BRAVE WAITING

NO. 1371

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

THE Christian's life is no child's play. All who have gone on pilgrimage to the celestial city have found a rough road, sloughs of despond and hills of difficulty, giants to fight and tempters to shun. Hence there are two perils to which Christians are exposed—the one is that under heavy pressure they should start away from the path which they ought to pursue—the other is lest they should grow fearful of failure, and so become faint-hearted in their holy course.

Both these dangers had evidently occurred to David, and in the text he is led by the Holy Spirit to speak about them. "Do not," he seems to say, "do not think that you are mistaken in keeping to the way of faith. Do not turn aside to crooked policy. Do not begin to trust in an arm of flesh, but wait upon the Lord."

And as if this were a duty in which we are doubly apt to fail, he repeats the exhortation, and makes it more emphatic the second time, "Wait, I say, on the *Lord*." Hold on with your faith in God. Persevere in walking according to His will. Let nothing seduce you from your integrity—let it never be said of you, "Ye did run well, what did hinder you that you did not obey the truth?"

And lest we should be faint in our minds, which was the second danger, the psalmist says, "Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart." There is really nothing to be depressed about. There is no real danger—you are safe while God lives, and while Christ pleads, and while the Spirit of God dwells in you. Therefore, be not dismayed, nor even dream of fear.

Be not timorous and unbelieving, but play the man. "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage and he shall strengthen thine heart." The object of our discourse this morning will be the encouragement of those who feel in any degree whatever dispirited and depressed on account of the hard places of the way, or the opposition of the world.

May the divine Spirit, whose peculiar office it is to be the Comforter of His people, now give the oil of joy to all who mourn, and courage to all who tremble.

We shall look at our text under four heads. First, *God is to be waited on*. Secondly, *courage is to be maintained*. Thirdly, *waiting upon God will sustain courage*. And fourthly, *experience has proven this*—for David sets his own seal to the text when he says, "Wait, *I say,* on the LORD." As much as to say—I have tried and proven the power of communion with God, and therefore personally give my advice that you do continually wait upon the Lord, and you will be greatly strengthened.

I. First, then, dear friends, GOD IS TO BE WAITED ON.

That word "wait" is so exceedingly comprehensive that I quite despair of bringing out every shade of its meaning. The word "walk" describes almost the whole of Christian life, and so does this word "wait." For rightly understood, waiting is active as well as passive, energetic as well as patient, and to wait upon the Lord necessitates as much holy courage as warring and fighting with His enemies.

We are to wait *on*, wait *upon*, and wait *for* the Lord. For it is written, "They that wait on the LORD shall inherit the earth." "They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength." And "Blessed are all they that wait for him."

What do we mean, then, by "wait on the LORD"? I say, first, let us wait on the Lord *as a beggar waits for alms* at the rich man's door. We are very poor and needy, laboring under such necessities that the whole world cannot supply what we require. Only in God is there a supply for the deep poverty of our souls.

We have gone to His door, many of us, and knocked and waited, and in so doing, we have obtained very gracious answers. If others of us have not seen the door of mercy open to us, let us still wait at the posts of the Lord's door, still knock and still hope for His salvation.

Are you seeking the Savior, and are you trusting Him, and have you not yet obtained the peace which comes with believing? Then with great importunity continue in prayer and wait on, remembering that the blessing is worth waiting for—it is such a treasure that if you had to wait for a lifetime fully to obtain it, you would be well-repaid when it came.

Wait, but knock as you wait, with fervent pleading and strong confidence, for the Lord Himself waits to be gracious to you. Agonize in desire, and let not the knocker of heaven's gate ever rest. Make the door of mercy resound again and again with your resolute blows upon it. The Lord is good to them that wait for Him. He will in due time answer you.

It shall never be said that any were sent away empty from His gate. He has not spoken in secret in a dark place of the earth, nor said unto the seed of Jacob, "Seek ye my face in vain." Pray on, believe on, and as surely as God's promise is true, He will in due time grant you conscious salvation, your head shall be lifted high above your enemies round about you, and you shall rejoice with unspeakable joy and full of glory.

The devil bids you cease from prayer. He tells you that the little faith you have will never save you. Do not believe him. Stand fast, pray on, believe on, expect on—though the vision tarry, wait for it—it shall come, it shall not tarry. The Lord grant you grace to wait in all humility, for what are you but a beggar, and beggars must not be choosers.

It is good that a man both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of God, for they shall not be ashamed that wait for Him. To cling to the cross, to rest at the altar of our Lord's atonement is the safest course. Believingly to wait upon the Lord, pleading the all-prevailing name of Jesus, is the suppliant's best posture.

I trust many in the house of God this morning have passed from this stage to the next—they wait *as learners for instruction.* The disciple waits at His Master's feet, and according as the Teacher chooses to speak, so the disciple's ears are opened. Mary sat at Jesus' feet. Some stand in the crowd and listen a little, and soon they are gone, but the true disciple abides in the school, and waits to hear what his Master will speak.

We bow down at His feet with this humble resolve, that whatsoever He says we will hear, and whatever His doctrine, precept, or promise may be, we will drink it all in with intense delight. The pupils of the old philosophers were wont to walk in the groves of Academia till the wise men were ready to come and speak with them. And when any one of the wise men began to speak, the young disciples quietly followed his steps, eagerly catching up every precious sentence which he might utter.

Much more should it be so with us towards our Lord Jesus. Let us follow Him in every page of inspiration, study every line of creation, and learn of Him in all the teachings of His providence. Let us catch the faintest whisper of His Spirit, and yield to each divine impulse.

"Wait, I say, on the LORD." If you are to be instructed disciples, it must be by a diligent, patient, persevering waiting upon Him who is the fountain of all knowledge, and the sun of all light. May we never outrun our Master by conceited speculations, and vain imaginings, but may we wait till He speaks, and be content to remain in ignorance unless He chooses to withdraw the veil.

A third form of this waiting will come out under the figure of waiting *as a servant waits upon his lord.* A true servant is anxious to know what his master wishes him to do, and when he once knows it, he is happy to undertake it and carry it through.

In great houses, certain servants inquire of the master in the morning, "Sir, what are your orders for the day?" Imitate this, and when you rise in the morning, always wait upon your Lord to know what are His commands for the day. Say, "Show me what You would have me do. Teach me Your way, O Lord. Lead me in a plain path. Inform me as to what to seek and what to shun, for my will is to do Your will in all things."

Notice how maid-servants watch their mistresses when they are waiting at table or serving about the house. A word is enough, and sometimes a look or a nod of the head is all the direction needed. So should it be with us—we should eagerly desire to know the mind of the Lord, and carefully watch for indications of it.

As the eyes of a maiden are unto the hand of her mistress, so should our eyes wait upon the Lord our God. We, who are the ministers of the Lord Jesus, ought to be looking all around to see what we can do in God's house. Good servants do not need to be told of every little thing—they have their master's interest at heart, and they perceive what should be done, and they do it. Oh, to be always waiting to do yet more and more for Jesus.

I would go up and down my Master's house, seeing what I can do for His little children, whom I delight to cherish. What part of the house needs sweeping and cleaning, that I may quietly go about it. What part of the table needs to be furnished with food, that I may bring out as His steward things new and old. What there is to be done for my Master towards those who are without, and what is to be done for those already in His family.

You will never be short of work if with your whole heart you wait upon the Lord. We do ill if we stand idly gazing up into heaven expecting His coming, and making it a pretense for doing little or nothing to win souls. Our wisest course is, as men that expect their Lord, to stand with our loins girt, and our lamps trimmed.

You know what the Orientals meant by having their loins girt—they gathered up their loose flowing garments when they meant work—even as a hard-working man among us takes off his coat and works in his shirtsleeves. Stand like workmen with your sleeves up—that is the English of it, ready for any work which your Master may appoint.

You put on the livery of the Lord Jesus years ago when you were baptized into His name—take care to keep it spotless, for it is known to be connected with a sinless Prince. Never by disobedience make the livery to be a lie, for if you be not His servant, wherefore should you wear the garb of His household? Beloved, "He that waiteth upon his master shall be honoured." Let us not fail in waiting upon ours.

Sometimes the servant will have to wait in absolute inaction, and this is not always to the taste of energetic minds. I suppose that walking round Jericho six days, and doing nothing, must have been very distasteful to the men of war who wanted to be coming to blows. They might have said, "Why should we and all the multitude march round the walls and do nothing?" The men of war chafed in their harness, and longed to be at the foe.

It is said that Wellington kept back the Guards at Waterloo till far into the fight, and it must, I should think, have needed much courage on their part to remain calm and quiet while cannon were roaring, the battle raging, and the shots flying about them. They must not stir till the commander-in-chief gives the order, "Up, Guards, and at them!"

Then will they clear the field and utterly annihilate the foe. They were as much serving their country by lying still till the time came as they were by dashing forward when at last the word was given. Wait then upon your Lord in all sorts of service and patience, for this is what He would have you do.

Another form of this waiting may be compared to *a traveler waiting the directions of his guide*, or a mariner waiting upon the pilot who takes charge of his ship. We are to wait upon God for direction in the entire voyage of life. He is at the helm, and His hand is to steer our course.

I am fearful that some Christians very greatly fail in waiting upon the Lord for guidance, yet the types and examples of the Old Testament very strongly enforce this duty. I will give you one type and one example. The type shall be Israel in the wilderness.

There was a straight way to Canaan, and I suppose it would not occupy many days to go from Goshen to Jerusalem. They must not, however, take that way, but follow their leader. When they had wandered even for a year in the wilderness, they might soon have reached the land, for in fact they were near its borders.

But no, they must go where the famous pillar, which indicated the presence of God, should conduct them. If it remained stationary for a year, the tents must not remove. If it was up early in the morning, again, and again, and again, for a whole succession of weary marching days, Israel must not dare rest. Under the shade of the pillar of cloud must they abide by day, and its light must be their glory by night.

Everywhere they were to wait for the heavenly signal, and never choose their own path. Do you watch the cloud, my brethren? Do you wait upon the Lord for guidance? Do you continually say, "I pray Thee show me Thy way"? Do you commit your own way unto the Lord? If not, how little you have learned the true position and privilege of the people of God.

The example I take from David's own life. If you have noticed the fourteenth chapter of the first book of Chronicles, you will read that David, being threatened by the Philistines, inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I go up against them?" And he had for an answer, "Go up, for I will deliver them into thine hands."

Encouraged by the oracle, he went forth to the attack, and carried all before him like the breaking forth of a flood. The Philistines rallied again, and spread themselves abroad in the valley, and surely David might have felt quite safe in falling upon them. What further directions could he need? Would not the former oracle avail now that the same circumstances were occurring?

But no, the man of God did not feel safe until he had laid the new case before the Lord, and it is recorded, "Therefore David enquired again of God." This time the response was very different. Possibly to his own surprise, David received orders not to go up after the Philistines, but to turn away from them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees. When he should hear a sound of the going in the tops of the mulberry trees, he was to bestir himself, but not just then. He followed the new directions, and again smote the host of the Philistines.

Brother, wait on the Lord often. Though you were wise in the last intricate business, you may be a fool over the next simple matter. In fact, it is over the simple matters that we make our great blunders in life, even as Israel did with the Gibeonites, when they came with old shoes and clouted, and bread that was moldy—half an eye might have sufficed to see through their trick, but Israel acted hastily, ate bread with them, made a treaty with them, and inquired not at the hand of the Lord.

Not so David, he was never slow to seek divine guidance. I admire that which comes out incidentally about him in the saying of Abimelech, the priest at Nob. When Saul accused him of having inquired of the Lord for David, Abimelech replied, "Did I then begin to enquire of God for him?" As much as to say, "He is an old frequenter of the Lord's courts. He has inquired of God many and many a time ere this. To accuse me of inquiring of the Lord for him, as though I was abetting rebellion, is unjust, for I only did for David what I had often done before."

Hence it was that David behaved himself wisely in a perfect way, because he followed not his own judgment, but waited on the Lord. There was one occasion, when he marched against Nabal in the heat of his wrath, when he went in his own spirit, and not under heavenly influences. And had it not been that the Lord sent a wise woman to cross his path, he had shed blood that day, and it would have been a grief of mind to him all his life.

Oh that we did more sincerely wait upon the Lord in the sense of seeking instruction as to our path in life, then would He fulfill His promise to us, "Thine ears shall hear a voice behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it."

I have not yet exhausted the word "wait," for we ought to wait upon God *as a child waits upon its parent*. Our children can seldom be accused of having small expectations with reference to us. They have desires and wants almost countless, and they always expect their parents to readily supply them—in which reckoning, I have no doubt, they have been strongly confirmed by their past experience.

No little child thinks of providing for himself, nor does he dream of directing his own course in life. You cannot get that little head to be thoughtful about tomorrow's food. You cannot force that little heart to be anxious about the next suit of clothes. To all suggested doubt, the little lips reply, "My father knows what I have need of, and I am sure he will give it to me."

Such is the happy, restful life of a loving child, and this is as it should be with us. It is my Father's business to provide for me. His name is JEHOVAH-Jireh. It is my Father's business to preserve me. He has given His angels charge to keep me in all my ways. It is my Father's business to mark out the future for me—I cannot see even into tomorrow. My eyes are dim, but my Father knows all about what shall be, and He will be ready for whatever shall happen, therefore would I wait upon Him, raise no questions, and expect great mercies. Blessed are they who are thus found waiting.

And then, perhaps, I may add one more thing, we should wait upon the Lord *as a courtier waits upon his prince*. He that is at court, and seeks to rise to favor, waits upon his prince with the desire to be employed in the royal service, that he may prove his loyal zeal. He counts any sort of employment at court to be a great honor.

He tells his friends, and they accept it as a subject of congratulation that he has obtained such and such work to do for the king. He delights to increase the honor and dignity of his prince's court, for he shares in it himself.

Brethren, how carefully should you and I endeavor to show forth the honor of our Lord Jesus among the sons of men, for has He not made us kings and priests, and should we not exalt His glorious name forever? We should seek to make our Lord Jesus famous to the world's end—our daily conversation and our current character, our private and public behavior should all tend to increase our Master's honor among the sons of men.

We must be ready for anything for Jesus, and everything for Jesus, counting that we ourselves are honored by disgrace if we bring honor to Him. Sir Walter Raleigh was wise in his generation when he took off his richly embroidered cloak to spread it over a miry place, that Queen Elizabeth's feet might not be damped. The courtier knew how to smooth his own road by caring for his queen.

And thus, with unselfish motives, out of pure reverence for our Lord, let us be willing to be made as the street to be walked over if Jesus can thereby be honored. Let us lay out for our Lord the best that we have, even to the character which is dear to us as life itself, if by so doing we may bring glory to the holy and blessed name of our Redeemer.

Henceforth it is ours to live unto the Lord and die unto the Lord. We will wait on the Lord and keep His way, and may His grace enable us daily to say, "I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope."

II. Secondly, COURAGE IS TO BE MAINTAINED.

"Be of good courage." Our good Lord and Master ought not to be followed by cowards. Be of good courage, you that wait on the Lord. Have *the courage of hope* concerning the faith which you are exercising upon Christ. You are just beginning, some of you, to believe in Jesus, and you are afraid that He will cast you away, or fearful that you will not obtain full salvation from sin.

I have already told you to continue to knock at mercy's door—do so, but be of good courage, for that door will certainly open to you. He that asks receives, he that seeks finds, and to him that knocks it shall be opened. Take heart, poor fainting one, the Lord has a tender eye towards mourning souls.

He is very good to those who seek Him. Though you are like poor trembling Mercy who fainted outside the door of the interpreter's house, yet your Lord thinks upon you and He says, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without?" He will not suffer those to perish who humbly wait on Him. The light of His countenance shall yet be yours. Be of good courage, O seeker!

Be also of good courage, you who have newly found Him. Be bold *to avow your faith*. Remember that the trust which you repose in Jesus is a justifiable one, and can be vindicated against all comers, therefore do not hide it.

I hate to see a Christian act like a rat behind a wainscot, who comes peeping out when everything is still to see if anybody is about, so that he may get his crumbs, but if there is half a sound of a foot anywhere, away he slips and hides himself in his hole.

Nay, if you belong to Christ, avow it. What is there to be ashamed of? To believe the truth—shall a man blush at that? To follow infinite purity and holiness incarnate in Christ Jesus, is there anything to be ashamed of in that? Nay, rather let us wear our colors before the face of all men, and lift high our banner in all companies, for it is rather a cause for glorying rather than for blushing that we are on the Lord's side.

It is the best thing about us. It is the greatest mercy we have ever received, why should we conceal it? Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and confess your faith before men, you that have newly been brought to Jesus.

Then go further. Be of good courage in *endeavoring to spread the faith* which you have received. When you go to speak to others about the great salvation, be not afraid. If it be new work to you, I dare say you will tremble, but still do it, and ask the Lord to give you greater confidence in proclaiming the tidings of His grace.

If you speak with infidels, be of good courage, though for a while you cannot lead them to believe. If you speak to those who are incensed against the truth, be of good courage, what harm can they do to you that shall be equal to the harm you will suffer by becoming a coward? Be of good courage and undertake great things for Christ.

Do not expect a defeat, but dare and venture all for Him. Do something more than you are able to do, expecting strength beyond your own to be afforded you, and it will certainly come. "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart." Be of good courage, then, in the way of practical energy for the advancement of your Redeemer's cause.

Be of good courage *when you pray for others*. Wait on the Lord about your children, and be of good courage and expect to see them saved. Wait on the Lord about your servants, about your brothers and sisters, about your neighbors—be of good courage about them—believe that God hears prayer, and that your intercessions will bless those for whom you pray.

Intercession has great influence with God. It is no vain thing to wait upon the Lord for the souls of others. Thousands now in heaven owe their conversion to the prayers of the saints, and therefore plead with great courage. Never cease to pray, and when you pray, pray not as though you spoke to a tyrant reluctant to hear, or to a forgetful God who would fail to answer, but wait on Him with quiet confidence and you shall not come away empty.

Be of good courage, too, also *in making self-sacrifices* for the cause of Christ. If you lose a situation because you are honest, be of good courage, you will be no loser in the long run. Are there some who despise you because you are a Christian? Be of good courage, their opinion is of very little worth, and in the judgment of angels and good men you stand very high.

Are you like Moses when he refused the treasures of Egypt, with all the honors of the court? Be of good courage, the Lord will give you, even in this life, a recompense, and in the world to come, life everlasting. If it should come to losing all you have for Jesus' sake, be of good courage, for he that loses his life for Christ's sake shall find it, and he that becomes poor for the cause of Christ shall be rich eternally. Be of good courage!

Once again, if you are called to *endure great affliction*, sharp pain, frequent sickness—if business goes amiss, if riches take to themselves wings and fly away, if friends forsake you and foes surround you, be of good courage, for the God upon whom you wait will not forsake you. Never let it be said that a soldier of the cross flinched in the day of battle.

Bear your Father's will, glad to have such a Father's will to bear. If grace cannot enable us to endure all that nature can heap upon us, what is grace worth? Now is the time, my dear brother, in the floods of adversity, to see whether your faith is real faith or not. Mere sunshine faith is not worth having. We want that which will outlive the most terrible storm that ever beclouded the heavens.

Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, though heart and flesh should fail you. Though eyes grow dim and the light of day should be quite shut out, though hearing should fail and the daughters of music be silent, though all the doors of the senses should be closed, though the bearers of the body should totter, and the keepers of the house should tremble, yea, though death itself should remove this feeble body, yet there is no cause for fear, but we may exclaim with dying Jacob, "I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD."

Let not your hearts be troubled. Wait on the Lord, and courage shall revive.

III. Our third point is, that WAITING UPON GOD SUSTAINS COURAGE.

Beloved, if ever you begin to grow weary in the good ways of God, wait upon Him with double earnestness. You have heard of the famous giant whom Hercules could not kill, because the earth was his mother, and every time Hercules dashed him down, he obtained fresh strength by touching his parent, and rose again to fight.

We are of like nature, and every time we are driven to our God, though we be dashed upon Him by defeat, we grow strong again, and our adversary's attempt is foiled. Our foe will never destroy us unless he can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, and that is impossible. Waiting upon God is the way to renew our strength until we mount up with eagle's wings and leave the world below.

In the first place, our heart is strengthened by waiting upon God, because *we thus receive a mysterious strength* through the incoming of the Eternal Spirit into our souls. No man can explain this, but many of us know what it is. We do not know how the Holy Ghost operates, but we are conscious that after a season of prayer we are often much refreshed, and feel as if we had been ground young again.

We have gone in before the Lord haggard and worn, desponding and (shame upon us, we must add) ready to give up, turn tail, and run away. We have not long drawn near God before we have felt our spirit revive. Though our approach was mostly a groan, yet we did wait upon the Lord, and the Eternal strength came into us.

How wonderfully do the secret springs of omnipotence break into the feeble soul, and fill it with might in the inner man. Through the sacred anointing of the Holy Ghost we have been made to shout for joy. We have been so glad in the Lord that we could not contain our joy. He that made us has put His hand a second time to the work, and restored unto us the joy of His salvation, filled our emptiness, removed our weakness, and triumphed in us gloriously.

The poor harp which had been long played upon could not at length yield music to its owner's hand. In vain the bardic fingers roamed over the strings, the more heavily they were struck the more discordant were the sounds. The harp was taken from the hall and laid aside in a quiet chamber, and there its Maker came to deal with it. He knew its frame and understood the art of tuning it.

He put new strings here and there, and set the rest aright, and the next time the harper laid his fingers among the strings, pure music floated forth, and flooded the palace with melody. Where discord had peopled the air with evil spirits, all was changed, and it seemed as though angels leaped forth with silver wings from every chord.

Ay, go to your God, poor soul, when you are out of order. Wait on the Lord, and He will strengthen your heart by His mysterious power.

Besides this, waiting upon the Lord has an effect upon the mind, which in the natural course of things, tends to strengthen our courage. For waiting upon God *makes men grow small*, and dwarfs the world and all its affairs, till we see their real littleness.

Poor David sat fretting about the ungodly, as he saw them prospering in their way, while as for himself he was plagued all day and chastened every morning. Foolishly and ignorantly he complained of the Lord, and questioned His justice, "until," said he, "I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end."

Set your great troubles before the infinite God, and they will dwarf into such little things that you will never notice them again. He takes up the isles as a very little thing, and the nations are as a drop in a bucket—and this great God will teach you to look at earthly things in the same light as He does, till, though the whole world should be against you, you would smile at its rage, and though all the devils in hell should rise against you, you would defy their fury.

Our worst ills are utterly despised when we learn to measure them by the line of the Eternal. Thus you see that waiting upon God strengthens the heart by lessening the causes of fear.

And then *it inflames the heart with love*. Nothing can give us greater courage than a sincere affection for our Lord and His work. Courage is sure to abound where love is fervent. Look among the mild and gentle creatures of the brute creation, and see how bold they are when once they become mothers and have to defend their offspring. A hen will fight for her chicks, though at another time she is one of the most timid of birds.

Mr. White, in his book on Selborne, tells of a raven that was hatching her young in a tree. The woodman began to fell it, but there she sat. The blows of the axe shook the tree, but she never moved, and when it fell, she was still upon her nest. Love will make the most timid creature strong. And oh, beloved, if you love Christ you will defy all fear, and count all hazards undergone for Him to be your joy.

In this sense, also, perfect love casts out fear. It hopes all things, endures all things, and continues still to wait upon the Lord. To have more love we must more continually wait upon the Lord, and this will mightily renew the strength of our heart.

Again, waiting upon the Lord *breeds peace* within the soul, and when a man is perfectly at rest within, he cares little for trials or foes. It is conscience that does make cowards of us all, but let conscience be pacified through the atoning blood of Jesus, and you can smile when others spit their venom at you, and like your blessed Master, you can bear their taunts without reply, for there is a heavenly calm within. A heart unsettled towards God is sure to be afraid of men, but when the soul waits on the Lord in glad serenity, it stoops not to fear.

And beloved, this waiting upon the Lord produces the effect of increasing our courage, because it often *gives us a sight of the eternal reward*, and if a man gets a glimpse of the crown of glory, the crown of thorns will no more prick his temples. He that sees what he shall be in the day when Christ shall be revealed, mourns not because of what he now is while he bears the reproach of Christ.

In fact, waiting upon God makes us see that we are in fellowship with Christ, and causes us to know that the load we carry is a cross of which He always bears the heaviest end. It lets us see that His heart is full of sensitive sympathy towards us, and so it makes us suffer without complaining. Is it not sweet to sing—

"If on my face for Thy dear name,
Shame and reproach shall be,
I'll hail reproach and welcome shame
For Thou'lt will remember me"?

Thus waiting upon the Lord pours power into the central reservoir of our strength.

IV. Now I finish with the fourth point, which is, EXPERIENCE PROVES THIS.

I want you to keep your Bibles open at the twenty-seventh Psalm, and see how my text is a summary of the entire Psalm. All the rest of the verse may be compared to the figures of an account, and this closing verse is the casting up of the whole—waiting on the Lord is the path of wisdom.

For, first, in the opening verses David had been surrounded by enemies. He waited upon the Lord, and the Lord made them stumble and fall. Afterwards, when they fought against him, he told his sorrow to God, and God lifted his head high above his enemies round about him, till he could sing in the sanctuary songs of exultant joy unto the Lord.

My brethren, do the same when you are assailed. You are not in a country subject to actual war, but you have many adversaries, spiritual and otherwise. You have the prince of darkness armed against you, and a host of spiritual wickednesses in high places. Wait on the Lord in this conflict, and He will give you victory.

Your strength is to sit still. Fret not yourself. Quietly refer all the contest to Him who returns from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah, traveling in the greatness of His strength, because His foes and yours are trodden beneath His feet. Wait on the Lord. Get away to the shadow of His pavilion. Hide in the secret of His tabernacle. Climb up upon the rock, and keep you there, and all the adversaries of your soul shall be broken in pieces.

Next, read the seventh and eighth verses, and you will see David occupied in prayer, and there, too, he succeeded and prospered abundantly, because in prayer he waited on the Lord. The very essence of prayer is to get the ear of God. You might as well whistle as pray unless you pray in spirit and in truth—and the very spirit and truth of prayer must lie in communion with God Himself.

If you have been praying after a fashion, and you have not gained that which you prayed for, surely you have not yet reached the ear of God. Get into the secret place. Go close to your Lord, and wait upon Him in very deed—then you shall have great courage in prayer, renew your strength, and come back victorious.

Next, David had been enveloped in darkness. He was afraid that God was about to forsake him. He had lost the light of JEHOVAH'S countenance. I think I hear one say, "What am I to do in such a case?" Wait on the Lord. If He does not smile, wait on Him still. The smile of His face is delightful, but if you lose it, hide under the shadow of His wing.

When He does not smile, He still loves. "Though he slay me," said Job, "yet will I trust in him." Even when He seems an angry God, yet throw yourself at His feet. Let nothing drive you away from Him. If He lifts His sword to smite, the further off, the heavier the blow will fall. Run close in, dear child, if your Father is going to whip you. Run close in, He cannot strike hard then.

Draw very near to your Father's heart. Lay hold on His strength, and put Him against Himself, as it were, pleading His love against His wrath and saying, "You have sworn that You will not be angry with me, nor rebuke me, therefore deal tenderly with Your child." If any walk in darkness and see no light, let him still trust and wait on the Lord.

In the next sense, we find David forsaken by everybody. Father and mother had left him, still he waits upon the Lord, and the Lord takes him up. Now that you are quite alone, dear widow, and the husband of your love is gone, wait on the Lord. Now that the children, one by one, have been carried to the silent tomb, wait on the Lord, and He will be better to you than ten sons.

Now, young man, you are drifting about London without a helper—wait on the Lord, and He will direct your way. Yea, all of you who, either from persecution or bereavement, have come to be solitary, remember the Lord sets the solitary in families, and makes them families like a flock. Wait upon Him and all will be well.

Next we find David in a difficult road, so that he prays, "Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies." But waiting on the Lord exactly met the case. Whenever you cannot tell what to do, wait upon the Lord. When the road turns this way and that, and you know not which is right, kneel down and pray—you will know which way to go when you rise from your knees, or if you do not, kneel down again.

The directing post is best seen when we are in prayer. The oracle shall answer to you out of the excellent majesty when you have resigned your will, and believingly sought direction from the Most High.

To conclude, we find next that David had been slandered by His enemies, "False witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty." What then? Wait upon the Lord still. "Oh, but I must answer them." Yes, and then you will make bad worse. Your slanderers will forge another lie when you have answered the first. "Oh, but," one says, "I could bear such a charge if it were true." Ah, but then you ought not to bear it. The truth of an ill report ought to grieve you, but if it is not true, never mind, let it alone.

"Oh, but they say _____." What do they say? Let them say it. No hurt will come of it. Wait you upon the Lord. They rail at you. Take care not to rail again. Make no reply to howling wolves. When dogs bark, let them bark, for it is their nature. They will leave off when they have done. And so with all our adversaries, they will confute themselves if we will but leave them alone.

Our strength is to wait upon the Lord, tell Him about it, and leave it with Him. Go to law? Yes, and get a suit which will not wear out in a hurry. Go to law, and bring upon yourself no end of troubles. In all other things except slander, if you want a thing done, do it yourself, but there, if you want to be well-defended, let others defend you.

Dirt will rub off when it is dry—be bravely patient. Wait upon the Lord, commit everything to Him, and He will see you through, even to the triumphant end. All that you can do in your own justification will only make more mischief. Hands off, there, and leave it with the Most High.

So we close by repeating our blessed text, "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD," May He keep you waiting courageously for Christ's sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—PSALM 27

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—27, 676, 686

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.