

Waiting for the Mercy of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Part 4 of 4)

But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. (Jude 20–21)

We all wait. All we do is wait. Husbands sit in the car, waiting for their wives to come out of the store. Wives wait for their husbands to finally grow up and become patient. Young children wait to become teenagers, only to discover that teens must wait until they are adults. Teachers wait for their students to complete their tasks. Building contractors wait for subcontractors to get out of the way. Doctors and patients wait for the body to heal. Musicians wait for someone to notice and offer them a contract. Pastors wait for their congregations, often in unseen ways, and sometimes congregations must likewise wait for their pastors.

The unbelieving world considers it useless and irritating to wait. Thirty seconds at a traffic light seems too long to wait, so I pull out the smartphone. The smartphone reminds me that I am waiting for my contract to expire, when I can finally get a new phone. Fast-food restaurants do not seem fast enough. Expensive shipping costs deliver my Amazon purchases sooner. The microwave makes me wait too long for my meal, so I eat my lunch half-warmed.

Perhaps we should take pains to embrace, and even to love, our inevitable waiting. We might even think of our waiting as something far greater than an inconvenience. The Scriptures of God open for us the possibility that all our waiting is essentially a practice, or a dress rehearsal, for the one form of waiting that really matters:

- “Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!” (Psalm 27:14).

- “I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in His word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning” (Psalm 130:5–6).
- “It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD” (Lamentations 3:26).
- “[We] wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come” (1 Thessalonians 1:10).
- “[We are] waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us” (Titus 2:13–14).

These verses all indicate that waiting is a synonym for faith and trust in Jesus. These verses add beautiful harmonies to the melody of Jude’s words: “waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life” (21). What do these words teach us to expect from God? They teach us to believe that, even as we have already been shown mercy in Christ, we shall yet be shown more mercy! Stated another way, the mercy of Christ is not merely for the forgiveness of our sins. The mercy of Christ is also for the blessedness of our future, when we shall at last “be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2).

What do we do in the meantime? We wait. “Blessed are all those who wait for Him” (Isaiah 30:18).

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