**WAITING AND CHANGE**

Sunday School Lesson 5

*THE WORTH OF WAITING*

Job 14:14

12/26/2021

**Introduction:** As we come to the last Sunday of 2021, we are going to be looking at the topic of waiting and change. Up to this point in our lesson series, we have observed how waiting interacts with the leadership of the Lord, being merciful, our receptiveness, and having strength. Regarding the matter of waiting and change, this seems like a very fitting topic to end the year on. Every year at this time, people all around the country find themselves making resolutions for the new year. The changing of the calendar year seems to prompt in us a time of reflection regarding things that need to change in our lives. The most popular resolutions that people made to start this year were exercising more, eating healthier, spending more time with family, losing weight, being more fiscally responsible, spending less time on social media, improving performance in their job, reducing stress, and quitting smoking and consumption of alcoholic beverages. Even ungodly people recognize a need for change and improvement in their lives. The problem for them is the focus of the change and the facilitator of the change. The list of resolutions is a commendable list, but it does not directly address the need for spiritual change. As believers, we should want to see change in the areas that are truly the most important. Let’s take some time this morning to consider how waiting affects change.

1. **WHEN WE WAIT ON THE LORD, OUR HOPE FOR CHANGE RESTS IN HIM.**
2. **Notice that we through the Spirit are waiting for the hope of righteousness (Galatians 5:5).** When it comes to the matter of change, the amount of hope that we have is very important. There are many who state that they want to see change, but the truth is that they have very little expectation that the change will actually occur. You’ve probably heard people who speak of a new year’s resolution to eat healthier and lose weight, yet they will outright tell you that they do not expect to really follow through on such a resolution. Some people don’t even make it past the first week of January! Sadly, this attitude is not limited to the unbeliever in the world. There are many Christians who talk of spiritual change as some far off and impossible idea. Through the Spirit of the Lord, we are waiting for the hope of righteousness. Obviously, this speaks of our salvation and justification, but does it not also pattern what our daily expectation should be? Perhaps, some believers do not have hope for change because they are not waiting for the Lord to produce that change? I think we could all understand not having hope for spiritual change if that hope is based solely on our own efforts.
3. **Notice that waiting on the Lord should be the direct result of our hope in Him (Romans 8:25).** There is mutual benefit found in waiting and hope. When we wait on the Lord, we have a genuine hope for change. Yet, it is also true that when we hope in the Lord, we will patiently wait on Him. Expecting change is hoping for something that has not occurred yet. If we expect that it will occur, then we will likely wait for it, even if we have not seen it take place yet. While we know that the complete change that we long for has not tangibly taken place yet, we do have the benefits presently of seeing some change take place in our lives. We do not have to wait forever to see real change take place. We must just be willing to wait a little while for our hope to produce its outcome. Some get discouraged because they do not see immediacy in change. It sure would be easy if we could just purpose to change and then see it happen right away. Our hope for change is the Lord. He does absolutely want to work in our hearts and lives. He does want to see us change. Knowing this, we ought to be willing to wait to see those things which we may not have seen just yet.
4. **WHEN WE WAIT ON THE LORD, A HIGHER STANDARD FOR CHANGE IS POSSIBLE.**
5. **Notice that our standard for change is to be like our Saviour (Philippians 3:21; 2:5; Ephesians 5:1-2; 4:22-24; Galatians 5:5).** This is what we alluded to in the introduction and first observation. What kind of change are we expecting to occur? What goal or benchmark do we have to press toward for change? Whenever someone says that they are resolved to lose weight, they typically have an idea in mind of what amount of change they desire to see happen. Oftentimes, people will put the expectation for change at a very low standard. This helps them to gain confidence that change can actually take place. Drastic changes can be daunting and discouraging. Yet, as believers, our expectation for change is that we will be fashioned like unto His glorious body! Talk about a significant change. This vile body is expected to be changed into a glorious body. This carnal mind is expected to be changed to be like the mind of Christ. Our standard for change is as high as it gets. To think that sinful man can be Christlike is quite extraordinary. We are not to be settled by small and insignificant change in this world.
6. **Notice that the achievement of such a high standard is only made possible by waiting on the Lord to do it (Job 14:14).** Job was a Godly man. He was a perfect and upright man. Job had seen real spiritual change in his life that few others have likely seen. The perfection here mentioned is not referring to sinlessness but to a man who was complete in the Lord. For all of this, though, Job was still waiting for the finishing of his change. It had not happened yet. Even the great suffering that Job went through did not complete the change to the standard indicated above. He still had work to do to see the change take place. What work was left? Well, he had to keep waiting for the Lord to change him. That’s the only way such a high level of change is possible. We would certainly quit long before we could ever see this type of change take place on our own. Additionally, we would fail miserably in trying to produce this change in our own flesh. We must let Him change us. We must let Him keep changing us. We must wait until He is totally done changing us. We really have no choice in the matter if we want to be like Christ.
7. **WHEN WE WAIT ON THE LORD, THE HELP FOR CHANGE IS REAL AND LASTING.**
8. **Notice that help is essential to seeing change take place (Galatians 6:1; Ecclesiastes 4:10; 1 Corinthians 16:16; Isaiah 41:6; 30:7; Psalm 146:3).** As believers, we ought to be in the business of helping others change. Helpers are vital to change. A person who resolves to make a change can be greatly benefited by those who assist him in such an endeavor. A person who wants to change his eating habits may seek help from his spouse in what food is prepared in the home. A person who wants to exercise more may seek help by enlisting a personal trainer. An addict may seek help by partnering with some program that specializes in overcoming his specific addiction. Help produces accountability. Help produces positive pressure to change. Help produces encouragement when we are on the brink of giving up on seeing change take place. Those in this world are able to help others produce small and insignificant changes all of the time. Believers have the opportunity to help others recognize real and lasting change that actually matters. We can help to change a person’s eternal destination!
9. **Notice that while believers can offer help for change, the greatest help for change comes from waiting on the Lord (Psalm 33:20; 2 Corinthians 3:18).** It seems that many believers are waiting on other believers or even a pastor to help them see change take place spiritually. Ultimately, they must understand that they are waiting on the wrong person for help. Of course, the issue is not that these others are bad helpers, though there are some who are bad helpers (see the verses above); instead, the issue is that they are waiting upon man rather than God. The Lord is the One who helps to give real and lasting change. I’ve had the sad experience of trying to help those who are heavily addicted to alcohol and drugs. It breaks my heart to see them in such a condition. As a pastor, I want to do everything I possibly can to help them change. What I have discovered, though, is that I can’t of myself give them the change that they need. Many want me to have some program for them to go through. They get disappointed when I pick up the Bible and remind them that the answer for change is found in there. Wait on the Lord for it.
10. **WHEN WE WAIT ON THE LORD, THE HOUR FOR CHANGE IS INEVITABLE.**
11. **Notice that the hour for change for the believer is a foregone conclusion. It is an inevitable event (1 Corinthians 15:52).** Praise the Lord that change for the believer will happen! It is not up for debate. It does not need to be reviewed or discussed. It is a certainty. The Lord has promised it to us. We have the promise of the adoption. We have the promise of the change. We can go through life holding on to that promise that we will be changed in an instant. It will happen in the twinkling of an eye. The world is desperately hoping for change going into 2022. They want to see a change in health conditions. Many want to see a change in political conditions. None of these changes are promised to us. Truthfully, we do not know what changes to expect in 2022. What we do know, though, is that change for the believer will happen. Perhaps, the Lord will rapture up His church in 2022, and we will all get to observe the finality of that change at the same time! The change is promised to come, and it will be a glorious change!
12. **Notice that the only thing expected for the believer is to wait for that change to take place (Romans 8:19-23; Luke 12:37; Philippians 3:14).** If the change is certain to happen, then why does it matter whether we wait for the Lord or not? The answer to this is that the Lord wants us to wait for the change. We ought to want to wait for it as well. After all, who wouldn’t be excited about changing from this vile body into a glorious body? Only a person who loves carnality or wickedness would have such an attitude and lack of anticipation. We ought to be groaning within ourselves in anticipation of the change. Additionally, we must understand that we are responsible for seeing some change take place now. We are not to take this liberty that we have and use it for our own fleshly appetites. We are to let the Lord keep changing us now while we wait for the finishing of that change. Are you waiting on the Lord for change? Are you eager for that day when you will be change? Are you striving to be like Christ now?