

Wait upon the Lord



"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Isaiah 40:30-31

They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength

There's a well-known verse from the prophet Isaiah which in the King James version of the Bible reads:

"Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Isaiah 40:30-31

Spoken in Hebrew some 2500 years ago these words still provide encouragement for exhausted souls in our own generation. Certainly, there are many in this position at this time. I spoke recently to a mother working extremely hard to keep her unusually crowded home running smoothly and harmoniously and, on top of that, helping her children with their education at home. She was, frankly, at screaming point. Keeping going when everyone is tired is really hard. When people are drained, words can so easily carry a tone of irritation or impatience. Keeping a sense of proportion does not come easily either. Meeting the needs and sometimes competing expectations of others is very challenging. There's no fun in fatigue!

But if we pause for a moment, here is a beautiful promise that strength will return with sufficient energy to walk and even fly

without running out of energy. But how can we actually receive what is promised here? What does it mean to wait on the Lord? Is waiting on the Lord like waiting for a bus at a bus stop? This is where recent translations offer further help.

The New International Version translates waiting upon the Lord as those who hope in the Lord. That implies having a strong expectation that the Lord will supply what is needed because hope in Scripture is more than mere wishful thinking as in common speech. Another translation, the Jewish Study Bible adds more. It translates the word wait as trust and in the margin adds the words with confidence and hope.

Putting these together we get a fuller picture:

We wait – because although strength returns, it does not do so immediately. It takes time. In our culture of instant results, we need to remember that some things take time. So we don't give up.

We trust – because the person who made the promise is trustworthy and can be relied upon. We are dealing here with a promise of God. He does not change his mind or waver.

We wait - with **confidence and expectation** because when we pray God does hear. He is not deaf. Furthermore, He has the ability to deliver what he has promised. We humans often make sincere declarations of intent but sadly being fallible we fail. But God is able.

Returning to idea of waiting at a bus-stop – there's always the possibility that the service has been cancelled. Perhaps the driver didn't turn up because he was ill, or maybe the bus broke down earlier in the day. But suppose we are waiting for a friend to arrive on that bus, and he or she sends us a text to say, "I'm

10 minutes away. See you soon.” That’s a totally different picture. This is the sort of conviction we can have. Help is surely on the way. It is Almighty God who has promised help. God is able to deliver.

Part of positioning ourselves to receive His help is to wait on him by turning our attention away from our current circumstance and focusing on the promise-maker and on His promise. Precisely how God chooses to deliver on his promise is, of course, His business and we leave that to Him. But when He does deliver, like the man at the temple gate we too will be “walking and leaping and praising God.”

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