

# THE PRESENT EFFECT OF WAITING FOR CHRIST

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There are two things which constitute the joy of a Christian, which are his strength on the road, and the object constantly before his heart.

- First, present communion and fellowship with God the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.
- Secondly, the hope of the coming of the Lord. And these two cannot be separated without loss to our souls, for we cannot have all the profit without both of them.

If we are not looking for the coming of the Lord, there is nothing that can separate us in the same way, from this present evil world; neither will Christ Himself be so much the object before the soul, nor yet shall we be able, in the same measure, to apprehend the mind and counsels of God about the world, if there be not this waiting for His Son from heaven.

Again, if this hope be looked at apart from present communion and fellowship with God, we shall not have present power, the heart being enfeebled by the mind being too much occupied and overborne by the evil around. For we cannot be really looking for God's Son from heaven, without at the same time seeing the world's utter rejection of Him, seeing that the world itself is going wrong, its wise men having no wisdom—all is going on to judgment, the principles of evil are loosening all bands. The soul thus becomes oppressed, and the heart sad; but if, through grace, the Christian is in present communion and fellowship with God, his soul stands steady, and is calm and happy before God, because there is a fund of blessing in Him which no circumstances can ever touch or change. The evil tidings are heard, the sorrow is seen, but the Christian's heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord, and this carries him far above every circumstance.

Brethren, we all want this; for to walk steadily with God we need both this fellowship and this hope. I do not believe a Christian can have his heart scripturally right, unless he is looking for God's Son from heaven; for there could be no such thing as attempting to set the world right if its sin in rejecting Christ were fully seen. Moreover, there never will be a correct judgment formed of the character of the world until that crowning sin be apprehended by the soul. To a Christian who is looking and waiting for Christ to come from heaven, Christ Himself is unspeakably more the object before the soul. It is not that I shall get to heaven and be happy, but that the Lord Himself is coming from heaven for me, and for all the Church. It is this which

gives its character to the joy of the saint; so Christ Himself says, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Where I find my delight, there shall you find yours also, I with you, and you with me—for ever with the Lord.

You may think to find good or produce good in man, but you will never find waiting for Christ in man. In the world the first Adam may be cultivated, but it is the first Adam still; the last Adam will never be found there, being rejected by the world. And it is the looking for this rejected Lord which stamps the whole character and walk of the saints.

Then again there is another thing connected with my waiting for God's Son from heaven. I have not yet got the Person with me I love, and while waiting for Him I am going through the world tired and worn with the spirit and character of everything around me. The more I am in communion with God, the more keenly shall I feel the spirit of the world to be a weariness to me, although God still upholds my soul in fellowship and communion with Himself. Therefore, Paul says, in 2 Thess. 1, "To you who are troubled, rest with us." I get rest to my spirit now in waiting for Christ, knowing that when He comes He will have everything His own way; for the coming of the Lord, which will be trouble to the world, will be to the saints full and everlasting rest. Still it is not that we are to be "weary and faint in our minds;" it is not right to be weary of the service and conflict. Oh, no! Father let me be victorious every day, but still it is not rest to be fighting. However, when walking with God, it is not so much thinking of combat, as joying in God Himself. I shall know it all better when I am in the glory, my soul will be enlarged, and more capable of enjoying what God really is; but it is the same kind of joy that I have now, as I shall have when He comes to be glorified in His saints, only greater in degree.

And if this joy in God is now in my soul in power, it hides the world from me altogether, and becomes a spring of love to those in the world; for though I may be tired of the combat, still I feel there are people in the world that need the love which I enjoy and desire that they should possess (it is the joy of what God is for me that sustains me and carries me on through all the conflict), so that our souls will be exercised in both the fellowship and the hope. Thus if I look for Christ's coming apart from this fellowship and communion with God, I shall be oppressed, and shall not go on steadily and properly. When the love of God fills my heart, it flows out towards all those that have need of it, towards saints and sinners according to their need; for if I feel the exercise of the power of this love in my heart, I shall be going out to serve others, as it is the power of this love that enables me to go through the toil and labour of service, from that attachment to Christ which leads to service, although through suffering for His sake. If my soul is wrapped up in the last Adam, attachment to Christ puts its right stamp upon all that is of the first Adam.

When this love has led out into active service, then the conflict, doubtless, will be found. In 2 Cor. 1 there is present blessing in the midst of trial; but in 2 Thess. 1 it is tribulation, and not rest

out of it till the Lord come — "That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer." In 2 Cor. 1: 3, 4 there is present blessing in the midst of the trial — "who comforteth us in all our tribulation" — so that if the sufferings for Christ's sake be ours, there is, at the same time, the comforting of God in the soul. How rich a spring of blessing is this in return for this poor little trouble of mine! I get God pouring into my soul the revelation of Himself. I get God communicating Himself to my soul, for it is really that. I find it to be a present thing; it comes home to me, to my heart, this very joy of God — God delighting in me, and I in God. He identifies Himself with those who suffer for Him.

If, therefore, the expectation of Christ and His constraining love lead us out into service, in the desire that others may share our blessing, and thereby bring us into trials or persecutions, how rich and sustaining are the consolations ministered to our hearts. "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." (2 Cor. 1: 5.) May the Lord ever fill our souls with the sense of His own presence, and keep our hearts under the present power of waiting for His coming.

## WAITING

Psalm 40:1

It is Christ's perfect life, and sorrows at the close of it, in which He refers to the faithfulness and goodness of Jehovah, so as to lead His people to confide in it, instructing them in this in which His perfection is shown. "I waited patiently for Jehovah."

Patience had its perfect work — an immense lesson for us. Flesh can wait long, but not till the Lord comes in — not in perfect submission; and confiding only in His strength and faithfulness, so as to be perfect in obedience and in the will of God. Saul waited *nearly* seven days; but the confidence of the flesh was melting away — his army.

The Philistines, the proud enemies, were there. He did not wait on till the Lord came in with Samuel. Had he obeyed, and felt he could do nothing, and had only to obey and wait, he would have said, "I can do nothing, and I ought to do nothing, till the Lord comes by Samuel." Flesh trusted its own wisdom, and looked to its own force, though with pious forms. All was lost. It was flesh which was tried and failed. Christ was tried.

He waited patiently for *Jehovah*. He was perfect and complete in all the will of God. And this is our path through grace.