

THE BELIEVERS SECRET OF WAITING

April 17, 2016 –Isaiah 40: 28-31

The Church of the Covenant

If I were to share with you one profound secret of the BLESSED God-centered life what would it be? I think it would be this –when we wait in expectancy for what God will do, and then when God acts, we see events unfold in provision and blessing in our lives. The believers' secret? --Wait upon the Lord. My SOUL, may it wait for THEE ALONE, O Lord! The title of this sermon and its content comes from one of my favorite books, by my favorite author, **The Believer's Secret of Waiting on God**, by Andrew Murray. I commend it to you.

Something happens in our life. We ought to quietly enter into the presence of God. Be still. Not anxious. Be silent. Not speaking. Be trusting. Believe that God is GOOD all the time. Believe that HE will not withhold one good thing from His children. Believe that even things which the world might identify as being difficult or evil, have a divine purpose and a plan to pour out God's mercy through it. Quiet your soul. Fill your heart with hope and expectancy. FAITH. God is at work. The battle you face is HIS to win, not yours. And then wait for HIM to act; the Lord will act decisively; and when HE does then it is your signal to act with purpose, power and direction to cooperate with His divine will and purpose. But we have to PRAY, first. QUIET our souls. And we have to WAIT. TRUST in the Lord. And when HE acts, O and HE WILL, then we can act with boldness and confidence and power.

I remember when I was praying about what would become the Light the Fire Campaign. Clearly, there were many needs on our congregation; but needs alone do not constitute a reason to engage in a campaign. I have seen such campaigns divide a congregation and I have seen them unite a congregation. What is the difference? --When we have waited upon the Lord in prayer. And I prayed and prayed and prayed. And a wonderful family approached me with a large, generous gift to be matched by the congregation. And I knew it was the answer to my prayer and the moment was ripe. And the time was NOW. And from January to June we raised every nickel we needed and more. It was in the middle of the recent recession but you all responded as you always do, generously and faithfully. What a great congregation I get to serve! And if we had delayed even 6 months we could not have done it, because by July my dear friend Randy's health was in decline and it would have precluded such an effort. There was one 6 month window to act with purpose, power and boldness. And we did. And God's plan was blessed by God. It always is. And we raised even more than we had hoped. It is THE BELIEVERS SECRET OF WAITING ON GOD...

Our scripture from Isaiah 40 highlights that self-same secret. *"They who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.."* (Isaiah 40: 31) When we wait for God to act and God acts it is THEN that we possess the strength of God in our life. Because as it says, *"the Lord is the everlasting Lord"*. He, the Lord God Almighty, *"does not grow faint or grow weary"* (Isaiah 40: 28) When we wait upon HIM it is then we receive His power for whatever problem we face in life. God's power poured through our need. Because the promise for us who choose to wait upon the Lord is this –*"They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."* (v. 31) What is the secret to power and grace sufficient for the day in our daily living? --THE BELIEVERS SECRET OF WAITING ON GOD...

I had the great privilege of going to Haiti on a mission trip to the New Testament Mission in LaCroix, Haiti, a week ago. I prayed about it and it was clear I was to go. But I was praying then that the Lord would watch over my beloved parents when I was away. Lord, let me go away in confidence because I trust you to watch over my parents whom I love. But on the Thursday of the mission trip when I was

away, first, my Father fell in the morning and was injured. And my Mother fell in the afternoon and was injured. And they went from being independent and mobile to being in need constantly. Do you ever have those moment when you ask the Lord –“Lord Jesus, what the heck are you up to? I thought you were going to take care of this.” But of course, HE did. He raised up the kindness of this congregation. He used Don Nixon and Debi Nicolella, Linda Grim and Connie Hornickel and the deacons and the compassion of our church family to support my parents every step along the way in my absence. I always knew this about you; your compassion as a people is your greatest strength. And I got to see it with my own eyes. It is who you are, The Church of the Covenant. And I wish every person in the sound of my voice had the opportunity to be part of a wonderful church family just like ours. (To be clear, I will never believe that GOD caused my parents to fall last week. That is not my experience in 35 years of ministry of the way God works in the world. No –LIFE HAPPENS and THEN God intervenes with love and purpose and power aplenty...for those who wait upon Him in expectancy and hope and prayer. And whatever you are contending with in your own life today, if you will but submit it to God in prayer and wait upon HIM to act, then you will see the hand of God at work in your life in mercy and love and compassion. *“The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down. The eyes of all wait upon THEE (O Lord) and THOU givest...in due season.” (Psalm 145: 14,15)* My Dad said to me when I got home from the mission trip: “Stu, we had prayed so much about this; I believe it is the answer to our prayer.” You are so right and wise, my dear Father. And so we can act with purpose and power and boldness, because we know what is now God’s plan. It is the BELIEVERS SECRET OF WAITING ON GOD...

So back to Haiti. Last year I also went on the Haiti mission trip. But I discovered that my health prohibited me from doing everything I felt I wanted to do. There is a little remote village up in the mountains, LaCoup, where we went last year. And then part of the team walked up a mountain and then down an even larger mountain in order to return to the New Testament mission. I could not have possibly done it last year. And it was a wake up call for me, and I believe it was from the Lord. So I purposed to lose weight and eat right and walk each day. And by the grace of God I have lost 50 pounds and I feel better than I have for years. So I returned to Lacoup this year. Was I going to walk up and down the mountain, 2 ½ hours in the blazing mid-day sun, 92 degrees, or not? *“They who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength...they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” (Isaiah 40: 31)* These were my watch-words along the path. Pastor Evans from the Haiti Mission even came back to ask me a second time, “Are you sure, Stu?” Yep, I have confidence in the Lord. So I took the walk from Lacoup. And on the very day when both my parents fell, I walked the walk, that a year before would have been impossible. And at the end, when I was walking across an open field and some of the younger members of the team had already arrived, they applauded me, and noted that I walked across that field in strength and purpose and power, fresh as a daisy, as one said. Trust me; it was an answer to prayer. Exactly.

So...what is the impossible mountain you face in your life today? *“They who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength...they shall run and not be weary...they shall walk and not faint.”* O my soul, may it wait upon THEE ALONE, O Lord! Beloved, it is THE BELIEVERS SECRET OF WAITING ON GOD...Amen and Amen.

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IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*