
THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR

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Waiting on Jehovah
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Dear Radio Friends,

There is nothing that reminds of life more than death. There is nothing that makes us appreciate life more than the thought of dying. When we face sickness, disease, affliction, persecution, pain, then we realize what a tremendous blessing health and life are. No matter who we are, we struggle to hold on to this earthly life. After all, man was created with this life, and it is precious. But there are many troubles in life that confront us. Psalm 27 is a beautiful chapter of the Bible that has encouraged and comforted God's people throughout the ages. The last verse of this psalm, verse 14, which we will be considering today, reads like this: "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD." These are words of encouragement to all of God's people, whether we are old or young. In fact, David probably penned the words of this particular psalm before he became king

over Israel—which means that he was quite young yet, although it is true that in his youth he faced death many more times than one usually does in his youth.

It is the goal and desire of every child of God, young and old, to dwell in the house of God to all eternity. So says the psalmist in verse 4 of this chapter: "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple." That is the end towards which the child of God strives. He wants to see the goodness of Jehovah in the land of the living. But God's people will never reach that goal without first seeing troubles and sorrows in life.

The psalmist speaks of those troubles in many of the verses of this psalm. For example, verse 2: "When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell." Or verse 5: "For in the time of trouble he shall

hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me.” Or verse 10: “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.” Even though we realize that God Himself sends such afflictions and burdens in life to accomplish our salvation, that does not relieve our misery. No one likes to suffer. No one enjoys heartache and pain. No one will ever say that they delight in the troubles of this present life. Life’s burdens are oftentimes too much to bear. So they seem. We can hardly go on with life. Our spirits are dampened. Enthusiasm for life is gone. We become depressed or cast down.

And it is at this time that our enemy, the devil, is at hand to add to our troubles. The psalmist says that our enemies come upon us to eat up our flesh. Satan does that. He tells us in times of trouble that God has left us and has forsaken us in our time of need. The devil whispers to us at times, “God has turned His face from you. You seek Him, but He’s not listening to you. God will not help you. Why should He? You’re too much of a sinner. You have wronged God far too often.”

The result of all of these troubles in life is that we can grow weary and faint. Hearts

can grow weak. The troubles become heavy burdens, which we are convinced we can no longer bear. And we sometimes become impatient with God and try to use our own arm of flesh to overcome. But we cannot. And then our spiritual feet begin to slip and we begin to question the hand of God in our lives.

Have you ever had that? Have you ever had such a heavy burden in life that such becomes true? You see a loved one suffer under the hand of a terminal illness, which we know will eventually take his or her life. To experience the pain and difficulties involved with such illness or to sit by helplessly watching one struggle, unable to do much more than to be there and to pray. It is painful. And it hurts. It cuts to the depths of one’s soul.

One thing I desire, O Lord, give it to me, that I may see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

And that is but one example of sorrows that can arise in our lives. We know of many others. Especially when there is the burden, perhaps, of loved ones forsaking the truth and walking in folly’s way. The pain and the sorrow is sharp. We grieve for them. We fret and we worry about them even when they, in their sin, lash

out at us. All these troubles are real. They make our hearts very, very weak. They hurt us sometimes even more than physical pain can hurt.

Then is when we need to hear the words of this chapter and the verse, especially, that we consider (14). Listen: “Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, ... wait, I say, on the LORD.” Do you hear that, weary soldier of the cross? Wait on the Lord! All of us need to hear these words of encouragement, old and young alike.

The term here for “wait” in this verse literally means “endure,” so that this verse really would read: “Endure in Jehovah.” Enduring, very simply, means from a negative point of view—do not give up, do not simply cave in when the difficulties of life press on you. But positively, we must remain firm in our conviction that all things in life are sent us by God and are for our good and will accomplish God’s good pleasure for us.

When the psalmist is asking us to wait, he is not asking of us the impossible. We are enjoined here to wait on the

Lord, or, as we have noticed, we must endure “in Jehovah.” That name Jehovah is God’s covenant name. And, as such, it reminds us of God’s enduring faithfulness towards His people. It reminds us of what God has done for us and continues to do for us.

You see, Jehovah has made us a promise. That promise is this: “I will give you the place of your desires. Heaven awaits you.” That is God’s

promise that the people of God in Christ receive. “I will not forsake you in your need and I will be there to give you what your desire is.”

And as a never-changing I AM (because, literally, that is what “Jehovah” means), God will certainly keep what He promises. From eternity God has chosen His own in His sovereign love. And nothing in this world is going to snatch them away from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.

Our Savior has come. Christ has already fulfilled, in principle, our desire to dwell in

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the house of the Lord. Not only has He done that through His saving work on the cross, making a place in heaven possible for God's people, but He has done that in His very ascension into heaven. Christ has entered into the place of our desires, into heaven. He prepares for us our place in heaven. Eternal death, eternal punishment, has already been taken away through Christ's death. And eternal life awaits us and is being prepared for God's people by Christ.

So we must wait on God. We must endure and remain firm in our conviction that all things in this life work toward that eternal state of glory.

And while we endure, we are told, we must be of good courage. We must be those who are steadfast in our courage. We must remain firmly fixed and immovable in our faith. Steadfastness is the ability to remain faithful and firm no matter what hardship befalls us. It is being able to face the storms of our life and to push on through them without wavering, without giving in. It is being convicted in our hearts that the circumstances of our lives do not take place by chance. All of them however, in some way, lead us to our heavenly home. And believing that, we are encouraged in our hearts.

But, just as the ability to wait on the Lord rests in Jehovah, is rooted in Jehovah, so also is the ability to be of good courage. To face adversity in life is not pleasant. In fact, using the words of the writer to the Hebrews, it is grievous. It is frightening, is it not, to live and to die of cancer? It is frightening to think that we are going to have to face tomorrow alone, without that loved one. Death is frightening.

The worst of all our troubles is to deal with the sin of a loved one who alienates himself from us and from the place of our desires, so that we lose him. Who likes to think of these things? Neither do we have the strength in ourselves to face these things. We simply, in ourselves, cannot endure. Or be of good courage, either.

So it is that, in these moments of life, we are enjoined by the psalmist here to look to God. "The Lord is my light and my salvation. The Lord is the strength of my life. He shall hide me in his pavilion." In our need, therefore, we must listen carefully, quietly, and humbly to the instruction given us in these beautiful words.

Why? Because God Himself will strengthen our hearts. That is what we are told. God

strengthens. That is to say, God makes our heart firm and sure. Have you ever been so frightened that you visibly shook from it? That is the picture that the term “strengthen” here in this verse draws for us. When we are so shook up by the adversities of our life, that we are left totally weak, physically, emotionally, spiritually. We are shook up by that adversary. Well, we are told by the psalmist: When we wait on the Lord, then He will strengthen us. He will make us strong-footed. God gives strength to withstand any affliction and burden, no matter how much pain it may give us physically or in our soul.

I’m reminded of the wonderfully comforting passage of Isaiah 40:28-31: “Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. 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.” With the power that the God who never faints or is weary gives us we will endure. We will be steadfast all the way to the end.

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You see, that is true of you and me because the strength of which this passage speaks is one that passes all human understanding. It is the strength that God Himself gives us in our hearts, that spiritual center of our beings. It is the strength that has nothing to do with physical strength. It is an inner strength, a strength of the heart. It is the inward man that receives strength from God. And with that strength we can endure.

I have seen that in my own pastorate as a minister. We can see loved ones who suffer patiently under their illness. And we can be so amazed at their strength. They are stronger than we are. We marvel at the confession of their mouths even while they are wracked

with pain. I have had that. I think of an elderly saint whom the doctors kept alive with a respirator. He knew that the only thing between him and death was that machine, and he said to his family, "Do not make me stay here any longer. I want to go home." Strength! A strength that only God can supply.

And let us not forget that this strength of the heart God promises to give us. He gives it to us. He promises us that. James tells us that you and I must ask that of God, nothing wavering, because God will give wisdom and strength liberally. The psalmist in our text assures us that when we wait on God, God *shall* strengthen us. That is the word that is used. He *shall*, of a certainty, He will strengthen us. We bear in mind, once again, that this verse directs us to contemplate Jehovah, the covenant God, who is always faithful to His Word and promises. And when we in our weakness turn to our heavenly Father and say, "And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in Thee," then God hears us out of heaven and He strengthens our hearts. When it is truly our desire to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living, then God will see to it that such a desire is fulfilled.

And adversity and trouble will not get in the way. No, God will even use these means in the service of fulfilling our desire. God swears by His own name to us that heaven is ours. We need not fear.

And with that knowledge, we *are* of good courage and we wait. That is why the psalmist repeats those words in this passage. Notice, once again, just exactly how he says that: "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD." He repeats it: Wait I say, on the LORD.

You know the strength that God can give. You know that He will give you courage to face those troubles. Then wait on the Lord!

In the light of what we have learned, we can be encouraged by God's promise to us. And, though the battle is a wearisome one, though we may be weakened by it, we wait and we wait. And sometimes we wait and wait and wait some more. But we wait in the strength of God.

And one day we will receive the desire of our hearts. Then we will see the goodness of God in the land of the living. We must not overlook this eternal reward that awaits us. It is that eternal home of ours,

after all, that we always have before our hearts and minds—especially while we are suffering. That is true. In verse 4 of this chapter we learn that heaven is the dwelling place of Jehovah. God is there. And that includes, of course, Jesus, since He is there sitting at God's right hand. Because they are there, heaven is a place of beauty, a place of goodness. It is not marred by sin and the curse. We will not find in heaven that which causes all of the troubles and sorrows and heartaches in this present life.

Furthermore, in verse 13 we learn that it is the "land of the living." There is no death there, nor any of those things that lead to death. There will be no more sickness there. There will be no more pain and sorrow and alienation from a loved one because of sin. And there we will never die. Nor will we ever be lonely, because God, our heavenly Father, and our loving Savior will always be there for us.

Those of us who are troubled by the adversities of life look at the house of the Lord and know that the afflictions of this present life are not worthy to be compared to the joy and the happiness that you and I will receive in heaven. In our sorrow and pain, in our loneliness, in the

struggles of this life, we must realize that it will be worth it all when we get there. Wait on the Lord. Be of good courage. One day we will mount up on wings as eagles, we will run and never be weary, we will walk and not be faint, for the Lord is our light and our salvation. What shall we fear? The Lord is the strength of our life, of whom shall we be afraid? Is that not true? Then wait, I say, on the Lord.

Let us pray together.

Our almighty God who holds all things in Thy sovereign and good hands, we come to Thee to thank Thee that Thou dost give us strength. If there are those here today who listen and who are weary because of the struggles of their own personal lives, we pray that they might look to the cross of Jesus Christ, and there know that salvation is accomplished and that those who belong to Jesus Christ will mount up as with wings of eagles and that, even now, we can wait on Thee our God and we will find strength from Thee. Father, encourage us by Thy Word. And when, in weakness, we stumble and we fail to place our trust in Thee, pick us up and lead us in the way that leads to life everlasting. We ask these things for Jesus' sake alone, Amen.