

(The Word for Today) Isaiah 30:18 - Part 1

by Chuck Smith

God waits patiently for us to come to him, showing mercy and forgiveness when we finally come to him, and giving us the opportunity to experience his deliverance and victory.

Duration: 25:59

Scripture: Isaiah 30:18, Jonah 1:1, Matthew 23:39

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith emphasizes the importance of fully committing our ways to the Lord and trusting in Him for deliverance. He reminds listeners that no matter where they are in life, they can find strength and confidence in God. Pastor Chuck also highlights the true meaning of Christmas and encourages believers to not get caught up in the busyness of the season, but to remember the birth of Jesus and its impact on the world. He uses the story of Jonah to illustrate the consequences of stubbornness and the importance of surrendering to God's will.

Transcript

Welcome to The Word for Today. The Word for Today is a continuous study of the Bible taught by Pastor Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California. Pastor Chuck is currently teaching from the Old Testament, and if you're following along in your Bible, we'll be continuing today in Isaiah chapter 30, beginning with verse 18, as we continue with a topical message entitled, God is Waiting.

One thing is needful, O my Father, One thing is needful, O my God, That I sit at your feet and pour out my love. This thing is needful, O my God. And now with today's study, here's Pastor Chuck.

As you go back into the 30th chapter, we read that the nation of Judah was being threatened with an invasion by the Assyrians. Hezekiah the king fortified the walls in preparation. He built the tunnel to bring the water from the spring of Gihon into the pool of Siloam, so they'd have water within the city gates.

But then, against the commandment of the Lord, he took money out of the treasury, and he sent emissaries down to Egypt, and with the money, they sought to hire the Egyptian army to come and help them defend themselves against the Assyrians. And this movement in seeking the help of Egypt was an act of rebellion against the counsel of God. But the prophet warns them in verse 7 that their alliance with Egypt will be a failure, that Egypt will not be able to help them against the Assyrians, that the money that they are taking down is going to be wasted because Egypt will be no help to them when the real crisis

arises.

God's word to them was just sit still and trust in God who would deliver them. Your strength, he said, is to sit still. Just wait on me.

Just trust in me. And the promise of God was that he would deliver them. And then the Lord declared to them, in returning, that is, these emissaries that had gone down to Egypt to seek their help, bring them back.

In returning and rest, you will be saved. Just rest in me. And in quietness and in confidence, you will find your strength.

So this was the issue. God was exhorting the people just to trust in him. He would deliver them from the Assyrians.

Just rest in the Lord. Their strength would be to do nothing, just to sit and wait for God. And it's in quietness and in confidence they'll find their strength.

But they said, no, we'll do our own thing. And if the Assyrians are threatening us, then we'll get on our horses and we will swiftly get out of here. And the prophet said, though you may ride on your swift horses, those that will pursue you will be even swifter.

They rebelled against this message from God. In fact, they told the prophets, don't tell us these things. Don't prophesy to us the truth.

Speak to us the things we want to hear. Prophecy deceits to us. We would rather hear a lie than to hear the truth.

Now, because they were rebelling against the word of the Lord. They were missing the opportunity for God's salvation. And therefore, the Lord said he would wait for them.

You won't wait on me. All right. I will wait on you.

He will wait until they have wasted all of their money on the help from Egypt that will never come. He will wait and he will let them see the Egyptian army be destroyed by the Assyrians. He will wait while they exhaust all of their own devices to deliver themselves.

He will wait until the Assyrians have encircled Jerusalem, cut off the supplies, and they're beginning to starve to death. And they finally, in utter desperation, cry unto God for help. OK, you don't wait for me.

Then I will wait for you. And so this is where Judah was. They were insisting on doing things their own way, which was the wrong way.

It's going to fail, but they won't listen to God. They won't do it God's way, which is to wait on God. And so God said, OK, you don't wait on me.

I'll just wait on you until you discover that your way is only going to lead to disaster. Now, the reason why God said he was going to wait on them was that he might be gracious unto them. Now, that amazes me.

Sometimes we wait on people with the idea, as soon as you learn, then you're going to get a real threshing, you know. And we sometimes think that God waits until we really get in trouble, then he's going

to really lay it on us. You know, and we say, didn't I tell you? I warned you.

I told you not to. Now look what you've done. And all we do is just heap on them all of this condemnation because they didn't listen.

But not so with God. When we come to the realization that we have made a mistake and we cry out unto the Lord, he's been waiting for us, but he's been waiting so that when we would cry, he could show himself gracious unto us. I marvel at the long suffering of God.

I marvel at how God is so patient with man. There are many enemies of God who are in open rebellion against God and doing their best to oppose the things of God. And God just waits so patiently.

Lets them make all of their rash claims and disclaimers of God and all, and God just waits. He knows their day is coming when they're going to need him, when they'll be calling out to him. And when that day comes, he will be gracious.

He'll be forgiving. He'll be loving. Jesus said to the Jews of his day, You will not see me again until you say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

The tragedy of the story of Jesus is that he came to his own and his own received him not. They did not accept him as their Messiah and King. In fact, they rejected him and crucified him.

And so Jesus said to them, You won't see me again until you say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. In other words, even as Israel has sought by its own endeavors to have a righteous standing before God, and they've sought by their own works to be accepted by God, and have gone through all of the miseries of the centuries, and are still obdurate in their stand against Jesus Christ, things are going to get bad and go to worse, until ultimately when they realize that they've been deceived by the Antichrist, and they look on him whom they have pierced and they cry out to him, then will the Lord reveal himself and will be their God and they will be his people once more. But he is waiting again.

It seems like that has been the classic history of Israel. God has been waiting on them. And now he waits, and as Jesus said, until they cry out and say, Oh, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

God is waiting on many of you today. And I wonder just how hard do things have to become until we return to God and we cry out to God and we seek God's help. It all depends on just how obdurate you are in your stubborn position.

I think of Jonah, stubborn guy. God said, Jonah, go to Nineveh and warn them. I'm going to destroy them.

Jonah said, No, I don't want to. I won't go. I'm getting out of here.

And he went down to Joppa and got a ship to go to Tarshish. That's the end of the world in those days. Thought he could escape from God, from the call of God.

But God raised up a storm in the Mediterranean. And finally, you know the story, Jonah was thrown overboard and the whale swallowed him. And he sat there for three days saying, No way, I'm not going to Nineveh.

I told you I'm not going. I mean it. Stubborn.

And after three days he said, Uncle, I've had it. I'll go. And God was gracious.

Deposited him on the beach. And he made his journey to Nineveh. But he didn't have to go through all of that suffering, you see.

He didn't have to go through all that misery. It was just he was stubborn. He thought he could do it his own way.

He wanted to do it his own way. And he made it tough on himself. And that's, he said, the lesson I learned.

While I was there for three days and three nights. I learned this lesson. He that observes lying vanities forsakes his own mercy.

I was listening to a lie. I thought I could run from God. I thought I could get away from the call of God.

And what it did was just made it tough on me. Made it tough on me. There are many times when God shows to me an area of my life that is not pleasing to him.

An area of the flesh that he doesn't like. And I say, OK, God, I'll take care of that right away. I'll fix that.

And I try to take care of it. But it's harder than I thought. It's stubborn.

It's pretty deeply inground into my very being. And so I try some other method. And it doesn't work either.

In fact, things get worse. I talk to my friends and they say, well, I did that and this is what I did. And I follow their advice.

Everybody has advice, but it doesn't work. The problem is still there. And finally, in desperation, I cry out and I say, oh God, help me.

God, I just, man, I'm a miserable wretch. I'm a failure, Lord, help me. And in gentleness, he says, I've been waiting for you.

Been waiting for you to call. Glad you called. Now I can work.

Now I can show my grace. Now I can show you my power. My strength for in quietness and confidence, you'll find your strength.

Just trust in me. Let me do it. I think of all of the misery that David went through when he was trying to hide his guilt.

He had sinned. He sought to cover the sin. It only got worse.

It only compounded. He got deeper and deeper into it. And his misery was growing.

Desperate. He spoke about, in Psalm 32, how that the heavy hand of God was on him. And he was just so dried up and miserable.

Night and day, thy hand is on me. No escaping. He couldn't sleep at night.

And in the daytime, he was troubled and going through the depths of misery. Until he finally said, I will confess my sin. And God had been waiting for that.

And the moment David confessed his sin, God forgave it completely. The moment he said to the prophet, I have sinned against the Lord. The prophet said, your sin is forgiven.

You see, the moment you turn to God and seek God's help. In that very moment, then God can extend his grace towards you. Which he is wanting to extend the whole while.

But he has to wait many times. Because you think, well, this plan ought to work. One more try, you know.

And you go that much deeper into the pit. Until you finally have exhausted your own energies, devices and schemes. And you finally say, God, help me.

And so God's waiting. God said, okay. Isaiah, they won't wait for me.

Tell you what, I'll just wait for them. That I might be gracious unto them. Some of you have sought to make your declaration of independence from God.

God, I don't need you. I can do it on my own. You can just step out of my life, if you don't mind, please.

And I'll take it from here. God just waits. Until you get things so messed up.

And you get so deep in the pit. That you can't see light. And you finally cry out and say, oh God, help.

God smiles and says, oh, nice to hear from you. I've been waiting. He knew all the while.

What it would take to bring you to himself. And he loves you so much, he was determined to bring you to himself. And if it takes calamity, if it takes disaster, so be it.

He'll wait. Until you come to give him the opportunity to show his grace to you. And then the Lord said, he would be exalted.

That he might have mercy upon you. You see, really what we deserve when we've been rebelling against God and going our own way. We deserve everything we get.

That's justice. Justice demands a punishment that is commensurate with a crime. And when we get to that place where justice says, give it to them.

They made their bed, let them lie in it. Hang them. And in a sense, a technical sense, God should hang us.

The law demands that we be hanged. And so God, in order that he might show mercy, retreats into his exalted position of sovereign God. He says, well, I'm God and I'm sovereign.

I can do what I wish. And I'll have mercy upon whom I will have mercy. And so he retreats into this exalted position of his sovereignty that he might have mercy upon us.

And so I will be exalted that I may show mercy, he said. Isn't that marvelous? God's dealing with us is something that causes me to marvel always. Letting me go my rebellious way until I run up against the wall.

No place to go. I call to God and then rather than punishing, rather than castigating me, he's merciful and he's gracious. And so Isaiah gives us sort of the flip side.

In the end of the verse, he said, blessed are all they that wait for him. Now, you see, you've got here the contrast. You have those people upon whom God is waiting and those people who are waiting upon God.

And you're in one of the two modes today. You're in that mode where God is waiting on you and you're on the road to disaster. Or you're in the mode where you're just waiting on God.

And you're on the path of victory. Or it may look like disaster, but in quietness and confidence is your strength. Waiting on God.

This is exactly what God had been advising the nation to do. Just wait on me. I will deliver you.

I will deliver you from the hands of the Assyrians. But that didn't make sense. The Assyrians are so strong.

How in the world can God deliver us? Don't go down to Egypt for help. They won't be able to help you. Well, we will go to Egypt.

And they went to Egypt. And the Egyptian army was destroyed by the Assyrian army. The Egyptian army came up to help.

And the Assyrians sent their army down there, wiped out the Egyptians. And then they came back and surrounded Jerusalem again. And now it's desperate.

The Egyptians are wiped out. They can't help us. There's no one to help us.

The Assyrians are now surrounded and we don't have food in the city. We're getting short. Oh, God help! And he says, well, nice to have you call.

I've been waiting for you. Now I'll show you what I can do, the Assyrians. And God wiped out the Assyrians.

An angel of the Lord went out in the camp of the Assyrians. And in one night, he killed 185,000 of the front line troops. Those that were remained hightailed for home as fast as they could go.

Face to face, Lord let me know. Face to face, Lord let me see you. Pastor Chuck Smith will return with a few closing comments.

But first I'd like to remind you that today's message is available in its unedited form on cassette or CD. Simply write or call and ask for ordering details on tape or CD, number T-3266. Again, that's tape or CD, number T-3266.

Well, Christmas time is soon approaching and it's easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the season. Buying presents, decorating, cooking, the list grows longer every day. Without realizing it, we can easily forget the true meaning of why we celebrate our Lord's birth.

For this reason, the word for today would like to present a booklet by Pastor Chuck Smith entitled, How Can a Man Be Born Again? And also an audio CD entitled, Why? by Pastor Chuck. That would be the perfect compliment for Christmas cards and gifts this year. Both resources share the gospel of Jesus Christ and explain the true meaning of Christmas and why a man born 2,000 years ago can still affect the world today.

And best of all, they contain a message leading people to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. And remember, the word for today would like to assist you this Christmas in spreading the gospel of Jesus to your family, friends, and coworkers. Please call our customer service department to help you in finding that perfect gift that will reflect the true meaning of Christmas.

And if you call right now and mention this radio ad, the word for today will give you a 20% discount on any resource carried by the word for today. So call the word for today at 1-800-272-WORD or write to us at P.O. Box 8000, Costa Mesa, California, 92628. Once again, that number to call is 1-800-272-9673.

And for those of you that would like to visit our website, you can do so at www.twft.com. Or if you would like to email us, you can do so at info@twft.com. Well, coming up next time on the word for today, Pastor Chuck will be continuing his fascinating study through the book of Isaiah. That's coming up next time on the word for today. And now with a few closing comments, here's Pastor Chuck.

Time has come. Got to call upon God. But I don't know if God's going to just really thrash me now, because man, I knew better.

I knew better. He wants to show His grace. He doesn't want to thrash you.

He wants to display His mercy. He'll retreat into that exalted position of the sovereign God. I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy.

And some of you have come to the place where you're waiting on God. Oh, it still looks bad. You still don't know the way out, but you know that God is the only way.

And you just have strength because of the confidence that you have in God. And your soul is waiting on Him. No matter where you are, know this, that you'll never make a mistake when you commit your ways fully to the Lord and trust in Him to deliver.

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