminent. Satan may whisper that there is no hope. He may try to get us to give up and run or fight without the Lord. We can show good courage by waiting on the One who is in command. He is our Shepherd. He is our Saviour. He ought to be our Strengthener.
9. **Notice that good courage and strength are often found together. Good courage produces strength of the heart (Psalm 27:14; 28:7; 31:24; Deuteronomy 31:6-7, 23; Joshua 1:6-18; 10:25; 1 Chronicles 22:13; 28:20).** Strength comes in different forms. Obviously, we understand physical strength. There is also mental strength, and there is emotional strength (strength of the heart). While physical strength is obviously important in a battle, we should not undermine the need for mental and emotional strength as well. In fact, when it comes to our Spiritual battle, it seems very apparent that mental and emotional strength are much more important than physical strength. After all, we are not fighting against flesh and blood. How do we strengthen our heart to be better prepared for battle? We need the Lord to strengthen the heart for us. He does this when we have the good courage to wait on Him. David was a man who had great strength of heart. How did that happen? He showed great courage by waiting on the Lord. Our hearts are strengthened by waiting because the Lord proves us His capabilities to us in battle.
10. **WHEN WE WAIT ON THE LORD, IT GETS US WEAK ENOUGH TO GAIN STRENGTH.**
11. **Notice that when we are weak, then we are strong (2 Corinthians 12:9-10; 1 Corinthians 1:27; Joel 3:10; Romans 8:9; Philippians 1:20; 1 Thessalonians 1:3).** Strength for the Christian is first preceded by weakness. We cannot have strength from the Lord unless we are first weak. Those who came to the Lord for healing during His earthly ministry were those who had been weakened by their flesh. The Lord made them strong. Those who came to the Lord for spiritual healing were those who understood and accepted that they were weak spiritually. The Pharisees did not come to the Lord because they viewed themselves as being spiritually strong. They thought that they did not need anything from our blessed Saviour. Paul recognized that his own weakness gave opportunity for strength to be provided from the Lord. We must be emptied of our own strength to make room for His strength. What did Paul do to ensure that he was weak?
12. **Notice that Paul was made weak because he waited on the Lord (2 Corinthians 12:5-8).** What was the cause of Paul’s weakness? The Bible tells us that Paul had a thorn in the flesh. He went before the Lord on three separate occasions to beseech Him to remove this thorn from him. Notice that the Lord did not take away the thorn on the first or second request. Paul had to keep waiting on the Lord to see what He was going to do. Finally, on the third occasion, the Lord told Paul that His grace was sufficient for him. Paul waited on the Lord to get that answer, and then he had to wait on the Lord after that to take care of him and his infirmity. Do not be surprised if waiting on the Lord initially causes us to be weak. The Lord desires for us to be weak in order for Him to fill us up with His strength. As a reminder in closing, our strength is not sufficient. We may not like the need to get weak in order to get strong, but if we want His strength to sustain us, it’s the only way to have it. Let’s wait on His strength!