

What Does It Mean to Wait Upon the LORD?

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Brethren, many years ago I used to be the choir director here in Houston. And one of my favorite choral pieces that we performed as a choir was, They Shall Soar Like Eagles by Laura Manzo. It is a beautiful and meaningful piece of special music, and it has a wonderful flute solo.

The opening words of the song are as follows:

*They shall soar like eagles, rise up and soar like eagles,
They who wait upon the LORD shall not be weary.
They shall never sorrow but gain new strength and power.
They who wait upon the LORD.*

The words of the song are a paraphrase of Isaiah 40:31. Please turn with me to Isaiah 40 and we will read this section of scripture.

Isaiah 40:31 *But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.* (KJV)

This is a beautiful song taken from a beautiful verse in the Bible which has much meaning for us today just as it did around 2,750 years ago when Isaiah wrote these words. But have we ever stopped and pondered what exactly does it mean to wait upon the LORD? What exactly does waiting upon our Heavenly Father entail?

Brethren, in my sermon this afternoon entitled What Does It Mean to Wait Upon the LORD?, I would like to explore four points concerning the deep meaning of this phrase and how waiting upon our Heavenly Father requires action on our part which has deep implications and ramifications in our spiritual lives and ultimately in our eternal salvation and entry into our Father's Kingdom.

Again, to begin with, we must define our terms. This is so very important no matter what the subject matter is in our Biblical studies. Without defining our terms, anything can mean anything, and any word or phrase can mean whatever we have heard for decades, not testing if that meaning and connotation is actually correct.

In defining our terms, there are two main verbs in Hebrew used in the phrase "wait upon the LORD" or "wait upon Yehovah."

The first Hebrew verb is **qavah** (qavah) Strong's #6960 which appears in the Piel form of the verb. The Piel form is the emphatic form in Hebrew which shows intensity. According to Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon and Strong's Concordance, the verb qavah in the Piel form means "to wait or to look eagerly but patiently for."

The phrase “wait upon the LORD” using this verb *qavah* occurs 23 times in the Old Testament. Let’s reread Isaiah 40:31.

Isaiah 40:31 *But they that wait upon the LORD [They who look eagerly and patiently for Yehovah] shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. (KJV)*

Please turn with me to Psalm 37, and we will read few other verses in the Old Testament using this verb *qavah* and this phrase.

Psalm 37:09 *For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. (KJV)*

Those who look eagerly and patiently for Yehovah shall inherit the earth.

Please turn with me to Proverbs 20. Solomon as well as David had much to say on waiting on Yehovah.

Proverbs 20:22 *Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee. (KJV)*

Look eagerly and patiently for Yehovah and He will save you.

The second Hebrew verb translated as wait is **חָקַח** (*khakah*) Strong’s #2442 which appears in the Piel form of the verb, showing emphasis and intensity. According to Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon and Strong’s Concordance, the verb *khakah* in the Piel form means “to wait or to long for or to yearn for.”

The phrase “wait upon the LORD” using this verb *khakah* occurs 5 times in the Old Testament.

Please turn with me to Isaiah 30, and we will read a few of these 5 verses in the Old Testament using this verb *khakah* and this phrase. Isaiah 30:18 actually uses this verb twice.

Isaiah 30:18 *And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him. (KJV)*

Isaiah 30:18 Therefore the LORD longs to be gracious to you, And therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; How blessed are all those who long for Him. (NAS)

Psalm 33:20 *Our soul waiteth for the LORD: [Our soul yearns for Yehovah] he is our help and our shield.*

21) *For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.*
(KJV)

Isaiah 64:04 *For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.* (KJV)

Isaiah 8:17 *And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.* (KJV)

An interesting point in Isaiah 8:17 is that this verse contains both verbs: qavah and khakah. The verb *wait* in the verse is khakah and the verb *look for* is qavah.

Therefore, this verse could be translated: *And I will yearn for Yehovah, who hides His face from the house of Jacob, and I will eagerly look for Him.*

In the New Testament, the phrase *wait upon the LORD* is not found. However, there are clues to a different way to connote a similar meaning of the phrase in Greek as it is in Hebrew.

A major clue is found in 1 Corinthians 2. Let's turn to 1 Corinthians 2:9 where Paul writes the Corinthians concerning our incredible indescribable future that we will share with God the Father and Jesus Christ in our Father's Kingdom.

1 Corinthians 2:9 *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* (KJV)

If that verse seems familiar, it is because Paul is referencing Isaiah 64:4, which we have just previously read.

The Greek verb at the end of the verse that Paul used in his reference to Isaiah 64:04 is the verb ἀγαπάω (agapaō) Strong's #25. This verb is the verb form of the noun ἀγάπη (agape) Strong's #26, which we all know to be the special Godly love that God the Father and Jesus Christ have for us.

It is interesting that the Apostle Paul uses this verb in referencing Isaiah 64:4, because in reading the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament), the verb in the Septuagint is a different verb than the verb that Paul used. So, Paul is not directly quoting the Septuagint, whereas many other references to Old Testament scriptures in the New Testament are almost direct quotes from the Septuagint.

This is important because Paul is showing the Corinthians an inspired interpretation of the Hebrew verb into Greek.

According to Thayer's Greek Lexicon, the verb agapaō means "to love selflessly in the way God loves" but the verb can also mean "to welcome with desire or to long for."

So Paul is telling the Corinthians in Greek in 1 Corinthians 2:9 by his own translation of the Hebrew verse of Isaiah 64:4:

But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God [ho theos or God the Father] has prepared for them who love Him and long for Him.

Hence, there is harmony between the Hebrew and Greek texts.

Other verses in the New Testament which have this verb agapaō with this special connotation include the following:

Please turn with me to James 1:12.

James 1:12 *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him [loving long for Him]. (KJV)*

James 2:5 *Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him [loving long for Him]? (KJV)*

Another Greek verb which closely follows the connotation of the two Hebrew verbs qavah and khakah (which we studied earlier) is the verb ἀπεκδέχομαι (apekdekhomai) Strong's #553.

According to Thayer's Greek Lexicon, this verb apedekhomai means "to diligently, persistently, and patiently wait for." Strong's Concordance states that the verb means "to await eagerly, to eagerly look for."

Let's read a few verses which utilize this verb apedekhomai. Please turn with me to Luke 12, and we'll read about Jesus' teachings about diligently awaiting and looking for their Master.

Luke 12:34 *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

35) *Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;*

36) *And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for [apedekhomai – eagerly await and look for] their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. (KJV)*

Please turn with me to Mark 15, and we can read the actions of an honorable and righteous man after the death of Jesus.

Mark 15:43 *Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for [apedekhomai – eagerly awaited and looked for] the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. (KJV)*

In all the verses in the New Testament which have either of these two Greek verbs *agapaō* and *apedekhomai*, the verbs appear always in the middle voice, which connotes that the action of eagerly and diligently waiting for and yearning and longing for is actively performed by the person but that the action is also being performed on the person. The use of the middle voice with these verbs shows the internalization of these actions and these mindsets and attitudes of the brethren performing the actions.

These verbs in the middle voice do not connote waiting as in waiting for the bus or as in waiting for your dinner to be served at a restaurant. These verbs go much deeper in meaning and point to a spiritual condition which requires patience, endurance, humility, and faith.

So in both Hebrew and Greek, the terms used for *waiting* connote an intense emphasized longing for and earnest expectation for something. They are all actionable verbs.

So brethren, in discussing further the term *waiting on the LORD*, I would like to explore four points concerning what is required to wait on our Heavenly Father.

The first point concerning waiting on our Heavenly Father is:

1. Waiting on God the Father requires patience

We've all heard the humorous anecdote about the man praying for patience. In the prayer, he prays: "Lord, please give me patience. And please give it to me right now!"

Brethren, when we ask our Heavenly Father for patience, does He just miraculously give us patience, or does He provide us with situations and circumstances in which we develop patience?

How many times do we pray and ask God the Father for patience, and then when He provides that opportunity to grow in patience and to exhibit patience in our lives, we get angry that things are taking too long. We get angry at the situation or at the person causing the delay or even at the Father Himself for not acting to alleviate the situation. This dichotomy is at the heart of *waiting on the LORD*.

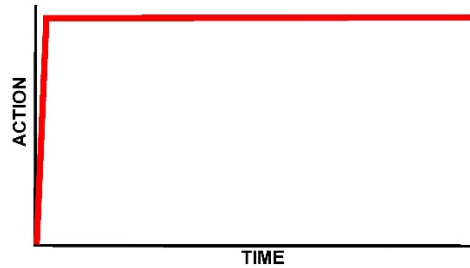
Brethren, our human nature wants and demands instant gratification. Our society is founded on that desire. Marketing and advertising on television, radio and the internet all blast out very effectively that we can have it all now. In times past, people had to save money in order to buy the things that they desired. Today, we want it and we want it now, so we buy everything we want now (instant gratification) on credit with money that we don't have. And consequently, the average American is heavily in debt, continuing to amass things that he wants instantly without having to wait and to save for the purchase.

I would like to show you three graphs: one which illustrate Satan's way, one which illustrates man's minimum expectations and desires, and one which illustrates the way of our Heavenly Father.

The first graph shows Satan's way of instant gratification. There are two axes on the graph. The horizontal axis is time, and the vertical axis is action. As this first graph shows, the desired action or outcome is achieved almost immediately. The line extends vertically next to the vertical access. No time passes, and we receive what we want. This

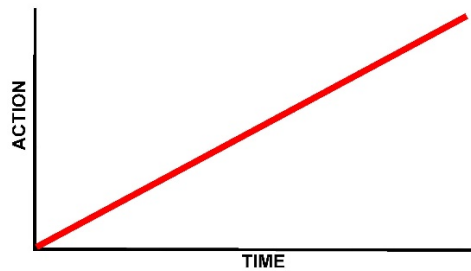
is how most of our prayers are prayed: that the desired outcome would come immediately.

**WHAT MAN NATURALLY WANTS
(SATAN'S WAY)**



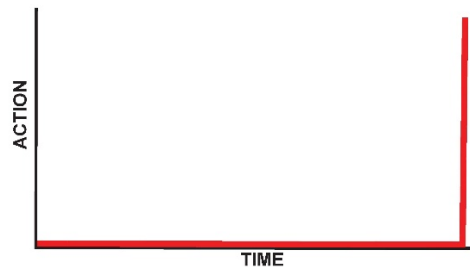
The second graph shows what we would normally accept at a minimum. The line extends at an angle and shows that progress is being made over time in achieving what is desired. We can see that God the Father is blessing us as we continually climb toward and approach our goal or desire.

**WHAT MAN WANTS AT A MINIMUM
(NOTICEABLE & CONTINUAL PROGRESS)**



However, the third graph shows what God the Father offers us so very often. It is His way on His time schedule, not ours. The time schedule is based on His will, not ours. So we pray. We diligently pray. And nothing seems to happen. We pray more earnestly. And nothing seems to happen. We pray even more diligently, and nothing seems to happen. Then we can begin to become disillusioned, disappointed, disheartened, and even bitter and angry, even towards our Father. Does this sound familiar in your life?

**WHAT GOD THE FATHER OFFERS US
(OUR HEAVENLY FATHER'S WAY)**



An example in my own personal life involves my wife, Martha, and me. I did not get married until I was 32. I lived all my twenties in search of getting married, just like most other people. But nothing ever worked out. I wanted immediate results. By the time I turned 31, I was still unmarried with no one on the horizon. I grew angry at the Father. I remember having angry conversations with Him. I felt that He just was not hearing me and that He apparently didn't care about my plight. I felt like life was passing me by.

I used to play racquetball often with an elder in the Church back in 1990. Our matches would always turn into counseling sessions afterwards. I finally came to the point that I gave up on what I was so adamant about in finding a wife. I finally told the Father that if He wanted me to stay single the rest of my life, then I would serve as a single person and would accept it. After a racquetball match with the elder in the middle of August 1990, I informed the elder of my decision and my acceptance of my fate.

I still remember verbatim what he then said to me. He said, "Mark, I think you're now ready. And I think that you will be married within a year. And I think that you will marry an Ambassador College graduate."

I was shocked. I actually told him that I wanted some of what he apparently had been smoking. Sure enough, two weeks later, I met Martha at a Singles' Weekend in Dallas. Long story made short, I married Martha on July 7, 1991, less than one year from that racquetball game. And Martha was an Ambassador College graduate. And in four days, we'll be celebrating our 30th wedding anniversary.

What I wanted in 1990 was the first graph – immediate action and fulfillment. What God the Father had been giving me was the third graph – a whole lot of waiting and then very quick fulfillment.

Please turn with me to Genesis 15. Abraham did not realize that his life following Yehovah meant the process in Graph #3.

Genesis 15:1 *After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.*
2) *And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?*
3) *And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.*
4) *And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.*
5) *And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. (KJV)*

Now Abraham believed Yehovah, but he misunderstood that the promised seed would actually be through his wife Sarah. So he fathered a child through Sarah's handmaiden, Hagar. Abraham took matters into his own hand, and actually did not wait on Yehovah.

Then Yehovah made the impossible happen and let Sarah become pregnant with Isaac when she was 90 years old, and Abraham was 99 years old. That brethren, is Graph #3.

Please turn with me to Genesis 41. We looked at this example in my last sermon, but the story of Joseph is a perfect example of Graph #3. After approximately 11 years as a servant and as a prisoner, Joseph was unbelievably and miraculously elevated beyond his wildest dreams.

Genesis 41:38 *And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?*

39) *And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art:*

40) *Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.*

41) *And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.*
(KJV)

Again, Joseph woke up that morning as a prisoner in the bowels of the prison and went to bed that night in Pharaoh's palace second in command in all Egypt.

Brethren, in the coming days and weeks, my challenge to you is to make a list of additional Biblical characters who had to show patience when nothing seemed to happen for an extended period of time and then, all of a sudden, the biggest unimaginable blessing comes unexpectedly out of nowhere and is basically dumped in their lap. Include in this list all the times that this has happened to you, or to your family, or to someone that you know. Then, when you are becoming disheartened by a seemingly unanswered prayer, take out this sheet and review it. It really is an attitude adjuster.

Brethren, waiting on God the Father, yearning for Him, longing for His coming and the coming of His Son requires patience. Are we showing that patience as we trust Him that all will work out in the end?

The second point concerning waiting on our Heavenly Father is:

2. Waiting on God the Father requires endurance

Please turn with me to Matthew 24. Jesus was prophesying on the end-time events surrounding the end of this age. Jesus gave a specific warning to the brethren, the called-out ones of His Father.

Matthew 24:12 *And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.*

13) *But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.* (KJV)

As explained in my last sermon, the Greek word for love in verse 12 is ἀγάπη (agape) Strong's #26 which is the Greek word for the Godly love that emanates from God the Father and from Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

This verse is talking about brethren who have God's Spirit. This is a warning to the brethren who have been called by God the Father, who have found favor with the Father and been given favor by the Father, who have been given the Holy Spirit by the Father. And this warning is that many will allow their Godly love to turn cold.

Then the next verse says that those brethren (those called out ones by the Father) who endure unto the end will be saved.

The Greek verb for *endure* is ὑπομένω (hupomenō) Strong's #5278 which means "to endure or persevere."

Please turn with me to 2 Timothy 2. Brethren, are we experiencing trials and ill treatment by others in our lives? Paul exhorts Timothy to endure hardness, but he uses a special verb.

2 Timothy 2:3 *Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*
(KJV)

The verb Paul uses is συγκακοπαθέω (sug-kako-patheō) Strong's 4777 which means "to suffer or endure hardships and evil treatment along with others." Paul is saying that we are in this together, that we are not to suffer alone, but we are to suffer together. This is why Paul told the Corinthian congregation in 1 Corinthians 12:26 that *when one member suffers, all members suffer with him or her.*

Please turn with me to Hebrews 12. Brethren, just like the athletes in the Olympics, we are running in a race, but our prize is not a gold medal. Our prize is eternal life.

Hebrews 12:1 *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,*
2) *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*
3) *For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.* (KJV)

The Greek noun translated as *patience* in verse 1 is ὑπομονή (hupomone) Strong's #5281 which means "patient endurance or steadfastness." This noun is the noun form of the verb hupomenō which we just discussed in Matthew 24. This same verb is used in verse 3.

So we are exhorted in Hebrews to run with patient endurance the race that is set before us. And brethren, it is a long race. It is a marathon, not a sprint. A sprint takes conditioning and sharp reflexes. A marathon takes conditioning and endurance.

Please turn with me to Matthew 10. Jesus said that His disciples would be hated and would have to endure hardships all the way to the end.

Matthew 10:22 *And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth [hupomenō] to the end shall be saved. (KJV)*

We will not turn there, but Daniel warns us in his prophecy in Daniel 7:25 that the entity who will be the Beast power at the end of the age will wear out the saints. Satan wants to wear us out, all of us. The Father allows us to be tested to see what we are made. But the Father will not test us beyond what we can endure.

Please turn with me to James 5. James refers to a righteous man who endured incredible suffering but still remained faithful to Yehovah.

James 5:11 *Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end [or the end result] of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.*

God the Father allowed Satan to kill all of Job's children, his servants and all of his livestock and cattle. But Job never cursed Yehovah. He instead praised Yehovah. God the Father then allowed Satan to afflict Job with sore boils from the top of his head to the bottom of his feet. Job was in agony. He didn't understand why he was in such agony. He thought that he had been faithful and obedient to Yehovah. Why was this happening then to him?

Have we ever thought the same thoughts in our lives? Do we try our best to do everything right and we still have terrible things seem to continually happen in our lives? Do we ever feel like Job?

Job never gave up. Even when his three friends were saying that all this calamity was because of some secret sin that Job had committed, Job never gave up. Finally, Yehovah explained to Job what was happening, and after Job had endured weeks of terrible agonizing suffering, Yehovah restored all that Job had lost, and then more.

Brethren, we must endure. We must not faint. We must not allow ourselves to be worn down by Satan, by our trials and tests, and by life itself. We are in a race, and in order to finish that race, we must have endurance, all the while yearning for and longing for and waiting in anticipation on God the Father.

So brethren, waiting on our Heavenly Father requires endurance.

The third point concerning waiting on our Heavenly Father is:

3. Waiting on God the Father requires humility

Another quality and characteristic that we need in order to wait upon our Heavenly Father is humility. Please turn with me to Psalm 34. David wrote many psalms about having a contrite heart and attitude toward Yehovah.

Psalm 34:18 *The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. (KJV)*

Please turn with me to Isaiah 66. Isaiah records the words of Yehovah on the type of person upon whom He looks favorably.

Isaiah 66:2 *For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. (KJV)*

Please turn with me to Micah 6. This famous verse includes three requirements that Yehovah puts upon those who follow Him.

Micah 6:8 *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? (KJV)*

Please turn with me to James 4. James writes that God the Father gives grace and favor to the humble in spirit.

James 4:6 *But he [God the Father] giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. (KJV)*

Jesus left us a wonderful example of humility to our Heavenly Father's will in His prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane. Please turn with me to Matthew 26. Jesus knew the agony, the incredible suffering that He would have to endure in the next few hours culminating with an excruciating scourging and an agonizing death on the cross.

Matthew 26:36 *Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. :*

37) And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

38) Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

39) And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

[Skip down to verse 42]

42) He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

43) And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

44) And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. (KJV)

Jesus did not want to die. He did not want to have His body torn open in a vicious scourging. He did not want to be nailed to a cross. He asked the Father if there could be any other way. But in the end, He humbly submitted to His Father's will, even when the Father's will was that He would suffer and die. That is true humility.

Are we willing to humbly submit to our Father's will? Or do we want what we want and we desire and sometimes even try to demand that God the Father adopts our will instead of us adopting His will? As we patiently wait for the Father to perform His work in us, do we exhibit the humility that it takes to trust Him, to put our lives in His hands, to let Him mold us and fashion us into what He wants us to be?

Brethren, humility is a trademark of those who are truly following the Father and His Son. We just cannot be truly close to our Heavenly Father if we do not exhibit real humility with a contrite heart. Humility is a requirement for waiting upon Yehovah, our Heavenly Father.

The fourth point concerning waiting on our Heavenly Father is:

4. Waiting on God the Father requires faith

Brethren, what is faith? The Biblical definition is given in Hebrews 11. Please turn with me to Hebrews 11.

Hebrews 11:1 *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* (KJV)

The word *substance* in Greek is ὑπόστασις (hupostasis) Strong's #5287 which means confidence or assurance.

The word *evidence* in Greek is ἔλεγχος (elegkhos) Strong's #1650 which means proof or inner conviction.

Therefore, Hebrews 11:01 could be written: *Now faith is the confidence of things hoped for, the inner conviction of things not seen.*

Brethren, do we truly have faith in our Heavenly Father? Do we trust Him implicitly, no matter what the present condition may appear like? No matter how bad things may seem? No matter what our eyes are telling that we are seeing?

Please turn with me to Luke 7. We read here about a centurion who knew how authority worked and we read about his deep faith in Christ's authority.

Luke 7:1 *Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.*

2) *And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.*

3) *And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.*

4) *And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:*

- 5) *For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.*
- 6) *Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:*
- 7) *Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.*
- 8) *For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.*
- 9) *When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.*
- 10) *And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick. (KJV)*

What is interesting in Luke's account that I had never noticed before is that the centurion never talked to Jesus. He sent friends to tell Jesus that Jesus didn't need to come to the house. The centurion knew and understood that all Jesus had to do was to say the words and his servant would be healed. Brethren, that is faith. It actually seemed to stun even Jesus because He marveled at the centurion's faith.

Brethren, do God the Father and Jesus Christ marvel at our faith? Do we show deep faith in them even when we cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel?

Please turn with me to Numbers 14. The twelve spies had just returned from spying out the Promised Land. Ten of the spies gave an evil report, and consequently, the Israelites all demanded to go back to Egypt. Only Joshua and Caleb gave an accurate positive report. What was the Israelites' reaction?

Numbers 14:10 *But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.*

11) *And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them? (KJV)*

The Israelites never believed Yehovah, even though they saw miracle after miracle after miracle. They witnessed the plagues in Egypt. They witnessed walking through the Red Sea on dry ground with walls of water on each side. They witnessed manna falling from the sky six days per week. They witnessed water coming from rocks. But they never had a heart to obey, and they never had a heart to believe. An unbelieving heart can see but it will still not believe.

Please turn with me to John 20, and we will see that our Heavenly Father wants the exact opposite. Brethren, it does not take much faith at all to believe something that you plainly see in front of you. Again, as James stated, faith is believing what you do not see. Jesus mentioned this concept to His disciple, Thomas, after Thomas had doubted that Jesus

had been resurrected. He stated that he would not believe until he placed his fingers in the holes of Jesus' hands.

John 20:26 *And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.*

27) *Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.*

28) *And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.*

29) *Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. (KJV)*

Believing in something you have not seen takes faith. And this is exactly what God the Father and Jesus want us to do. Let's list just a few things that we deeply believe in but have never seen.

We believe in God the Father and Jesus Christ, His Son. Have you ever physically seen them or heard their voice? We believe that we will be given eternal life at the resurrection and we will enter the Father's Kingdom? Is there any physical proof of that? We believe that Jesus died and paid the price for our sins? Do we have any physical proof that He was the Son of our Heavenly Father? The Pharisees saw His miracles and didn't believe. So, we earnestly believe these things with all our heart and being, but we believe because we have faith that they are true.

Please turn with me to Mark 9. Jesus was talking with the father of demon-possessed child. The child's father was at his wit's end. He pleaded with Jesus to have compassion on the child and to cast the demon out. We read Jesus' reply in verse 23.

Mark 9:23 *Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.*

24) *And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. (KJV)*

The child's father believed, but he also knew his belief had limitations. He asked Jesus to help him with his unbelief. Jesus did, and the demon left the child.

Brethren, when we are at our wit's end, when we begin to waiver in our faith, do we ever ask our Heavenly Father to help us in our unbelief? As we yearn for and long for our Father, as we wait for Him to perform His work in us, do we have the faith to endure unto the end?

So brethren, we must have faith in God the Father and in His Son, Jesus, for us to please Him and for us to be able to wait upon Him.

Brethren, waiting upon the LORD means to eagerly and patiently and diligently look for Him and to yearn for Him. Waiting in Hebrew and Greek are action verbs and are not passive verbs. Waiting upon the LORD requires action.

The four points we've covered today are:

1. Waiting on God the Father requires patience.
2. Waiting on God the Father requires endurance.
3. Waiting on God the Father requires humility.
4. Waiting on God the Father requires faith.

Brethren, in closing, I would like to read a short anecdote that I recently received from a friend. This story goes to the heart of obeying our Father, faithfully fulfilling the duties and the calling that He has given us, trusting Him, and having the faith to continue to follow His lead no matter what the present conditions in our lives may be.

Once upon a time, there was a man who was sleeping at night in his cabin when suddenly his room filled with light and an angel appeared. The angel told the man that our Heavenly Father had work for him to do, and showed him a large rock in front of his cabin. The angel explained that the man was to push against the rock with all his might. This the man did, day after day. For many years he toiled from sun up to sun down, his shoulders set squarely against the cold, massive surface of the unmoving rock, pushing with all his might.

Each night the man returned to his cabin sore and worn out, feeling that his whole day had been spent in vain. Thus the man began having the impression that the task was impossible and that he was a failure.

These thoughts discouraged and disheartened the man. "Why am I killing myself over this?" he thought. "This is totally futile!" He began doubting God and even began to be a little bitter and angry at God the Father.

He then prayed, "Heavenly Father, I have labored long and hard in Your service, putting all my strength to do that which You have asked. Yet, after all this time, I have not even budged that rock a half a millimeter. What is wrong? Why am I failing?" To this the Father responded compassionately, "My child, when long ago I asked you to serve Me and you accepted, I told you that your task was to push against the rock with all your strength, which you have done. Never once did I mention to you that I expected you to move it. Your task was to push and to push with all your might.

And now you come to Me, your strength spent, thinking that you have failed. But, is that really so? Look at yourself. Your arms are strong and sturdy, your back is muscular and tanned, your hands are callused from constant pressure, and your legs have become massive and hard. Through opposition, you have grown much and your abilities now surpass that which you used to have. Yet you haven't moved the rock. But your calling was to be obedient to Me and to push and to exercise your faith and trust in My wisdom. This you have done. And now, my child, I will move the rock."

Brethren, what rocks does the Father have you pushing against in your life? How many times do we get frustrated or disheartened or depressed because of conditions in our lives? Maybe sometime we feel that we are at our wit's end, that we just cannot keep going? Maybe we feel we are just too tired to keep pushing against the rock.

Brethren, for a final scripture, please turn with me again to Isaiah 40:31, where we will reread the scripture where we started today.

Isaiah 40:31 *But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. (KJV)*

Brethren, let us continue to run our race toward the Kingdom of our Heavenly Father! In the days and weeks ahead, let us continue to grow in patience, in endurance, in humility, and in faith! Let us be actively pursuing and longing for our Heavenly Father. Brethren, in doing so, we will be laying the ground work so that we will be able to effectively and successfully wait upon the LORD.