

# MARANATHA BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

16 December 2018

*"Present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28)*

Address: 63 Cranwell Road, Singapore 509851

E-mail: [maranatha.bpc@pacific.net.sg](mailto:maranatha.bpc@pacific.net.sg)

Sunday School: 10 am

Sunday English / Chinese Worship Service: 10.45 am Sunday Chinese Worship Service: 7.30 pm

Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8.00 pm

**Rev Colin Wong (HP : 9665 8160); Elder Daniel Tau (HP : 9761 5415); Elder Peter Ong (HP : 9626 7045)**

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## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO WAIT UPON THE LORD

We live in a world of instantaneity. Patience is no longer a virtue our society seems to favour. Nowadays, the mentality of the people is something like this: "I'm searching for modern happiness. The old-fashioned kind takes just too long. That happiness requires patience and I don't want to wait. I want upgraded happiness. I want release 4.02, the "new and improved" version. This is the 21st century and I demand instant gratification" (No Happiness without Patience, by David Leonhardt). Is instant gratification the recipe for happiness? Unfortunately, the motto of the day is "Give it to me quick or forget about it."

Dr. Larry Dossey, a Dallas internist, coined a term that describes this problem. People who hate to wait suffer from what he calls "Hurry Sickness," which he defines as "an increased sensitivity to the passage of time." He believes that people suffering from this sickness die before their time.

We are living in a crazy, weary, groaning world. The pace of life is so vigorous. Society is ever-changing by the seconds. Many of us are tired and wearied after a day's work. We hardly have time for ourselves let alone for family or church activities. But for the sake of survival, many of us keep on going in life's race in our own strength. Instead of slowing down to work things out, we find other means to keep ourselves going. We resort to taking all sorts of tonic or anything that can lift up our spirits or make ourselves feel energetic. That's how we survive and keep ourselves sane! But deep in our hearts we lament, "Where to find strength to face another day?"

Have you heard of a prayer that goes like this: "Lord, give me patience, and I want it right now." Sadly, this is the kind of mindset many Christians have today. We have become impatient people when it comes to waiting on the Lord to answer our prayers. We want instant, immediate answers from the Lord. But the Lord does not operate that way.

The Lord knows how tired and wearied and troubled we are. He also knows our need of strength to face another day. But He wants us to learn to wait on Him, and waiting on Him takes time. The prophet of God tells us that those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength. With this strength that comes from the Almighty, they will soar on wings of eagles. To soar is really to be carried along by the wind. The soaring eagle is relaxed and calm as the elements of nature carry him along. This, said the prophet, is what it will be like for those who wait on the Lord. As they wait on the Lord, like an eagle, they shall fly above the storms of life and run in the strength of the Lord, and not grow weary because the Lord never gets weary (Isaiah 40:31).

Is this something wishful or is it actually a precious promise from the Lord? This is not just wishful thinking. This is what each and every one of us is in desperate need of in our lives. We want to renew and gain new strength. We want to rise on wings like eagles. We want to run through this life and not get weary. We want to walk through our daily struggles and not grow weak. But how many of us really know how to do these things?

What does it mean to “wait upon the Lord” and how do I do that? This is one of the most difficult things to do for a 21st century Singaporean Christian. The mentality of the people today is “We want to get it done now.” Of course, there is nothing wrong with getting things done as soon as possible. But as Christians, should we do the same as the people of the world?

There is a difference between the people of the world and the people of God. The people of the world do things to gratify the desires of the flesh (and they want to do it quick) but the people of God do things to glorify God (and they want to do it in God’s time). The guiding principle for us is 1 Corinthians 10:31 – “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” Therefore, God’s people must learn to “wait upon the Lord” before acting.

The word “wait” simply means “to wait, to hope or to expect,” and it conveys the idea of anticipation. This is the same kind of waiting children would do on Christmas morning while waiting for their parents to get out of bed to open presents. The same kind of waiting with anticipation is found in Romans 8:19 where Paul said that all creation is eagerly waiting for God to reveal who His children are. The Psalmist is fond of this word in Psalm 25:5, 27:14 and 62:1 and 5.

We are reminded in Romans 15:4 and 1 Corinthians 10:11 that whatever was written in former days was written for our learning. The people of God in the Old Testament have many wonderful lessons for us to learn today. A good example was the nation of Israel.

Israel had always been told to seek God and His will in matters pertaining to life and godliness. Everything from warring with neighbouring nations to building the temple had to be done according to God’s will. When Israel decided to attack a nation that God told her not to, she lost. Here is a warning to us. We can become so caught up in our own personal devotion to God to the extent that we can actually disobey God, thinking all the while that we are in full compliance with His will.

Jephthah was a good example. He found this out the hard way. The Bible records that he hastily vowed to sacrifice to God the first thing that came out of his house if God would to give Israel victory over the Ammonites. How sorry he must have been when he saw his own daughter coming out to greet him.

The lesson for us is that God always wanted Israel to bring all of their decisions to Him in prayer and confidently execute them upon full confirmation obtained from His Word via a priest, a prophet, or the written law. In that way, all hasty decisions could be avoided.

We find this same principle in the Acts of the Apostles. Jesus commissioned His disciples and us by extension, to be His witnesses in the world after they have received confirmation from the Father (Acts 1:3-8; 2:1-4). Can you imagine their frustration? Perhaps, one of the disciples might have grumbled, “We have been personally trained by our Master Jesus for three and a half years. We are passionate about preaching the Gospel. We are ready. But why does He want us to wait?”

No doubt they had been passionate and well equipped to preach the Gospel, but they had not yet received the promise of the Father. The power from on high is the indwelling Holy Spirit given as the Father’s confirmation to the new local church ministry. The lesson is that whenever we act without proper biblical authority, we are acting on our own strength, not on God’s. Therefore, to wait upon the Lord means to make sure that we have biblical grounds for doing whatever we do before we do it. And we do that by knowing what God’s Word says.

Beloved brethren, have you been tired or wearied lately? Let me encourage you to wait patiently on the Lord to strengthen you again. Psalm 27: 14 says, "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD." Perhaps, some of us may argue that waiting on the Lord is time consuming or a waste of time. Why can't we make plans while waiting on the Lord? The point is that if we do not receive any instruction from Him, how can we make plans? It is best to wait for His instruction (i.e. by prayer and by reading of the Word) before making any plans.

Hudson Taylor aptly said, "It is not lost time to wait on God." God's clock keeps perfect time. God's delays are never his denials and his timing is always perfect. Waiting on the Lord is time well spent and it also reaps eternal benefits and rewards. Therefore, there is divine wisdom to be found in waiting on God. A willing spirit will trust God unreservedly in times of indecision and uncertainty. Such attitude will lead to a renewal of strength. Like an eagle, he shall fly above the storms of life and run in the strength of the Lord and not be weary and walk and not faint.

May God teach us to wait on the Lord patiently. Amen.

*Pastor Colin Wong*

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**Theme for the Quarter :**

**LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IN THE WORLD  
(The Study of the Epistle of James)**

**English Worship Service :**

**Rev Colin Wong  
speaks on**

***The Prayer of a Righteous Man***

**(Scripture Text : James 5:13-18; Responsive Reading : Matthew 6:5-15)**

[End of MM]