

# *The Spirituality of* **WAITING**

*A collection of quotes*



THE PILGRIMAGE

*The  
Spirituality of*

WAITING

*A collection of quotes*

T h e P i l g r i m a g e – 2 0 2 0



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# *A Resource for Those Who Wait with Eager Longing*

It is no easy thing to learn to wait. Many of the things which our culture admires seem antithetical to waiting. We are people who are used to just-in-time delivery, blistering-fast internet access, and fast-food restaurants on every corner among many other “conveniences” of the fast and furious rat-race in which we seek to earn a living and keep our balance.

The following booklet is simply the collection of quotes which I found as I began to read as widely as I could on the subject of waiting. Perhaps you, as I did, will be both surprised and delighted that many thoughtful people of faith have walked this path before us and have left a valuable legacy of written wonderments on the subject of waiting in faith.

— *The 20<sup>th</sup> Wednesday following Pentecost, 2020*

# *Waiting in Scripture<sup>1</sup>*

## *Wait, Waiting, and Waits*

Psa. 25:3    Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;  
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

Psa. 25:5    Lead me in your truth, and teach me,  
for you are the God of my salvation;  
for you I wait all day long.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise stated, the scripture used throughout this resource is from:  
'*New Revised Standard Version Bible*', copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of  
the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.    Used by permission. All rights reserved.'

Psa. 25:21    May integrity and uprightness preserve me,  
                  for I wait for you.

Psa. 27:14    Wait for the LORD;  
                  be strong, and let your heart take courage;  
                  wait for the LORD!

Psa. 31:24    Be strong, and let your heart take courage,  
                  all you who wait for the LORD.

Psa. 33:20    Our soul waits for the LORD;  
                  he is our help and shield.

Psa. 37:7     Be still before the LORD, and wait patiently for him;  
                  do not fret over those who prosper in their way,  
                  over those who carry out evil devices.

Psa. 37:9     For the wicked shall be cut off,  
but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land.

Psa. 37:34     Wait for the LORD, and keep to his way,  
and he will exalt you to inherit the land;  
you will look on the destruction of the wicked.

Psa. 38:15     But it is for you, O LORD, that I wait;  
it is you, O LORD my God, who will answer.

Psa. 39:7     “And now, O Lord, what do I wait for?  
My hope is in you.

Psa. 59:3     Even now they lie in wait for my life;  
the mighty stir up strife against me.  
For no transgression or sin of mine, O LORD,



Psa. 62:1    For God alone my soul waits in silence;  
                 from him comes my salvation.

Psa. 62:5    For God alone my soul waits in silence,  
                 for my hope is from him.

Psa. 69:3    I am weary with my crying;  
                 my throat is parched.

                 My eyes grow dim  
                 with waiting for my God.

Psa. 106:13   But they soon forgot his works;  
                 they did not wait for his counsel.

Psa. 119:95   The wicked lie in wait to destroy me,  
                 but I consider your decrees.

Psa. 130:5    I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,  
                 and in his word I hope;

6      my soul waits for the Lord

more than those who watch for the morning,

more than those who watch for the morning.

Is. 30:18      Therefore the LORD waits to be gracious to you;

therefore he will rise up to show mercy to you.

For the LORD is a God of justice;

blessed are all those who wait for him.

Acts 1:4 While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. “This,” he said, “is what you have heard from me;

James 5:7 Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains.

# *Patient, Patiently, and Patience*

Rom. 2:4 Or do you despise the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not realize that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

Rom. 8:25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Rom. 9:22 What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience the objects of wrath that are made for destruction;

2Cor. 6:6 by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love,

2Cor. 12:12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, signs and wonders and mighty works.

Gal. 5:22 By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness,

Eph. 4:2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,

Col. 1:11 May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully

Col. 3:12 As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.

1Tim. 1:16 But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life.

2Tim. 3:10 Now you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness,

2Tim. 4:2 proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching.

Heb. 6:12 so that you may not become sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

James 5:10 As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

2Pet. 3:8 But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.

Heb. 6:9 Even though we speak in this way, beloved, we are confident of better things in your case, things that belong to salvation. 10 For God is not unjust; he will not overlook your work and the love that you showed for his sake in serving the saints, as you still do. 11 And we want each one of you to show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope to the very end, 12 so that you may not become sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Heb. 6:13 When God made a promise to Abraham, because he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, 14 saying, "I will surely bless you and multiply you." 15 And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise.



## *Carlo Carretto*

No longer seek God far away from you. Seek him within yourself, and abide in his presence. “Let yourself go; let God act. But your letting go must be perpetual activity, like a road unmoving yet leading on to somewhere, like a yes pronounced in concert, deliberately, forever.

God is what you seek as perfection, as being, as oneness, as love. God is on the point of your pencil, on the edge of your ploughshare, as Teilhard de Chardin said: “The only thing separating you from God is the placenta of his procreative force, his infinite respect for your individuality, space in which you can be free to say 'I love you', distance allowing him to embrace you as son or daughter, brother, friend, spouse. . . an autonomous person. I sought - yes, I sought, for he was seeking me. That is my answer. I found him because he was already there, waiting for me.

Pp. 82-83, *I Sought and I Found*

*Prayer is a word of infinite variety, were it repeated into infinity with the same syllables and in the same tone of voice. What varies is the Spirit of the Lord which gives it life, and this is always new...*

*Understanding prayer well means understanding that one is speaking with God. Thus there are two poles. One very, very tiny and very, very weak: my soul. One immense and powerful: God.*



*But here is the first paradox, the first surprise: that he who is so great should have wanted to speak to me, tiny as I am. It is not I who wanted prayer. It is he who wanted it. It is not I who have looked for him. It is he who has looked for me first. My seeking him would have been in vain if before all time he had not sought me. The hope on which my prayer rests is in the fact that it is he who wants it. And if I go to keep the appointment it is because he is already there waiting for me...*

*Letters from the Desert*

"God comes like the sun in the morning — when it is time.

We must assume an attitude of waiting, accepting the fact that we are creatures and not creator.

We must do this because it is not our right to do anything else; the initiative is God's, not ours. We are able to initiate nothing; we are only able to accept....In short, [God] is what creates, and we creatures are in an act of becoming."

*The God Who Comes*

# *Margaret Guenther*

Yet the prayer of waiting is not so much a prayer of accomplishment as one of presence, a prayer of being rather than doing.

This kind of praying requires patience, a vastly underrated quality too often confused with mindless toleration of misery. Yet in scripture, patience is linked with love. As Paul tells us in his first letter to the Corinthians: Love is patient; ...

*p.44 My Soul in Silence Waits*

Whether we are waiting for the tomatoes to ripen, our child to reach maturity, a new language to become fluent—or whether we are waiting for God, our patience is grounded in hope.

Waiting without hope is empty and futile. Only the assurance, however faint and wavering, that our patience will be somehow rewarded sustains us....

"O tarry and await the Lord's pleasure;  
be strong, and he shall comfort your heart;  
wait patiently for the Lord." (Psalm 27:18)

*p.48 My Soul in Silence Waits*

## *Thomas Merton*

"The purest faith has to be tested by silence in which we listen for the unexpected, in which we are open to what we do not yet know, and in which we slowly and gradually prepare for the day when we will reach out to a new level of being with God. True hope is tested by silence in which we have to wait on the Lord in the obedience of unquestioning faith."

*P 76 Essential Writings*

"If you go into the desert merely to get away from people you dislike, you will find neither peace nor solitude; you will only isolate yourself with a tribe of devils."

Thomas Merton — *New Seeds of Contemplation* #8 Solitude Is Not Separation

## *James Finley*

"How does an apple ripen? It sits in the sun. A small green apple cannot ripen in one night by tightening all of its muscles, squinting its eyes and tightening its jaw in order to find itself the next morning miraculously large, red, ripe, and juicy. Like the birth of a baby or the opening of a rose, the birth of the true self takes place in God's time. We must wait for God, we must be awake; we must trust in his hidden action within us."

*From Merton's Palace of Nowhere*

# *Vincent van Gogh*

“There may be a great fire in our soul, yet no one ever comes to warm himself at it, and the passersby only see a wisp of smoke coming through the chimney, and go along their way. Look here, now what must be done? One must tend the inner fire, have salt in oneself, wait patiently yet with how much impatience for the hour when someone will come and sit down — maybe to stay? Let him who believes in God wait for the hour that will come sooner or later.”

*The Complete Letters of Vincent van Gogh*, vol. 1 p. 197.

# *Søren Kierkegaard*

## **A Path to Prayer<sup>2</sup>**

As my prayer became more attentive and inward,  
I had less and less to say.  
I finally became silent.  
I started to listen

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<sup>2</sup> [unsure whose translation this is. It is commonly quoted . . . but not the translation in my book, PHL]

Which is even further removed from speaking.  
I then learnt that praying is hearing.  
Not merely being silent.  
That is how it is.  
To pray does not mean to listen to oneself speaking;  
Prayer involves becoming silent,  
And being silent,  
And waiting until God is heard.

*The Lily of the Field, the Bird of the Air, Section One in Three Godly Discourses*

## *Rainer Maria Rilke*

I believe in all that has never yet been spoken.  
I want to free what waits within me  
so that what no one has dared to wish for  
may for once spring clear  
without my contriving.

If this is arrogant, God, forgive me,  
but this is what I need to say.  
May what I do flow from me like a river,  
no forcing and no holding back,  
the way it is with children.

Then in these swelling and ebbing currents,  
these deepening tides moving out, returning,  
I will sing you as no one ever has,  
streaming through widening channels  
into the open sea.

*Book of Hours: Love Poems to God* . Penguin Publishing Group. I, p.12 (trans. barrows)

And yet, though we strain  
against the deadening grip  
of daily necessity,  
I sense there is this mystery:

All life is being lived.

Who is living it, then?  
Is it the things themselves,  
or something waiting inside them,  
like an unplayed melody in a flute?

Is it the winds blowing over the waters?  
Is it the branches that signal to each other?

Is it flowers  
interweaving their fragrances,  
or streets, as they wind through time?

Is it the animals, warmly moving,  
or the birds, that suddenly rise up?

Who lives it, then? God, are you the one  
who is living life?

*Book of Hours: Love Poems to God* . Penguin Publishing Group. II, p.12 (trans. barrows)

"I would like to beg you, dear Sir, as well as I can, to have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and to try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer."

Rainer Maria Rilke — *Letters to a Young Poet* (1903)

## *Catherine of Siena*

Patience is "the very marrow of love."

*The Dialogue*, trans. Suzanne Noffke (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1980) p.328

## *John Calvin*

"There is no place for faith if we expect God to fulfill immediately what he promises."

*John Calvin's Commentaries On Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai (Annotated Edition)*, p.60,





# *Charles Hummel*

"Adequate time for daily waiting on God... is the only way to escape the tyranny of the urgent." *See fuller context for quote below - PHL*

## CONTINUE THE EFFORT

Over the years the greatest continuing struggle in the Christian life is the effort to make adequate time for daily waiting on God, weekly inventory, and monthly planning. Since this time for receiving marching orders is so important, Satan will do everything he can to squeeze it out. Yet we know from experience that only by this means can we escape the tyranny of the urgent. This is how Jesus succeeded. He did not finish all the urgent tasks in Palestine or all the things He would have liked to do, but He did finish the work which God gave Him to do. The only alternative to frustration is to be sure that we are doing what God wants. Nothing substitutes for knowing that this day, this hour, in this place we are doing the will of the Father. Then and only then can we think of all the other unfinished tasks with equanimity and leave them with God.

*Tyranny of the Urgent.* Intervarsity Press

## *Simone Weil*

"Waiting patiently in expectation is the foundation of spiritual life."

*Waiting for God*

## *Jean Danielou*

"We live always during Advent. We are always waiting for the messiah to come. The messiah has come, but is not fully manifest. The messiah is not fully manifest in humankind as a whole: that is to say, that just as Christ was born according to the flesh in Bethlehem of Judah, so must he be born according to the spirit in each of our souls."

*The Advent of Salvation, 1962*