

God Can Be Trusted

Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD (Psalm 27:14).

Scripture: Psalm 27

Song: “’Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus”

I hate waiting. I arrive on time for appointments and expect others to do the same. Years ago, there was someone in my life who was always late. Whenever we made plans, I didn't know when she'd arrive. Sometimes she didn't show up at all, forgetting to tell me she wasn't coming. Because I couldn't count on her, I quit making plans to see her.

In today's passage, David wrote about times when His enemies had surrounded him. From those experiences David learned that God is faithful and can be trusted to provide help and rescue. David had confidence that the Lord would deliver him from his troubles right on time—*God's* time.

Scripture admonishes us to wait for the Lord. Waiting for Him is a lot different than waiting for unpredictable people. We can wait for Him, knowing He will fulfill His promises—promises of love and safekeeping. We can have confidence that His plans are better than our own, so when we must wait for answers to our prayers, there are good reasons. God watches over us in good and bad times. With that in mind, we can be strong and take heart as we wait for Him.

Father, I know You desire the best for Your children, so I'll wait on Your guidance for my life. In Jesus' name, amen.

June 24–30. **Diana L. Walters** lives in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where she works in a retirement community and writes in her spare time.

Moving Toward the Goal

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me (Philippians 3:12).

Scripture: Philippians 3:1-14

Song: “Change My Heart, O God”

I once thought I'd know everything I needed to know when I turned 18. I didn't. Then I was convinced I'd be fully mature and have it all together by the time I was 30. That didn't happen either. Now at age 75, I'm certain I still have much to learn and much growing to do.

In today's passage, the apostle Paul wrote that even though he had achieved much, he still had not arrived at his goal. Paul understood that God's call for His people to be holy doesn't mean we will reach perfection during our time on earth. But God does expect us to pursue becoming increasingly like Christ.

It's true that today I'm doing better than I used to. For example, I pray and read Scripture every day (I didn't do that at 18). I give a portion of my income regularly now (I didn't do that at 30). But the Lord has more for me to do, more for me to learn. He wants His children to grow ever deeper and stronger in their love for Him, in faith and obedience. He doesn't expect perfection from us, only persistence until the day we go to be with Him.

Father, I will seek to continue being made more like Your Son until I'm finally home with You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Demonstrating God's Love

They praised God because of me (Galatians 1:24).

Scripture: Galatians 1:13-24

Song: “Take My Life and Let It Be”

Many older Christians have heard of Billy Graham, Dwight L. Moody, and Charles Colson. These evangelists pointed countless people to Christ through their respective ministries. However, lesser-known folks, such as Frances Ridley Havergal (1836–1879), also reached people with the gospel by evangelizing in a different way. Frances was a talented classical musician and songwriter. She would play Beethoven for groups and then sing and play hymns she had penned herself. Her best-known of these begins with, “Take my life and let it be, consecrated, Lord, to Thee.”

In today's passage, the apostle Paul was not promoting his own goodness. He had lived with legalism until the Lord confronted and changed him. Everyone knew that Paul was once a persecutor of Christians, but the Lord made him new. Paul became a humble servant of God, teaching grace and glorifying the Lord for transforming his life. He wanted the Galatian believers to know that it was by grace through faith (not legalism) that they'd been saved.

As God's people, each of us has a role in sharing the gospel message. Some become preachers and evangelists. Others may play music or write devotionals or perform acts of kindness like feeding the poor. What we do may look different from what anyone else is doing, but as we dedicate ourselves to serving the Lord, we may someday be able to gratefully say with Paul, “They praised God because of me.”

Father, use me today to inspire others to praise Your holy name. In Jesus' name, amen.

We Need Not Fear

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10).

Scripture: Isaiah 41:1-15

Song: “Fear Not, I Am with Thee”

On an episode of the 1970s television sitcom *Happy Days*, Richie Cunningham found himself cornered by several bullies. But then, right in time, Fonzie showed up. Richie’s trusted friend and respected authority figure was there for him. And with a snap of “The Fonz’s” fingers, the bullies disappeared.

Three verses in today’s passage—verses 10, 13, and 14—urge God’s people not to be afraid because God promises to help them. Although it’s a popular misconception that the words *fear not* or *be not afraid*, appear 365 times in the Bible, the Scriptures do teach over and over that God’s children need not fear, whatever the threat may be. We find God’s assurances throughout Old and New Testaments, along with His instruction to trust His promise to be with us, to protect us, and to provide for us.

God is our trustworthy authority figure. He will strengthen us to do and to be what He intends us to do and be. We don’t need help from Fonzie. We have a far better Savior who has defeated every foe and will never leave our side. Trust Him today and do not be afraid.

Father, help me face life’s challenges with confidence and faith, knowing You will go with me and never let me go. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Eager to Meet Our Lord

[The man clothed in linen said to Daniel,] “Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days” (Daniel 12:12).

Scripture: Daniel 12

Song: “Through It All”

As children, we can't wait for our birthdays to arrive. It's not only the celebration and presents we're excited about. Each successive birthday marks another year in the quest to be more grown up. Older adults can become eager for their next life stage too. In working with senior adults, I've heard people say things like, “I've been alive too many years. I'm ready to be with the Lord. Why is it taking so long?” This is particularly true when the person is in pain or unable to do things they once enjoyed.

The message of today's passage is that we can expect trials at the end time. Through them, God's people will be refined and purified. During this time, there will be a need for God's people to persevere and be patient. The Lord is faithful to do what He says He will do, so if He promises to bless us after the waiting period, it will happen.

Only God knows the exact details about when the end of time will occur. And only God knows when our earthly lives will conclude. When my older friends express their impatience to leave this world, I remind them that the Lord must still have something for them to do. In Matthew 24:13, Jesus reiterates the promise: “The one who stands firm to the end will be saved.”

Father, help me persevere while keeping my eyes on my future with You. In Jesus' name, amen.

His Plan, Not Mine

For three days [Saul] was blind, and did not eat or drink anything (Acts 9:9).

Scripture: Acts 9:1-9

Song: “Amazing Grace”

Ronald Dale Jackson lost his hearing by the time he was 16 months old. On top of that, Ushers Syndrome would lead to blindness before he reached middle age. At 39, he was depressed, feeling useless, and wondering why he'd ever been born. A friend suggested he attend a church for people who are deaf. That's where a pastor told Ronald that God had a purpose for his life, and he needed to find it. He began learning sign language and quickly excelled at it. He eventually began sharing his love of Jesus with people who were blind and deaf by signing into their hands. He had found his purpose.

Paul, a persecutor of Christians, was struck blind temporarily, not from disease, but because the Lord wanted to get his attention. God had a purpose for his life. It wasn't what Paul thought it was, but it became clear that he was being called to fulfil the Lord's purpose, not his own.

We don't always know how God intends for us to use our time and talents. Sometimes we aren't sure we even *have* talents. I didn't know what I wanted to be when I grew up until I was past 60! But the Lord had a plan for me to minister to older adults and to develop my interest in writing. Like Ronald, we will find our purpose in life as we seek to make Jesus known, and when we find it, we will be glad to wholeheartedly devote ourselves to it.

Father, help me to always seek Your plan, not my own. In Jesus' name, amen.

Faith on Trial

[Paul said to King Agrippa,] “It is because of my hope in what God has promised our ancestors that I am on trial today” (Acts 26:6).

Scripture: Acts 26:1-11

Song: “Jesus Is Tenderly Calling Thee Home”

Most of us likely won't be dragged to court for talking about our faith. However, I once held a job where my supervisor was very friendly until she overheard me speaking with a coworker about our mutual Christian faith. After that, she found reasons to belittle me almost daily. Quitting my job may have been cowardly, but at the time, I didn't know how else to handle the situation.

In today's passage, Paul, a former persecutor of Christians, was brought before King Agrippa to defend himself, his only “crime” being preaching the gospel. Paul had come to believe in the hope of resurrection through Jesus Christ, and he was not only defending himself but also attempting to convince his audience of that hope.

We can rest in the hope of our salvation: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). And while we cannot force others to believe, when we live out our faith (instead of running from people who don't understand it), our “audience” may eventually want to know more about why we believe as we do. The best thing we can do is to be prepared to answer that question when it comes.

Father, help me stand firmly in my belief in You and not run from opportunities to display Your love to those I meet. In Jesus' name, amen.