

Bethel

Prayer Meeting Addresses

Number 121

“Only”

Text: *“My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him”*
(Psalm 62. 5)

This Psalm is different from any other Psalm or any other portion of the Word of God in this. The word *only* keeps coming over and over again, and not only as it appears in our version, but in the original as well. Surely, beloved friends, this is the vital point in real religion! It comes so often in our services, in our preaching, in our prayers, in our hymns. The hymn we started with this evening (383) used this word *only*: “Our only, all-availing plea.” In its fullest sense, we think of it as on the Mount of Transfiguration: “Jesus only.” “They saw no man, save Jesus only.” This is the ground and foundation of our hope. This is our only plea in prayer. We have no other. This is what seeking, longing souls want: a knowledge of Jesus only, Jesus Christ and Him crucified

“None but Jesus!
From His blood their hopes arise.”

“None but Jesus.” No other ground of hope, no other ground of salvation, no other way to heaven.

Now to the psalmist David, this was the important thing here. He had just been talking about a few difficulties and problems he had. How is he going to deal with them? It is this *only*. “My soul, wait thou *only* upon God.” He was reminded he had a soul, and that was the most important thing, his never-dying soul. And you and I need to be reminded that we too have a soul, a soul that can never die. He speaks of his own soul: “My soul, wait thou *only* upon God.” Especially, “Wait thou only upon God” in prayer. We have so much about this waiting on the Lord in the Old Testament. We have so many exhortations to wait upon the Lord, and we have so many precious promises to those who do seek to wait upon the Lord.

As I have reminded you over the years, someone waiting on the Lord is not just sitting still and waiting. It seems to me something like this. In our English language we use the expression a *waiter*, or a *waitress*. Well, they wait. That does not mean they stand about doing nothing. They are very active, but they wait on other people. They wait on other people's needs. They wait on other people's concerns. They wait on people, wanting to satisfy their desires. That is it really.

I was looking at Psalm 123: "Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters" – now this is waiting – "and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress" – this is waiting – "so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that He have mercy upon us." In eastern countries then, and I believe still in many eastern countries today, the master of the house does not do so much speaking, does not do so much talking or giving commands. There is just a nod or a frown or a shaking of the head, and what does that mean to those who wait upon their master? It means they have to watch carefully, watch his hand, watch his eye, watch his frown, watch his smile, and that is what it is with a living soul waiting upon the Lord. We sing in one of our hymns, "Wait your Maker's nod." Well, if our souls are alive, our eyes are up to our Maker and we are looking for His nod, or for the shake of His head.

"My soul, wait thou only upon God" – in complete dependence, in continual prayer. Of course, it is in providence. David here was troubled about these things he had and what was he to do? Well, there are a lot of things people would do, especially a mighty king. There are many people they would look to. "My soul, wait thou only upon God," looking to Him, waiting on Him for His help, for deliverance, for the supply of all your needs, for guidance.

"Wait thou *only* upon God," but especially wait on the Lord Jesus for His great salvation. It is to be found nowhere else. Mary of Bethany, when she sat at Jesus' feet, she waited only upon God. I think this is a specially-helpful word for our young people and our children. You are going to school. You are coming home. You are mixing with friends. You have plans for the future. You wonder what is going to be, not to be. You are thinking about exams. You are thinking about exam results. You are also, I trust – many of you, I hope all of you – thinking about real religion, your soul's salvation, your sin, your life, your death, a never-ending eternity, the need to be prepared, the vital necessity for a personal knowledge of Christ, the need to be led by the Holy Spirit. There are

so many, many things. And perhaps more than ever in this difficult day, how shall a man order his way? “By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word.”

But it is this: it is safe ground, it is sure ground, it will not fail. The Lord will not fail you in it. When you come to chapel, when you come to the prayer meeting, when you are at home with family prayer, when you are preparing for the Lord’s day, O this blessed posture, if that is the right word, the blessed posture of real religion: waiting upon the Lord.

And of course, if you are waiting on the Lord, you are expecting something. You are expecting answers to your prayers. You are expecting answers to your waiting upon the Lord. You are expecting spiritual guidance. You are expecting providential help. “My soul, wait thou only upon God,” keep on waiting only on God. Whatever your friends do, or wherever they wait, with you, “wait thou only upon God.” You are expecting something; of course you are. If you come to chapel, it is waiting on God during the services. You are expecting something.

So this word closes with an exceeding great and precious promise: “My expectation is from Him.” You are praying to the Lord for something, and you are expecting an answer from the Lord, and this is the promise: that you cannot be disappointed. Of course, there are one or two quite well-known scriptures which speak of our expectation. One is this: “Surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.” You shall not be disappointed. Another is this: “The expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.” There are so many similar ones, aren’t there! “Thine expectation shall not be cut off.”

Immediately after, he crowns it with all manner of glorious titles of his Lord and Saviour, the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and he uses this word *only* again. “He only is my rock and my salvation: He is my defence,” and another precious promise: “I shall not be moved.” Did you notice, verse 2 starts exactly the same, and there he says, “I shall not be *greatly* moved”? But by the time he comes to verse 6, he is more established. “I shall not be moved.” Of course, this is the One on whom we wait, my rock, my salvation, my defence. This is the One from whom we expect answers and the blessing, and this is the One who will not disappoint us.

This address was given at Bethel Chapel, Luton, by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom, on Thursday, 15th July, 2021

What foolish worms are we!
How prone to start aside,
And in our troubles flee
From Jesus' wounded side;
To wait on self, or something base,
Instead of trusting sovereign grace!

O that our souls could wait
At all times on the Lord;
And watch at wisdom's gate,
Whose mercy will afford
A constant flow of every good,
To souls that trust alone in God.

The Lord is rich indeed,
And richly will supply
The waiting sinner's need,
With blessings from on high;
My expectation is from God;
Then wait, my soul, upon the Lord.

If darkness Him surround,
His mercy's still the same;
He never will confound
The soul that waits on Him;
He is my All; of Him I'll boast;
On Him I'll wait, and in Him trust.

W. Gadsby