

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, June 18, 2014 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

LISTEN  **Up**

LEARNING TO LISTEN TO GOD

“The Hardest Part to Listening”

Selected Scripture

“The hardest part to listening is waiting!”

If the problem with listening is really “listening,” perhaps the hardest part about listening is “waiting”... waiting on God’s voice, waiting for God to speak to a certain situation, waiting for God to answer, waiting for God to show us something, to lead us, to speak. When God speaks, and He does, His voice not only comes in varied ways requiring that we learn how to listen for His voice and discern His speaking; but His voice also comes on His time table. God does speak, make no mistakes about it, but it is not always immediate and often we must patiently and expectantly wait for His voice and that is many times hard for us to do.

Often our steps today are marked by speed, impatience, noise, and much busy activity. To that list let’s add panic. Instead of moving calmly and smoothly through life, we ricochet... quickly bouncing from one thing to another, often acting impulsively and rashly rather than patiently waiting for the right reaction, the right answer! Truth be known, most of us would rather do anything than have to wait... even if it’s a wrong course of action we take, and often it is if we are not willing to wait for God’s voice and His leading.

We want to hear God’s voice... NOW! However, one of the fruits Spirit, remember, is “patience” (Gal. 5:22). How difficult it is to be patient and wait for something? Often we rush to be satisfied only to realize that our impatience has cost us something important... maybe our reputation, or a job, or a relationship... maybe a friendship or worse our marriage, or maybe our impetuosity has cost us financially... like our bank account or losing our home or a car. The situation might vary, but the results are the same. As we rush to judgment and rush into action without the blessings of God’s voice, we will inevitably pay a price... sometimes a high price. Sometimes the price is not seen for years, sometimes it is seen immediately. Think about this... if God’s answers came immediately there would be much we would perhaps miss, many opportunities for growth and maturity. But, as believers and His children, God is shaping us into something more than what we can see. There is a reason we need to apply patience: “He is refining us, changing us and helping us to build His Holy character!” As the Apostle Paul put it in **Romans 5:3-5**... this is how the Amplified Bible says it (I like this), **“Moreover [let us also**

*be full of joy now!] let us exult and triumph in our troubles and rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that pressure and affliction and hardship produce **patient and unswerving endurance**. 4And endurance (fortitude) develops maturity of [c]character (approved faith and [d]tried integrity). And character [of this sort] produces [the habit of] [e]joyful and confident hope of eternal salvation. 5Such hope never disappoints or deludes or shames us, for **God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who has been given to us.**"*

To fully hear God and His voice, we must be patient and we must wait to hear from Him. We must wait on the Lord!

I. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF WAITING ON GOD

The Bible is replete with examples and verses on "waiting." It is a key to success in God's ways... particularly in hearing God's voice. We must learn to wait on Him and the best place to learn how to do that is from the wise words of Scripture itself. As a side note... remember that the enemy, the devil, is almost always works the "opposite" to that of God's spirit. When we feel that impatient and impetuous draw, we need to consider the source and cast it away. The follow are some great Biblical examples and reminders of learning to wait on God in our life.

10 Biblical Encouragements to Wait:

1. **Waiting expresses a trustful expectation in the Lord (Psalm 5:3)** – *"In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation."*
2. **Waiting increases your strength and resolve in the Lord (Psalm 27:14)** – *"Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD."*
3. **Waiting produces a hope in the Lord as your help and shield (Psalm 33:20)** – *"We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield."*
4. **Waiting quiets your spirit before the Lord and produces a peace in you (Psalm 37:7)** – *"Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes."*
5. **Waiting blesses and prospers you in the Lord (Psalm 37:34)** – *"Wait for the LORD and keep his way. He will exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, you will see it."* Listen to Lamentations 3:25-26, *"The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the soul who seeks Him. It is good that one should hope and wait quietly For the salvation of the LORD."*
6. **Waiting provides answers (Psalm 38:15)** – *"I wait for you, O LORD; you will answer, O Lord my God."*
7. **Waiting promises the attention and response from the Lord (Psalm 40:1)** – *"I waited patiently for the LORD ; he turned to me and heard my cry."* The Prophet, Micah says in Micah 7:7, *"Therefore I will look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation; My God will hear me."*
8. **Waiting counsels us in a trustful watching for the Lord hand (Psalm 130:5-)** – *"I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, And in His word I do hope. My soul waits for the Lord...more than those who watch for the morning-- Yes, more than those who watch for the morning."*

9. **Waiting renews our strength and refreshes our spirit before the Lord (Isaiah 40:31)** – *“But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.”*
10. **Waiting gifts those who are willing to wait in Him (Acts 1:4-5)** – *“On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’”*
- Consider this last verse in Acts 1:4. Those who listened to the voice of God and waited were the first people to receive the gift of God’s Holy Spirit on that awesome day of Pentecost. What an incredible gift for those who followed God’s leading voice!

Across the landscape of Bible history rise forms of men who triumphed over their human impulse to rush God. They had to wait on God because the control of their situation was not in their hands.

6 Biblical Examples of Those Who Waited on God:

1. **Noah** – He was told by God to build an ark (ship) and to keep his faith until it rained. Noah waited 120 years.
2. **Job** – Described as a man “blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from evil” (Job 1:1), Job was allowed by God to encounter physical suffering that intensified with time. After losing his children and all of his material wealth, he suffered a paralyzing infection that nestled in pockets across the surface of his skin. He waited perhaps years before his disease was removed.
3. **Abraham** – At the age of 75 he moved from his native land of Ur to pursue God’s promise to him, “... I will make you a great nation... bless you... make your name great...” (Gen. 11:27-12:4). When he died at the age of 175 he still had not witnessed the grand fulfillment of God’s declaration. Over 100 years, moving from one place to another, he developed a discipline of waiting and trusting God was pleased.
4. **Joseph** – From Judah he’d been transported to Egypt as a slave...sold into slavery by his own brothers. Because of a false accusation he was placed in prison, where he waited for about fourteen years before being released. For so long he was forgotten and mistreated... only to later be placed in the position of prime minister of Egypt, a position that ultimately God would use to restore his family to him and save an entire nation.
5. **Moses** – The adopted son of the Pharaoh’s daughter, heir-apparent of the kingdom, at the age of forty was sent by God to a most unlikely setting in which to live. For forty years he lived in the Midian desert leading his father-in-law’s sheep. He waited for the hand of God to touch him and use him. The desert wait resulted in Moses trusting God so that he could finally say to the people he was to lead, “Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today...” (Ex. 14:13)
6. **Paul** – The prime zealot of Judaism, whose mark was aggressive leadership, had been set aside for three years so that his heart and mind could be seasons. He listened to God and received His revelations. Later, he waited one day after another for God to open doors to different areas.

II. INITIAL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT WAITING

Looking at the experiences of past lives, we can draw two conclusions:

2 Initials Observations About Waiting Based on Scripture:

1. **Waiting on God is the rule... the open door is the exception –**
2. **Waiting on God is resting (trusting)... not worrying -**

III. PERSONAL EXHORTATION TO WAIT

An appropriate title for this psalm is “Waiting for God.” Observe the first phrase of David’s piece, *“Truly my soul silently waits for God...”* Apparently, his back was to the wall and he had no place to turn. His only option was to look God-ward. In verses 1-2 and 5-8, David gives good advice to waiters...

1. What to do?

2 Things To Do In Regard To Waiting:

- (1) **Wait for God to direct your steps (v.1) –** *“Truly my soul silently waits for God...”* Note in **verse 5** the way David handled his own tendencies to move ahead of god. He became his own counselor, *“My soul, wait silently for God alone...”* It is as if he is speaking to himself... his own soul and instructing it. He practiced the counsel he gave to others.
- (2) **Trust God to provide for your needs (vv.1-2) –** *“He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved” (v.2).* David had good perspective on his own incompetence in providing for himself in this situation. Man’s problem is not only found in his possessed weaknesses, but also in his perceived confidence, his professionalism, his expertise, and his independence. Sometimes we can just get too big for our britches and thing that we can handled it on our own, we can take care of ourselves, we don’t need anyone not even God. It’s not up to us to meet our own needs. It is up to Him to do that.

2. How to do it?

2 Ways to Waiting on God:

- (1) **Wait in silence (vv. 1&5) –** *“My soul, wait silently for God alone...”* The Hebrew term translated *“silently”* means to *“whisper softly.”* It’s idea is that of whispering a secret to someone you love so that no one else hears. David spoke his own words loud enough for only God to hear... shouting was unnecessary. Sometimes the best moments of prayer are those of silence when God does all the talking, shaping our thoughts and conclusions.
- (2) **Wait in confidence (vv. 2&6) –** *“He only is my rocks and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved.”(v.2,6)* Reliance upon, and trust in, the Lord results in stability which man cannot mimic on his own. Isaiah, God’s faithful prophet to Judah, put it this way in **Isaiah 40:31**, *“They that wait upon the Lord will renew their strength, they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not faint.”* To Hebrew term there translated as

“wait” means “to twist or stretch in order to become strong.” Here the thought is that of twisting together strands of hemp so that far greater strength results. **“They that wait upon the Lord...”** We are to take our lives and twist them around the Lord... or wait, on Him.

3. Why do it?

5 Things Waiting on God Produces:

- (1) **Deliverance (v.1)** – “... from Him comes my salvation.”
- (2) **Security (v.2)** – “He only is my rock... my defense.”
- (3) **Hope (v.5)** – “For my expectation (hope) is from Him...”
- (4) **Glory (v.7)** – “In God is my strength and my glory...”
- (5) **Refuge (v.7)** – “... the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.”

IV. PRACTICAL APPLICATION FOR TODAY

Waiting is often confused with failing to do something that is responsible. However, as we look back upon these men of faith in God’s Word who became noteworthy “waiters,” we find that they were not passive people. We do we learn from them... at least three practical truths for waiting on the voice of God.

3 Practical Truths for Waiting on the Voice of God:

1. **Waiting on God’s voice should involve trusting** – Do you think Noah trusted God? Was that a big deal as he waited 120 years for God to do what He said He would do? You bet! God will speak and our waiting on His voice means that we trust and believe that He will speak, He will show us, He will tell us. Remember God is faithful and as we wait we can “trust” Him to see it to completion. He never fails. He never lets us down.
2. **Waiting on God’s voice does include praying** – Remember that when we speak of listening to God we are talking about communication. That is what David is doing in the 62 Psalm... praying... communicating with God and telling God that He trusts Him and will wait on Him. Remember that it is okay to ask God questions, to speak to Him and commune with Him through prayer, even at times when the Heavens seem silent we must keep seeking the Lord in prayer and waiting on Him.
3. **Waiting on God’s voice ought to imply resting** - This is something beautiful in the idea of asking of God and then waiting on Him to answer. It not only implies that you trust and believe that He will speak, but it also implies that you are content and at peace with His timing on things.