

**Weekly Devotions**  
**South Holburn Church**  
**4<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

## READINGS

I must confess I do not like waiting! I always want to choose the shortest queue at the supermarket tills. I enjoy planning and looking ahead rather than 'going with the flow'. I realize these are not always healthy qualities, but, after all, who really likes to wait? We have been on a journey of waiting in our family. Three years ago this spring, I went on my assessment conference with the Church of Scotland. Since then, we have gone through major changes, including selling our home, applying for visas (in a pandemic), sorting and packing all our things, finding a placement (I am so glad it is South Holburn!), watching our children apply to university and finish secondary school! Lydia has grown from a baby to a toddler, to now getting ready to start nursery next year. The trio have gone from teenagers to adults, and we have seen them grow tremendously. Joe and I have a few more grey hairs, but we have learned to accept God's timing. It is not easy waiting on God, but the Lord has always proven faithful, both in this situation but also throughout our lives. Even though I am far from patient, I am being stretched beyond what I thought was possible. This week while working on my Sunday sermon on Jesus' ascension, the topic of "waiting" fascinated me. You will hear more on Sunday about how the disciples had to wait. But in this devotional, I want to acknowledge that waiting on God is a theme we see throughout scripture.

*<sup>28</sup>Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
The LORD is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
He does not faint or grow weary;  
his understanding is unsearchable.  
<sup>29</sup>He gives power to the faint,  
and strengthens the powerless.  
<sup>30</sup>Even youths will faint and be weary,  
and the young will fall exhausted;  
<sup>31</sup>but those who wait for 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.*

**Isaiah 40:28-31 (NRSVA)**

*<sup>9</sup>So let us not grow weary in doing what is right,  
for we will reap at harvest time,  
if we do not give up.  
<sup>10</sup>So then, whenever we have an opportunity,  
let us work for the good of all,  
and especially for those of the family of faith.*

**Galatians 6:9-10 (NRSVA)**

## REFLECTION

In Isaiah, the people who were in exile in Babylon were being encouraged that God had not forgotten them. They were being reminded that even though they were tired and weary they would yet see the goodness of the Lord. The exile had been long, and they were far from their home, but they had not stopped seeing God's provision in their lives. They would renew their strength even when they felt they could not wait any longer for God's deliverance.

In Galatians, we are reminded that it can be easy to give up on doing good. Sometimes we might feel as though others prosper even when they do not do good. We might feel as though we do good, but it is not seen, or we do not receive the outcomes that we are hoping for in our lives even though we follow God's path. Yet, Paul reminds the Galatians that they cannot give up. God does see their efforts, and through patience they will see blessings come to them. This passage does not promise a prosperity gospel, where doing good promises us material wealth, but often these blessings come in the form of a deeper walk with the Lord, with a developed sense of self and community and with intangible blessings that produce a gentler and more beautiful nature in us.

I have yet to meet someone who loves the process of waiting on God. I think even the most laid-back people still grow weary in the wait. However, we can be assured that we are not overlooked, that God sees our struggle and is walking beside us.

There is a beautiful poem called "Footprints in the Sand" that you have properly heard. It reminds us that we are never alone even in our most difficult times of waiting.

*One night I dreamed a dream,  
As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.  
Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.  
For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,  
One belonging to me and one to my Lord.  
After the last scene of my life flashed before me,  
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.  
I noticed that at many times along the path of my life,  
especially at the very lowest and saddest times,  
there was only one set of footprints.  
This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.  
"Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,  
You'd walk with me all the way.  
But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life,  
there was only one set of footprints.  
I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me."  
He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you  
Never, ever, during your trials and testings.  
When you saw only one set of footprints,  
It was then that I carried you."*

**~ Anonymous**

Do we recognize that God carries us through our times of waiting, even when we are uncertain of where he is leading us? Perhaps you have a new situation in your life that is uncertain, or an illness that is frightening, or you are concerned about what the world will be like as we face an ongoing pandemic – it is in these times and so many more, that God is caring you. The reason we can be lifted up and given wings to fly and not grow

weary is because God is ever present in our lives. Even when we forget about the Lord's love and work on our behalf, He is never faithless to us.

So why do we struggle with waiting and why do we give up in doing good? Because it is easier to work at it and keep planning and continue doing than it is to trust a sovereign God who is asking us to be still and trust that He has all things in his loving hands. The Lord will pick us up if He needs to do so, and the Lord will give us wings to soar when we grow weary.

*"Teach us, O Lord, the disciplines of patience, for to wait is often harder than to work."*

**~ Peter Marshall**

May each of us learn to be more patient, to allow God to carry us and to be willing to give up our ideas of what is ahead. No matter how long the next leg of life's journey takes, or the situation we are in needs to be resolved, or the healing we long for tarries in coming, may we fully trust our faithful God, who is with us in the waiting.

## **PRAYER**

Precious Lord,  
Take our hands,  
Lead us in your paths,  
Help us to not become weary in waiting,  
May we follow you, taking one step at a time.  
May we know that when we do not see you, we are being carried.  
May we trust that you have blessings in store for us in the midst of challenges.  
We trust that you will shape our characters and give us strength.  
We know you long for us to be more like you.  
We are grateful that you are always faithful and will never abandon us.

In Jesus name we offer our prayers,  
Amen

