

Watching With God

by F.B. Meyer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of watching with God, waiting patiently for His presence and guidance, even when we cannot see or understand His plans.

Scripture: Genesis 15:8-10, Genesis 15:18, Lamentations 3:26, Habakkuk 2:3, Romans 8:25, Hebrews 6:19-20

Topics: "Waiting On God", "Trust in God's Promises"

Description

F.B. Meyer emphasizes the importance of waiting and watching with God, drawing parallels between human relationships and our relationship with the Divine. He reflects on the struggles of faith, particularly in times of uncertainty and darkness, using Abraham's experience as a model for patience and trust in God's promises. Meyer encourages believers to remain steadfast in their hope, even when faced with the horror of great darkness, and to trust in God's timing and providence. He concludes by affirming that God's covenant with Abraham remains unbroken, assuring us of His faithfulness and the ultimate fulfillment of His promises.

Transcript

"The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie. Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come; it will not tarry." --Habakkuk 2:3.

"It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." -- Lamentations 3:26.

"If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience with patience wait for it." -- Romans 8:25.

It is not easy to watch with God, or to wait for Him. The orbit of His providence is so vast. The stages of His progress are so wide apart. He holds on His way through the ages; we tire in a few short hours. And when His dealings with us are perplexing and mysterious, the heart that had boasted its unwavering loyalty begins to grow faint with misgivings, and to question -- When shall we be able to trust absolutely, and not be afraid?

In human relationships, when once the heart has found its rest in another, it can bear the test of distance and delay. Years may pass without a word or sigh to break the sad monotony. Strange contradictions may baffle the understanding and confuse the mind. Officious friends may delight in putting unkind and false constructions on conduct confessedly hard to explain. But the trust never varies or abates. It knows that all

is well. It is content to exist without a token, and to be quiet without attempting to explain or defend. Ah, when shall we treat God so? When shall we thus rest in Him, trusting where we cannot understand? Can any education be too hard which shall secure this as its final and crowning result? Surely that were heaven, when the heart of man could afford to wait for a millennium, unstaggered by delay, untinged by doubt.

At this stage, at least, of his education, Abraham had not learnt this lesson. But in that grey dawn, as the stars which symbolized his posterity were beginning to fade in the sky, he answered the Divine assurance that he should inherit the land of which he as yet did not own a foot, by the sad complaint: "Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?"

How human this is! It was not that he was absolutely incredulous: but he yearned for some tangible evident token that it was to be as God had said; something he could see; something which should be an ever-present sacrament of the coming heritage, as the stars were of the future seed. Do not wonder at him; but rather adore the love which bears with these human frailties, and stoops to give them stepping-stones by which to cross the sands to the firm rock of an assured faith.

(1) WATCHING BY THE SACRIFICE

In those early days, when a written agreement was very rare, if not quite unknown, men sought to bind one another to their word with the most solemn religious sanctions. The contracting party was required to bring certain animals, which were slaughtered and divided into pieces. These were laid on the ground in such a manner as to leave a narrow lane between; up and down which the covenanting party passed to ratify and confirm his solemn pledge.

It was to this ancient and solemn rite that Jehovah referred, when he said, "Take Me an heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another" (Genesis 15:8, 10).

It was still the early morning. The day was young. And Abraham sat down to watch. Then there came a long pause. Hour after hour passed by; but God did not give a sign or utter a single word. Judging by appearances, there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

Higher and ever higher the sun drove his chariot up the sky, and shone with torrid heat on those pieces of flesh lying there exposed upon the sand; but still no voice or vision came. The unclean vultures, attracted by the scent of carrion, drew together as to a feast, and demanded incessant attention if they were to be kept away. Did Abraham ever permit himself to imagine that he was sitting there on a fool's mission? Did not the thought instil itself into his mind, that perhaps after all he had been led to arrange those pieces by a freak of his own fancy, and that God would not come at all? Did he shrink from the curious gaze of his servants, and of Sarah his wife, because half-conscious of having taken up a position he could not justify?

We cannot tell what passed through that much-tried heart during those long hours. But this, at least, we recognize; that this is in a line with the discipline through which we all have to pass. Hours of waiting for God! Days of watching! Nights of sleepless vigil! Looking for the outposts of the relief that tarries! Wondering why the Master comes not! Climbing the hill again and again, to return without the expected vision! Watching for some long-expected letter, till the path to the Post Office is trodden down with constant passing to and fro, and wet with many tears! But all in vain! Nay, but it is not in vain. For these

long waiting hours are building up the fabric of the spirit-life, with gold, and silver, and precious stones, so as to become a thing of beauty, and a joy for evermore.

Only let us see to it that we never relax our attitude of patience, but wait to the end for the grace to be brought unto us. And let us give the unclean birds no quarter. We cannot help them sailing slowly through the air, or uttering dismal screams, or circling around us as if to pounce. But we CAN help them settling dawn. And this we must do, in the name and by the help of God. "If the vision tarry, wait for it."

(2) THE HORROR OF A GREAT DARKNESS

The sun at last went down, and the swift Eastern night cast its heavy veil over the scene. Worn out with the mental conflict, the watchings, and the exertions of the day, Abraham fell into a deep sleep. And in that sleep his soul was oppressed with a dense and dreadful darkness; such as almost stifled him, and lay like a nightmare upon his heart. "Lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him."

Do my readers understand something of the horror of that darkness? When one who has been brought up in a traditional belief, which fails to satisfy the instincts of maturer life, supposes that in letting go the creed, there must also be the renunciation of all faith and hope, not seeing that the form may go, whilst the essential substance may remain: when one, mistaking the nature of sin and the mercy of God, fears that there has been committed an unpardonable sin, or that the bounds of repentance have been overstepped for ever: when some terrible sorrow which seems so hard to reconcile with perfect love, crushes down upon the soul, wringing from it all its peaceful rest in the pitifulness of God, and launching it on a sea unlit by a ray of hope: when unkindness, and cruelty, and monstrous injustice browbeat, and mock, and maltreat the trusting heart, till it begins to doubt whether there be a God overhead who can see and still permit -- these know something of the horror of great darkness; and what weird and frightful visions will in that darkness pass one after another before the spirit, like the phantoms of a drunkard's delirium or the apparitions of an unhealthy brain.

It was a long and dark prospect which unfolded itself before Abraham. He beheld the history of his people through coming centuries, strangers in a foreign land, enslaved and afflicted. Did he not see the anguish of their soul, and their cruel bondage beneath the task-master's whips? Did he not hear their groans, and see mothers weeping over their babes, doomed to the insatiable Nile? Did he not witness the building of Pyramid and Treasure-city, cemented by blood and suffering? It was, indeed, enough to fill him with darkness that could be felt.

And yet the sombre woof was crossed by the warp of silver threads. The enslaved were to come out, and to come out with great substance, their oppressors being overwhelmed with crushing judgment. They were to come into that land again. Whilst, as for himself, he should go to his fathers in peace, and be buried in a good old age.

It is thus that human life is made up: brightness and gloom; shadow and sun; long tracks of cloud, succeeded by brilliant glints of light. And amid all, Divine justice is working out its own schemes, affecting others equally with the individual soul which seems the subject of especial discipline. The children of Abraham must not inherit the Land of Promise till the fourth generation has passed away, because the iniquity of the Amorites had not yet filled up the measure of their doom. Only then -- when the reformation of that race was impossible; when their condition had become irremediable, and their existence was a menace to the peace and purity of mankind -- was the order given for their extermination, and for the transference of their power to those who might hold it more worthily.

Oh, ye who are filled with the horror of great darkness because of God's dealings with mankind, learn to trust that infallible wisdom which is co-assessor with immutable justice, and know that He who passed through the horror of the darkness of Calvary, with the cry of forsakenness, is ready to bear you company through the valley of the shadow of death, till you see the sun shining upon its further side. "Who is among you that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God."

(3) THE RATIFICATION OF THE COVENANT

When Abraham awoke, the sun was down. Darkness reigned supreme. "It was dark." A solemn stillness brooded over the world. Then came the awful act of ratification. For the first time since man left the gates of Eden there appeared the symbol of the glory of God; that awful light which was afterwards to shine in the pillar of cloud, and the Shekinah gleam.

In the thick darkness, that mysterious light -- a lamp of fire -- passed slowly and majestically between the divided pieces; and, as it did so, a voice said: "Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Genesis 15:18).

Remember that promise: made with the most solemn sanctions, never repealed since, and never perfectly fulfilled. For a few years during the reign of Solomon the dominions of Israel almost touched these limits, but only for a very brief period. The perfect fulfillment is yet in the future. Somehow the descendants of Abraham shall yet inherit their own land, secured to them by the covenant of God. Those rivers shall yet form their boundary lines: for "the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

A foreign power forbids their entrance yet; and Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles. But we may be entering on a series of events, which shall shatter the decrepit empire of the unspeakable Turk, and release Egypt and Palestine from his blighting sway, so that the land which awaits the people, and the people which awaits the land, may be reunited beneath the blessing of Him who, by word and oath, gave strong consolation to His much-tried servant Abraham.

As we turn from this scene -- in which God bound Himself by such solemn sanctions, to strengthen the ground of His servant's faith -- we may carry with us exalted conceptions of His great goodness, which will humble itself so low in order to secure the trust of one poor heart. By two immutable things, His word and oath, God has given strong assurance to us who are menaced by the storm, drawing us on to a rock-bound shore. Let us, by our Forerunner, send forward our anchor, Hope, within the veil that parts us from the unseen: where it will grapple in ground that will not yield, but hold until the day dawn, and we follow it into the haven guaranteed to us by God's immutable counsel (Hebrews 6:19-20).

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/fb-meyer/watching-with-god/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net