

Trinity Baptist Church
Sunday 11th April 2021. David Linley.
ISAIAH 40:31 WAITING ON GOD

Today I want us to briefly consider, in a kind of overview, what it means to wait on God.

I wonder what you think of when you hear this phrase 'Waiting on God'?

Perhaps you think of that regular time each day that you spend praying and reading the bible.

Or it may be when you deliberately take some time to seek God, perhaps with fasting, to listen to Him for a specific purpose.

Another reason could be because you feel that God has definitely spoken to you about your future or has clearly given you a particular promise, that is yet to be fulfilled.

When we are Waiting on God, for whatever reason, I think that there's a lot of encouragement to be found in Isaiah 40:30 & 31 (NKJV)

"Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, 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."

Whether we are young or old, weariness and lack of strength – Physically and Spiritually, comes to us all. We feel powerless. We lack motivation and inspiration. (*Isaiah 40:30*)

There may well be physical reasons for how we feel, that can be addressed simply by rest, relaxation, time to eat and sleep, or perhaps we have health issues that we need to address.

Isaiah though, is encouraging us to think about the Spiritual renewing that comes from waiting on God, as we simply come and wait before Him for whatever reason.

I know from personal experience that when we come to wait upon God there is always the temptation to 'do' stuff rather than just simply waiting. Of course, it's good and right to pray and read the Bible - and we should give attention to these things each and every day, as we are able.

It's also right to ask ourselves the questions 'How much do we read God's word?' 'How much time do we spend in prayer?' We should keep this challenge before us always. We will never regret the time that we spend with God each day.

But I want us to focus today on the actual aspect of 'Waiting'.

What are the effects of waiting?

Back to Isaiah 40:31 *"We will Mount up with wings like eagles . . ."*

If you look at the eagles, that feature on those nature programmes on television, they are amazing! I did a bit of research. The majestic Golden Eagle, with its two-metre wingspan, soars across the sky to a height of about 10,000 feet (that's two miles high). He spots his prey - mainly rabbits and hares, from up to three miles away, and swoops down on them at speeds of around 200mph.

The Bible likens those of us who wait on the Lord to be like those eagles, implying new strength, a new perspective, a fresh vision. Energy, power, might, authority, renewal. All together with the ability to keep on going and to prevail in the situations that we find ourselves.

Psalm 46:10 NLT "Be still and know that I am God"

When we allow ourselves to be still, it gives us the gift of time and space.

Being still allows you to ask God (and yourself) important questions and then seek God and listen for the answers or solutions that He gives.

Being still often allows us to start over - at least in our approach to the challenges that we may face. We may even find that God has a completely different path in mind.

Peter Meadows one of the More Than Gold directors had a great formula that we would do well to consider. When he was under pressure and had to make an important decision, He would simply stop what he was doing, make himself a cup of tea and sit down to relax and drink it, before deciding on a plan of action.

Being still can help you by giving you vital time to reset.

People often think (wrongly) of silence and inactivity as some kind of barrier that needs to be overcome, instead of a gift to be embraced.

We have all heard the saying:
'Don't just stand there - do something!'.
It's not always true.
Sometimes:
'Don't do something - just stand there' is much better

Being too busy can be the unseen enemy to taking the right path or doing the right thing.

Like the account in Luke 10 about Jesus with Mary and Martha. Let me read it to you:

Luke 10:38-42 "As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home.

Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught.

But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing.

She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."

But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about.

Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her.""

Luke 10:38-42 NLT

Now some specific points around when you feel that God has definitely spoken to you about your future or has clearly given you a particular promise that is yet to be fulfilled

Are we ever tempted to take matters into our own hands?

In 1 Samuel 13, King Saul, in the 2nd year of his reign, attacked the Philistines, but the fighting was not going well, and his army were really afraid. The prophet Samuel told King Saul to wait for him at Gilgal and he would meet him in seven days. But Samuel didn't arrive and, afraid that the army would leave him, Saul sinned by taking Samuel's role and offering the sacrifices to God himself. He should have waited for Samuel - and not waiting cost him God's favour and eventually the kingdom.

Interestingly, Saul had some very good, logical reasons why he shouldn't wait but his actions led him gravely into sin (Look at it there in 1 Samuel 13:11 & 12) Saul, in effect, said to Samuel:

- I was afraid that the army would leave me.
- You Samuel, didn't come when you said.
- The Philistines were advancing ready to attack us.
- I needed to ask God's guidance.
- I felt compelled to do it.

But to Samuel, and to God, those reasons were simply not good enough.

Do we ever justify our action, knowing deep down that we are sinning against God and need to stop, and tell God how sorry we are?

If you're finding it hard to wait

I want to tell you about the man who waited 45 years

Joshua, Caleb and ten others were sent by Moses as spies into the promised land.

When they returned those other ten spies gave a bad report and said to the people, don't go up there or we will all die.

But Joshua and Caleb said 'It's a great land and God is with us. Let's go up now and we'll be victorious.

The people believed the ten spies instead and rebelled against God.

As punishment God sent them back into the wilderness for 40 years - until each and every unbeliever had died.

After 45 years the next generation went up and were victorious.

And Caleb went with them:

We carry on with the story in Joshua 14:10-12 NKJV

“And now, behold, the LORD has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the LORD spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in. **Now therefore, give me this mountain** of which the LORD spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the LORD said.” (Joshua 14:10-12 NKJV)

And he was able!

God’s timing is always perfect. And we should always trust Him as we wait.

Psalm 37:7 NLT

“Be still in the presence of the Lord and wait patiently for him to act.”

Someone once said: ‘What we call waiting – God calls timing!’

One other thing . . .

As I’ve grown older, I’ve actually found that one of my very best times to wait on God and be still, is the first few moments after I wake up.

So tomorrow, why not set your alarm 10 minutes earlier and give it a try!

Just be still and allow God to speak.

As we finish, let’s remind ourselves one more time, of the lovely promise from God, in Isaiah 40:31

“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.”

And of course, the very best thing about waiting on the Lord – is that, as we wait on Him, He will draw near to us and we will get to know Him better.

If we needed one, that is the greatest motivation of all, to take time to do it.