

NOVEMBER 2017

TODAY IN THE WORD™



*Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart
and wait for the LORD.*

Psalm 27:14

WAITING ON GOD

A devotional from



MOODY
GLOBAL MINISTRIES

TODAY WITH DR. PAUL NYQUIST

President of Moody Global Ministries

Be Strong and Take Courage



Americans spend approximately 37 billion hours each year waiting in line. Psychologists confirm that distractions while waiting can reduce

frustration. For example, airports locate baggage claims at the far end of the airport from arrivals so that passengers are busy walking, reducing the amount of time to complain about waiting for their luggage to arrive. For most of us, waiting is frustrating because we don't have control.

Whether we are waiting for test results or a delayed flight, we hate being unable to do anything about the situation. But another definition of the word fits better from a scriptural perspective. A person who waits can also be defined as someone rooted in place, anticipating an event. Throughout Scripture, we are told to wait on the Lord: "Wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD" (Ps. 27:14).

We wait for the Lord in anticipation, trusting in who He is. We wait for God to answer our prayers, knowing He hears our cry and supplies our needs. We wait for His direction, knowing that He will direct our path. We wait for Him to

punish evil doers, assured that our God is just and will triumph. And we wait for His return, holding fast to the promise of His Second Coming.

We are to wait on God with an attitude of readiness and expectancy. Jesus tells the parable of servants who were waiting on the return of their master. He says, "Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks" (Luke 12:36).

In the parable, we are represented by the servants and God as our master. We do not know the hour of His return, but we are to be waiting and watching. Waiting means being faithful, ready, and prepared. Like a doctor or nurse who is ready "on call," we must never see ourselves as "off duty" Christians.

Waiting for the Lord should influence our behavior and renew our priorities: "Yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary" (Isa. 40:31). When you are waiting at that stoplight or stuck in traffic, remember what it means to wait on the Lord and His promises for you. Be ready, faithful, and expectant. ■

THEOLOGY MATTERS

by Dr. John Koessler

God, Time, and Eternity

The feeling of wasted time makes waiting difficult. We even feel frustrated with God because He does not appear to be in the same hurry as we are. The Bible says that with God “a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day” (2 Peter 3:8). What is God’s relationship to time and eternity?

Theologians are divided on this question. Some believe that God exists outside of time and does not experience it as we do, instead existing in an eternal now. Past, present, and future are the same to Him. Others think that God does experience time but is not limited by it as we are. He exists in time at all times and has always done so. According to this view, God’s relation to time is like that of His relation to physical space. Just as He is omnipresent, He is also omnitemporal.

Theologians and philosophers may speculate, but our finite capacity for understanding will never fully grasp the nature of God’s relationship to time and eternity. We can know only what it is like to live in a universe where time is a factor. Although we might think about the present, past, and future, we do not actually visit the past when we remember, and our memories are often faulty. We can only speculate about

the future. Events always unfold in a sequence for us. We are time-bound.

Scripture says God is eternal (Gen. 21:33; Deut. 33:27; Psalm 90). He has no beginning or end. He also acts in time. He makes promises and executes His redemptive plan in what we would call on our behalf at the “right time” (Rom. 5:6). This was especially true of the birth of Jesus Christ, which occurred “when the set time had fully come” (Gal. 4:4).

The Bible is clear that God acts within time. What is more, by being born of a woman and taking to Himself a human nature, Jesus Christ entered into the experience of time as we know it. He grew from infancy to adulthood (Luke 2:52). His earthly experience and ministry were affected by the constraints of time (Matt. 26:18; John 7:6–8). Although we may not be able to explain the physics or the philosophy of God’s relationship to time and eternity, we can say this with certainty: He is the master of both. ■

FOR FURTHER STUDY

To learn more about the different views of God’s relation to time, read *God and Time: Four Views* by Gregory E. Ganssle (InterVarsity).

TODAY AT MOODY

Setting Prisoners Free with *Today in the Word*

Your Gifts Provide Devotional Studies for Inmates

“As I look back over my life, all the pain I went through, the craziness, the hatred, and all the things I tried to do to find happiness, it was really God’s schooling to prepare me for my life’s work—working in prisons,” says Phil Wagner, who has spent his career reaching men and women in prison with God’s love.

He founded Set Free Ministries, which is partnering with *Today in the Word* to distribute this devotional to more than 4,000 prisoners every month. Your gifts to *Today in the Word* help make this outreach possible!

“The Word of God changes people,” says Phil. “A lot of people have different ideas of what people are like in prison. Many inmates have never experienced love in their life. Their lives are so messed up. The Bible says that unto those who have much, much is required. We have to understand that.”

In 1966, Phil began volunteering at the Cook County Jail. “I treated everybody like I would have liked to be treated,” he said. In 1971, he founded Set Free Prison Ministries, an organization that provides Bible study materials to those in prison.

Last year, Moody contacted Phil and Set Free Ministries for help in distributing

the print devotional to prisoners. “*Today in the Word* is so super because it gets you into the Word of God. It is relevant teaching that you can apply to your life. It has been fantastic!” Phil says. “It’s the Word of God that changes people.”

In addition to *Today in the Word’s* current readers, Set Free now provides the devotional to an additional 4,000 active students in prison. “We’re swamped!” Phil said. “Other inmates are seeing it and asking for it.”

Giving devotional material to prisoners meets a spiritual need at a critical time in their life. “While they’re in prison, they have time to study. So this is a precious time,” Phil said. One inmate said, “I didn’t get arrested; I got rescued.” Some have even said they are happy they went to prison because that is where they found the Lord and had time to get into the Word of God.

Your gifts to *Today in the Word* provide financial support for this important outreach. As Phil says, “Prisons are universities of crime unless God’s Word and God’s Son come into their lives and change them from the inside out. Through the gifts you provide, you reach inside prison walls and touch a life. We may never know the full value of that gift on this side of eternity!” ■

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TODAY IN THE WORD™

Waiting on God

Samuel Beckett's avant-garde play *Waiting for Godot* features two characters, Vladimir and Estragon, who are waiting for a third man, Godot, to arrive. They talk, sit, argue, and debate where and when they are supposed to meet Godot. The play concludes after two acts, with the two men still waiting and despairing for the absent Godot.

Some mock Christians for believing in an absent God. Are we no better than the two forlorn men in Beckett's play, passing the time while waiting for an absent deity who will never arrive? As we'll see this month in our study of waiting on the Lord, Scripture assures us that our experience of waiting for God is no tragic, futile, absurd exercise. Rather, we wait with eagerness, joy, and anticipation because we know who God is and what He has promised. He does hear our prayers. Jesus will return, just as He said. We will dwell with Him in eternity.

This does not mean that every moment of waiting is easy or pleasurable, but it does mean that we can wait for the Lord with hope. Our prayer is that the Lord will strengthen and encourage you in your commitment to Him through this study in *Today in the Word*. We are grateful for your prayers and support as we journey together, filled with awe at God's goodness even while we wait patiently for Him. ■

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*Maintain love and justice,
and wait for your God always.*

Hosea 12:6

Waiting Is a Spiritual Imperative

Waiting in daily life is an inevitable and often tiresome experience. We're put on hold during phone calls. We sit in waiting rooms for medical appointments. We wait in line to pay for items in stores. We take a number in a restaurant and wait for it to be called.

Sometimes spiritual waiting feels like that. Yet as we'll see this month, waiting on the Lord is an important and exciting biblical theme. In fact, as today's passage reveals, waiting is a spiritual imperative, an activity in which all believers must engage (v. 6). During our study, we'll consider how and why this is so, what biblical waiting means, how waiting is an essential part of salvation, and how and why to cultivate the associated virtue of patience.

In today's passage, the Lord charged Israel with sinfully abandoning her covenant responsibilities and Him (v. 2). Fraud and injustice were being

practiced, and the rich seemed to think that money could conceal their sin (vv. 7–8). Jacob had similarly sought to deceive for his own advantage, and his descendants were following in his footsteps (vv. 3–5). They should have known better (vv. 9–10)!

Verse 6 presents the standard for what God's people should have been doing and what they had to do to return to Him. Their priorities must be love, justice, and waiting on the Lord. Faithful love (the Hebrew word is *hesed*) is at the heart of the relationship between God and His people. Justice is also a well-known imperative from verses such as Micah 6:8 and Amos 5:24.

The surprise on the list is the third item: "Wait for your God always." How amazing that waiting on the Lord is here made equivalent with pursuing love and justice! This deserves our attention.

APPLY THE WORD

We may think we already know what waiting is and what it means. But as this study proceeds, we encourage you to set aside your personal preconceptions and cultural ideas—especially those related to productivity and the fast North American pace of life—in order to see the biblical meaning and significance of “waiting on the LORD.”

PRAY WITH US

Please uphold in prayer our board of trustees who faithfully serve Moody Global Ministries with their expertise, experience, and time. Pray for the continual effectiveness of their leadership and service.

*We wait for you; your name and
renown are the desire of our hearts.*

Isaiah 26:8

THURSDAY
NOVEMBER

2

To Wait Is to Desire God's Glory

Scripture's use of rock metaphors, points out the *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, “has the desert as its backdrop. The sight of a rock in a barren, sun-parched wilderness lifted the spirits of the hot and weary traveler or soldier. . . . The rock might contain a spring of water as well as providing welcome shade from the burning sun. . . . [R]ock formed a sound foundation; a rock was a stronghold, a fortress and a refuge.”

“Trust in the LORD forever,” today’s reading proclaims, “for the LORD, the LORD himself, is the Rock eternal” (v. 4). This is part of a song of praise for God’s deliverance (v. 1). The people who dwell in His secure city are righteous and trust entirely in Him (vv. 2–4). He gives them perfect peace (v. 3), perfect justice (vv. 5–6), and a straight, smooth path because He removes obstacles and difficulties (v. 7). This is all possible

because God is the Rock, the Upright One who humbles the proud and brings victory to the poor and oppressed.

In this song, waiting is described as being essentially connected with two actions that are themselves connected: obeying God’s law and desiring God’s glory (v. 8). One cannot wait on the Lord and at the same time disobey His commandments, nor can one wait on the Lord and at the same time pridefully seek one’s own glory. The phrase “desire of our hearts” indicates that His “name and renown” are our central motivation, consuming passion, and soul’s deep yearning (v. 9).

From this perspective, God’s judgment is a good thing, because His power is displayed, His victory is accomplished, and—since they see Him for who He is—“the people of the world learn righteousness” (v. 9b; cf. Phil. 2:9–11).

APPLY THE WORD

The classic hymn “Rock of Ages” uses this biblical metaphor of the Lord as our Rock: “Rock of Ages, cleft for me, / let me hide myself in thee; / let the water and the blood, from thy wounded side which flowed, / be of sin the double cure; / save from wrath and make me pure.” Sing or listen to this song as part of your personal worship.

PRAY WITH US

During this Thanksgiving season, Dr. James Spencer, VP and dean of Moody Bible Institute, invites the Moody family to thank God for the Moody faculty who, together with our wonderful students, make Moody a leader in Christian education.

FRIDAY
NOVEMBER

3

Wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness.

1 Corinthians 4:5

Waiting for God to Reveal What Is Hidden

We are often waiting for information to be revealed. What grade did you earn on the recent exam? Which movie will win the Oscar? What did your friend buy you for Christmas? Whom will your favorite sports team draft in the first round? Which politician will win the election? Wait and see!

In the same way, spiritual waiting involves waiting for God to reveal what is hidden. As we continue to examine foundational aspects of what it means to wait on the Lord, we see the contrast between His infiniteness compared to our finiteness. He always knows what we do not and He can do what we cannot. He's always in control, and His thoughts and ways are far higher than ours (Isa. 55:8–9). From this vantage point, waiting on Him is always wise.

In today's reading, Paul made this point in the context of evaluating

human motivations and actions (v. 5). Ultimately, merely human opinions and judgments don't carry any weight (v. 3). God will bring to light all that is hidden, whether we like it or not, and His judgments are entirely truthful. The Corinthians had been quarreling about church leaders, and Paul had been accused of exalting himself and of not being a genuine apostle. In response, he asserted that leadership was not about pride or position but about being a servant of Christ entrusted with the mystery of the gospel (v. 1).

As a minister of the gospel, Paul acknowledged God alone could know his heart (v. 2). The opinions of others, and even of his own conscience, meant nothing compared to the accurate, omniscient judgment of His Lord and Savior (v. 4). The only reward he sought was "praise from God" (v. 5)!

APPLY THE WORD

Waiting on the Lord and deferring to Him is countercultural in a society that promotes self and rejects patience. One way to focus on waiting for the Lord is by memorizing His Word. Any of our passages this month would be a good option, and you could start with our key verse for today, 1 Corinthians 4:5.

PRAY WITH US

Today and tomorrow, please pray for Moody's Intercultural Studies faculty. Pray for professors Clive Craigen, Maria Mocuta, Mary Cloutier, and Stephen Clark, who bring academic training and missions experience to the classroom.

*No eye has seen any God besides you,
who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.*

Isaiah 64:4

God Acts for Those Who Wait

The newly liberated Israelite slaves found themselves trapped, or so it appeared. In front of them lay the Red Sea; behind them was the well-equipped Egyptian army. The people complained to Moses, “What have you done to us?” He responded, “The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.” And indeed, God opened a pathway through the Red Sea. The Israelites walked through on dry ground, while the Egyptians were swept away and drowned (see Exodus 14).

This story is one of many biblical examples confirming that God acts for those who wait (vv. 4–5). This is the fourth and final of our foundational truths: Those who wait for the Lord are never disappointed. This doesn’t mean we get what we want when we want it. It means that God never forgets, never breaks a promise, and never fails. A person might stand us up, misremember, or lie. None of these

things will ever be true of the Lord. Waiting for Him is a certainty.

In today’s reading, Isaiah called on God to act on behalf of His people. His awesome power would disrupt the status quo and inspire holy fear. Because of sin, our resulting failure to call on the Lord, and His giving us over to the consequences of our own actions, we don’t deserve His intervention or rescue. Nonetheless, we remain His people. The Potter will forgive and continue to work with the clay.

God acts for those who wait. This is one of His fundamental characteristics. He’s incomparable, the only true God, and He “acts on behalf of those who wait for him” (v. 4). Waiting is not sitting around twiddling our thumbs but rather a choice of hope and faith, as we’ll see in the next section of our study.

APPLY THE WORD

Waiting on the Lord does not depend on us but on Him. Do you feel as though your sins have swept you away (v. 6)? Do you think God has abandoned you, or that He’ll leave you twisting in the wind until you get your act together? Not true! He loves you. His character and promises never fail. Wait on Him, for He *will* act on your behalf!

PRAY WITH US

Keeping the Intercultural Studies faculty in prayer, please add Richard Wilkinson, Samuel Naaman, Timothy Sisk, and Michael Rydelnik to your list. May God continue to empower their ministry to students, future global ambassadors for Christ.

SUNDAY
NOVEMBER

5

*I watch in hope for the LORD, I wait for
God my Savior; my God will hear me.*

Micah 7:7

Waiting Is Hoping in the Lord

Struck blind by an unknown disease in the middle of his career, English poet John Milton wondered in a famous sonnet what God expected him to do. Were his literary and other talents now “useless”? “Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?” In the poem, Patience answered, reminding him that God does not *need* our work: “They also serve who only stand and wait.”

Biblically, waiting is not just waiting for God to do something—it is waiting for God Himself. In other words, our hope is founded upon the character of God. This kind of hope is not tentative but guaranteed. Godly waiting is therefore accompanied by a joyful anticipation and strong faith that He is on the way: “In the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly” (Ps. 5:3).

Waiting on the Lord is part of our overall relationship with Him. It is an orientation toward God—an attitude of

the heart, mind, and will. We’ll explore different elements of this relationship, orientation, or attitude in the next five days in order to see a definition of biblical waiting.

Today’s reading reveals hope as a key ingredient in spiritual waiting. Micah’s lament for Israel mourns that pretty much everything that could go wrong had gone wrong. Harvests failed (v. 1), people acted in hurtful and violent ways (v. 2), and corruption and exploitation were rampant (vv. 3–4). Relationships were broken at every level, including community, friendship, even marriage and family (vv. 5–6). The only bright side was God Himself—but He is enough!

Waiting on the Lord doesn’t mean a “wait and see” attitude, nor is it mere human optimism. Instead, Micah watched in *hope*. He waited for the God he knew would be a *Savior*. And he boldly asserted, “My God will hear me” (v. 7).

APPLY THE WORD

Waiting might not be easy, but Scripture promises that God is present even in our waiting and He will strengthen us to hope and to trust. Keep this verse nearby as a reminder: “Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint” (Isa. 40:31).

PRAY WITH US

Moody’s president, Dr. Paul Nyquist, requests your prayers for today’s performance of Handel’s *Messiah* at Moody. Pray for all participants on stage, behind the scenes, and those in the audience. May the name of God’s Son be lifted up!

Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.

Psalm 27:14

MONDAY
NOVEMBER

6

Waiting Is Trusting in the Lord

Speaking on Psalm 27, English preacher Charles Spurgeon highlighted two dangers to avoid in the Christian walk: “All who have gone on pilgrimage to the Celestial City have found a rough road, sloughs of despond and hills of difficulty, giants to fight and tempters to shun. Hence there are two perils to which Christians are exposed—the one is that under heavy pressure they should stay away from the path which they ought to pursue—the other is lest they should grow fearful of failure and so become faint-hearted.”

Waiting on the Lord helps us avoid these two mistakes, enabling us instead to stand firm with faith and trust in Him. Faith and trust are essential ingredients in godly waiting, unlike ungodly waiting, which involves fear, worry, or anxiety. Believers confidently rely on the Lord rather than their own finite and flawed understandings (Prov. 3:5). Such trust is closely connected with hope: “Faith

is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see” (Heb. 11:1).

The psalmist’s confidence was not pie-in-the-sky. Despite his negative situation, David felt sure he would “see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living” (vv. 2–3, 13). He had more certainty about God than about his own parents (v. 10)! Though waiting was hard, he was encouraged by the truth that we have nothing to fear with God on our side (vv. 1, 13–14). The “day of trouble” is just a prelude to victory and continued worship (vv. 5–6).

Unaided, however, David could not stand firm. His enemies were too many. He needed God’s presence (v. 4) and strength even to wait for Him! If the Lord would teach him His ways (v. 11), then he could stay on the “straight path,” and his faith-filled waiting would bear fruit.

APPLY THE WORD

Prayer is an important part of standing firm and waiting on the Lord. We can come before the Lord at any time and in our own words, and when we struggle to find the words, He provides us with Scripture that we can use to pray. Make the words of this psalm your own prayer of praise and petition to the Lord as you wait for Him in faith.

PRAY WITH US

Dr. Junias Venugopal, provost and dean of Education, leads Moody’s education ministry on our three campuses. Today, pray for students and faculty of the Spokane, Wash., campus, where a two-day Missions Conference starts today.

TUESDAY
NOVEMBER

7

How long will you wait before you begin to take possession of the land?

Joshua 18:3

Waiting Is Not Passive

Samuel had told King Saul to wait until he arrived at Gilgal to offer sacrifices. The Israelite army had gathered there to fight the Philistines. The purpose of the sacrifices was to seek God’s help in the upcoming battle. Saul waited seven days, but then felt he could wait no longer. His army was “quaking with fear” and some of his men had even fled and hidden. So he offered the sacrifices himself, disobeying Samuel’s instructions. This failure to wait was a key negative turning point in his kingship (see 1 Samuel 13).

Because waiting is about faith, it is also about obedience. Faith does not move forward when God has said hold back; neither does faith hold back when God has said move forward. Saul made the first error. The Israelites in today’s reading made the second. Their “waiting” indicated a lack of faith and shows clearly that waiting on the Lord is not passive. Whether one holds back

or moves forward, faith must be active and obedient. Waiting on the Lord in part means waiting for His direction and includes going where He leads.

Godly waiting, then, is an active and courageous orientation, as opposed to being passive, timid, or fearful. Joshua’s question, “How long will you wait?” (v. 3), was a rebuke to the Israelites. One now-dead generation ago, they had “waited” and refused to enter the Promised Land based on the fearful recommendations of ten spies. They had lost forty years and paid a heavy price for their disobedience. Were they going to repeat this tragic error?

This time, Israel got it right. By surveying, mapping, and dividing the land (vv. 4–10) before actually taking possession of it, they demonstrated faith in God’s promises. And by casting lots, they bowed before God’s sovereignty.

APPLY THE WORD

Today is Election Day in the United States. We can cast our ballots in a democratic system and at the same time acknowledge God’s sovereign control over all human political processes and powers. As you pray and vote in local, state, and national elections, give thanks to the Lord for His loving rule in your life.

PRAY WITH US

Moody’s Spiritual Enrichment Week presents a good opportunity to pray for our students as they attend chapels every day and hear powerful biblical messages. Ask the Lord to teach them and draw them closer to Him this week.

*After waiting patiently,
Abraham received what was promised.*

Hebrews 6:15

WEDNESDAY
NOVEMBER

8

Waiting Because God Keeps His Promises

In his song, “Soul Anchor,” musician and writer Michael Card celebrated God’s faithfulness: “We are so sure of what we’re waiting for / And certain of the things we do not see / For we are told by the One who cannot lie / And in this hope is our security / It’s a soul anchor, hold on to the hope / It is a soul anchor, and hold on to your courage / Before we call, He answers us with hope.”

We can wait with hope and trust because God keeps His promises. But it’s just as certain that waiting is difficult. This is why the next key ingredient of waiting on the Lord is patience or perseverance (v. 15). Patience is rooted in God’s covenant faithfulness, that is, knowing that God keeps His promises enables us to be patient. Otherwise, why would we wait? Uncertainty pushes us to wait impatiently, or hopelessly, or perhaps with an angry or complaining spirit. Patience, by contrast, rests in

the absolute certainty that God always keeps His promises and that nothing can prevent Him from doing so.

Abraham exemplifies this kind of patience and faith. From God’s initial promise to the birth of Isaac was 25 years—a long time to wait! Not to mention that his and Sarah’s ages made the promise humanly impossible. Yet Abraham believed that God was absolutely trustworthy, and in time he “received what was promised” (v. 15).

Patience was possible because the result was guaranteed. God had not only promised but double-promised. It’s impossible for Him to lie in any case, but to encourage Abraham He had made His purpose and promise even more clear (vv. 13–17). We are likewise encouraged, for waiting on God’s promises is part of our spiritual experience as well (vv. 18–20).

APPLY THE WORD

The anchor was the symbol used most in art and worship by early Christians, often carved on tombs along with messages of hope in Christ. Spend time today reflecting on the image of an anchor in verses 19 and 20 in today’s reading. How is the Lord your anchor? How can this biblical image encourage you to wait on God?

PRAY WITH US

Dr. Timothy Arens, vice president and dean of Student Life, and his team work hard facilitating the learning process and enriching our students’ experience on Moody’s Chicago campus. Will you pray for their ministry to the students?

THURSDAY
NOVEMBER

9

*May your unfailing love be with us,
LORD, even as we put our hope in you.*

Psalm 33:22

Waiting Because God Loves Us

Did God still love His people? Was He still present with them? The young priest-in-training Ezekiel might have asked such questions after the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem, destroyed the temple, and took him and other Jews into exile. God answered with a resounding yes! First, He gave Ezekiel a vision of Himself, then He called him to be His prophet (see Ezekiel 1–2). Jerusalem or no, temple or no, exile or no, God loved His people and remained present with them.

God’s love is always faithful and never falters, no matter what the circumstances or our own feelings. Spiritual waiting rests on this absolutely secure foundation (v. 22). Therefore, waiting is not about duty or obligation, any more than God’s love is. God loves us of His own sovereign free will, not because of any external requirement. As yesterday’s reading indicated, He is His own guarantor.

Psalm 33 describes how blessed it is to be the people of God (v. 12). He is above all and sees all, not only outward actions but also inward thoughts, for He created all. To belong to the Lord is thus a tremendous source of hope and encouragement, far superior to human sources of confidence such as physical strength or military power (vv. 13–19).

Appropriate and worshipful responses to this truth are given in verses 20 through 22. We should wait, hope, rejoice, and trust in God. At the foundation of it all is His “unfailing love,” a phrase repeated twice (vv. 18, 22). Part of waiting on the Lord, then, is both knowing that we are deeply and steadfastly loved by our Creator and loving Him in return. We may even be facing life-threatening dangers, but His eyes are always on us, and we’re safe in His matchless hands.

APPLY THE WORD

Waiting is often hard, but that’s no reason not to be glad and give thanks! The psalmist saw waiting as a joyful state: “In him our hearts rejoice” (v. 21). We can rejoice even in the face of something like famine because our “soul anchor,” and “our help and our shield” holds us safe and secure. Think of a way to rejoice in hope today!

PRAY WITH US

Mollie Bond and Amyra Rodriguez in Foundations and Corporate Relations extend information about Moody Global Ministries and raise funds, reaching out to businesses, corporations, and ministries. They will appreciate your prayers today.

I waited patiently for the LORD . . . he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.

Psalm 40:1–2

FRIDAY
NOVEMBER

10

Waiting for God's Rescue

One biblical example of patient waiting is found in the story of Joseph (see Genesis 40–41). His opportunity to interpret the dreams of the royal cupbearer and royal baker seemed arranged by God to free him from his unjust imprisonment. Yet when the cupbearer was set free, he forgot all about Joseph! Joseph waited two more years in prison until the man finally remembered and Joseph was brought before Pharaoh to interpret his dreams.

Waiting for God's rescue isn't easy. By definition, whatever we're waiting to be rescued from is troublesome or painful. It might be imprisonment, illness, unfair blame or exploitation, or another difficult situation. This next section in our month's study addresses the purpose of waiting. We've studied what it means to wait on the Lord, but what specifically are we waiting for? God's rescue, help, or deliverance is the first of six answers to this question.

Psalm 40 is a classic expression of this kind of waiting and its results. David had experienced it many times. He knew that he had to wait patiently and the Lord would come to his aid. God would listen, lift him out of the pit (the problem), set his feet on a rock (the solution), and put a "new song" or "hymn of praise" in his mouth (vv. 1–3). The initial reason didn't matter—it might be external troubles or David's own sin (v. 12). The result is what mattered—more glory and worship rightfully given to God.

Paradoxically, waiting in patience and trust is therefore a blessing (v. 4). But how can this season of waiting for God be a blessing itself? Because it is patience and trust aimed in the right direction, toward God, who works wonders at will and is incomparably above all (v. 5). Our waiting will not be in vain!

APPLY THE WORD

Visit or write a prisoner to encourage them with the truth of God's salvation: "You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance" (Ps. 32:7). Your financial support of *Today in the Word* also encourages prisoners by making it possible to send thousands of copies into prisons each month.

PRAY WITH US

Please join Ken Heulitt, chief financial officer, in prayer and praise for God's faithful provision for Moody's ministries. If you've ever given to Moody, you are one of the Lord's wonderful ways to bless Moody's work for His kingdom.

SATURDAY
NOVEMBER

11

*The whole world will be consumed
by the fire of my jealous anger.*

Zephaniah 3:8

Waiting for God’s Just Wrath

The expression “Wait for it!” can be used to build suspense before a verbal climax. One expects that what is said next will be surprising, humorous, or unexpectedly significant. According to one source, its increased “colloquial usage as a dramatic interjection” can be attributed to its frequent appearances in the popular American TV show *How I Met Your Mother*.

To those who think they have escaped divine justice, God says, “Wait for it!” Whereas in yesterday’s reading the purpose of waiting was to experience God’s deliverance, in today’s reading the purpose of waiting is to see His just wrath against sin and evil. The poetic and prophetic books of Scripture resound with cries for this: “Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all the faithless live at ease”? (Jer. 12:1).

The context for Zephaniah 3 is Judah’s sinfulness and unwillingness to repent.

The nation was being chronically rebellious, disobedient, and prideful (vv. 1–2). Leaders exploited others, prophets lied, and priests profaned worship (vv. 3–4). God, who is perfectly righteous, had been more than patient, waiting for the nation to accept correction. The fact that He hadn’t punished them yet did not mean they had gotten away with their wickedness, as they seemed to think. They should have already known this from His past judgments on other nations (vv. 5–7).

When God said, “Wait for me,” then, it was a severe and perhaps sarcastic warning (v. 8). They didn’t think He was actually coming. They didn’t want Him to show up and “testify” about their evil deeds. They disregarded and disrespected His righteous wrath and judgment. But His arrival and His justice are as certain for judgment as they are for the salvation of the faithful remnant who waits in hope (see vv. 9–20).

APPLY THE WORD

Can we really give “shouts of joy” when the wicked perish (Prov. 11:10)? That doesn’t seem very “nice.” But the answer is yes, if our desire is for God’s plan to be accomplished and His name to be honored. If, however, our feelings are fueled by hatred or revenge, that is not *godly* waiting. For a vital lesson on this topic, read Jonah 4.

PRAY WITH US

As we praise God for His provision, please pray for Moody’s Investment Accounting staff: Andrea Palmer-Reed, Daphne Hussey, Marilou Logan, Rohan McLachlan, and Tonya Reed. We appreciate their expertise, diligence, and attention to detail.

*Do not fret when people succeed in their ways,
when they carry out their wicked schemes.*

Psalm 37:7

Waiting for God's Justice

In a sermon titled “The Beauty of Biblical Justice,” pastor and author Tim Keller said: “In the West, when we think of justice, we think of individual rights. . . . Biblical justice has a different trajectory. Biblical justice means interwovenness, interdependence, bringing individuals to see that our stuff isn't just ours. . . . [Justice] means taking the threads of your life—your emotions, your time, your body, your physical presence, your money—and plunging them into the lives of other people.”

To wait for God's justice, then, is not primarily about punishment or even fairness. To wait for justice is to wait for *shalom*, a state of peace, blessedness, and wellbeing in which God is obeyed and worshiped. That day will come when sin and death are finally and fully vanquished.

Psalm 37 describes what waiting for justice feels like in everyday life. We

are not to worry or become angry when it seems like sinners are rewarded for their wrong choices and actions. Instead, we are to be still and wait patiently for the Lord, because His justice is certain (v. 7; Isa. 30:18).

We shouldn't fret over the apparent success of evil; it's not real and won't last (vv. 1–2). Instead, we should draw close to God and do as He leads. “He will give you the desires of your heart” because then your heart is in the right place (v. 4). To trust Him is to choose wisely, to see through the fraud of temptations to the truth of righteous obedience.

Those who do so will be vindicated and rewarded for their patience! As for people who choose and act otherwise, they will be destroyed. Only those who hope in the Lord “will inherit the land” (vv. 8–9).

APPLY THE WORD

Both fretting over the “success” of the wicked and worrying about everyday needs show a lack of faith (see Matt. 6:25–34). Instead of anxiety, we have the privilege of taking these needs to God in prayer (Phil. 4:6; 1 Peter 5:7). When you are tempted to complain or worry, take that as a cue to pray for faith to wait on the Lord.

PRAY WITH US

We are grateful for the ministry of Student Enrollment Services, headed by vice president and dean Anthony Turner. Please keep this team in your prayers, and thank God for leading godly students to Moody who love Him and are eager to serve Him.

MONDAY
NOVEMBER

13

I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

Job 19:27

Waiting for God's Grace

Martin Luther challenged the church of his day in areas including salvation by faith (not works), Christian freedom, the sacraments, and the authority of the Bible. Ordered to change his views at a church council in 1521, he responded: “Unless I can be instructed and convinced with evidence from the Holy Scriptures or with open, clear, and distinct grounds of reasoning . . . then I cannot and will not recant.” He is then said to have added, “Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me!”

Job's words in today's passage are likewise his “Here I stand.” Throughout the book, he had been suffering without understanding why. His so-called friends, believing it was because of sin, had relentlessly accused and attacked him (vv. 21–22). Job wanted his words recorded so that he could be vindicated in the future (vv. 23–24). He didn't know how long he might wait, but he firmly believed God Himself would ultimately

act as his “redeemer” and defend him (vv. 25–27). He put his hope in, and took his stand on, God alone.

Like many biblical statements of faith, these words mean more than even Job knew. Our Redeemer has indeed stood upon the earth, incarnated as a human being. Death is indeed not the end—there is justice and salvation and life and God's love beyond the grave (see Phil. 1:21)!

That Job could speak these words is evidence of God's grace. There is no way he could have known such truths on his own, so God must have given him special insight. Despite his horrific circumstances and what appeared to be impending death, Job continued to trust in the Lord and to wait for His love and grace. And in this moment, in these verses, though the waiting wasn't finished, God's grace met him!

APPLY THE WORD

Believers have understood verse 25 to point toward Jesus and to hint at His resurrection. One of the most beautiful musical expressions of this verse is found in Handel's *Messiah*, as a soprano sings, “I know that my Redeemer liveth” (Part 3, #45). Find time soon to listen to this section of the *Messiah*—or perhaps the entire masterpiece!

PRAY WITH US

For the next three days, please join us in prayer for the Admissions department on Moody's Chicago campus. Today, ask the Holy Spirit for guidance and wisdom for Audrianna Cageao, Christopher Toland, and Deborah Moreno.

*My guilt has overwhelmed me
like a burden too heavy to bear.*

Psalm 38:4

TUESDAY
NOVEMBER

14

Waiting for God's Forgiveness

The *Literary Study Bible* explains that Psalm 38 is a penitential psalm, “a variation on the conventional lament psalm” in which “the poet defines a dire crisis and asks for God’s deliverance. But the twists on the lament form are these: the speaker’s antagonist is not an external enemy but himself; the threat is not physical threat or slander but spiritual guilt; the petition is to be delivered not from a threat to life or political oppression but from peril of soul.”

In other words, a penitential psalm is about waiting for God’s forgiveness. Forgiveness is part of God’s love, which He has promised to those who confess and repent (see 1 John 1:9).

But in what sense do we wait for it? Forgiveness is part of the process of God’s ongoing work in our lives. Sin’s effects are not undone instantaneously, nor are God’s grace and forgiveness

instantly in full control in our lives.

While waiting, David felt cut off from his relationship with God by the guilt of his sin (vv. 1–2, 18). He felt the sting of God’s righteous discipline for his “sinful folly” (v. 5). He felt lonely, since his friends were avoiding him, and vulnerable, since his enemies were trying to take advantage of the situation (vv. 11–12, 19–20). It was all too much to bear, to the extent that many interpreters see in the psalmist’s words evidence of a physical ailment as well (vv. 3–10). But what David was primarily doing in this psalm was expressing intense grief over his sin (vv. 6, 8, 18).

Even while describing his feelings in such terms, David waited in hope and faith. He had absolute confidence that God would answer (v. 15). “Come quickly to help me, my Lord and my Savior” (v. 22).

APPLY THE WORD

When we know our troubles are a result of our sin, it can be a depressing blow to our pride. But in these times we can discover all the more quickly what was always true—that God’s grace and forgiveness are our only hope! If this is your situation, use the words of Psalm 38 as your own personal prayer to your Lord and Savior today.

PRAY WITH US

Again, Moody’s Admissions staff are in our prayers: Jacqueline Haywood, Jonathan Morgan, Joshua Walberg, and Kylie Kristofek. May God bless their service, as they help future students navigate the admissions process.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

by Eric C. Redmond, Assistant Professor of Bible

Q **Was Jonah a historical figure, and does it matter?**

A Jonah was a historical figure, which is important for the truthfulness of both Old and New Testament Scripture. The Old Testament book of Jonah presents the story as a factual account, and in the New Testament Jesus refers to the historicity of Jonah to describe His coming resurrection and judgment upon the unbelieving generation (Matt. 12:39–41; 16:4; Luke 11:29–32).

The book of Jonah begins with the same historical markers as in other prophetic books (see Jer. 1:2–11; Hosea 1:1; Joel 1:1; Zech. 1:1). A second historical note in Jonah 3:1 is akin to the marker in Haggai 2:20, and 2 Kings 14:25 gives a historical account that includes Jonah. Fictional accounts do not provide the type of details given in the book of Jonah, such as Jonah’s journey to Joppa, his payment of the fare, the conversations among the mariners before they cast lots, the entirety of Jonah’s prayer and his specific judgment of idolaters within the prayer, and the length of the city of Nineveh and its population.

The book of Jonah describes miraculous events, actions, and occurrences that are not natural,

logical, or traditional happenings. They include a storm increasing in intensity specifically against the sailors, a fish large enough to swallow a man whole being present at the very moment Jonah is in the water during a violent storm at sea, a fish holding Jonah for three days and nights without digesting or suffocating him, the appearance of Jonah in Nineveh by means of a fish, and the raising and withering of a plant within a day.

If we attempt to explain the miraculous happenings as natural events, we deny the supernatural ability of God and the supernatural character of Scripture. God’s sovereignty and omnipotence are on display in the book of Jonah, and we should not diminish that by claiming these mighty acts were mere fiction. While we should not expect those with eyes closed to Christ to see the miraculous as true, we should also feel burdened to make the miraculous credible to them. We need supernatural eyes to see the truth.

Q **What is the synagogue of Satan in Revelation 2:9?**

A The phrase “synagogue of Satan” occurs in Revelation 2:9 and 3:9. Both verses describe “those who say they are Jews and are not.” Both verses are in letters written to

God's sovereignty and omnipotence are on display in the book of Jonah.

churches experiencing persecution, and the activities of both synagogues stand in contrast to congregations that are faithful to Christ and have not denied His name (see Rev. 2:10; 3:8). Therefore, we can conclude that the satanic synagogues refer to first-century Jews who were persecuting those who had believed on the name of Jesus. They still gathered at the synagogues as Jews, but they denied Jesus as their Messiah. Though they claimed to be Jews, they were not experiencing the blessings offered to Israel that are experienced only through faith in Christ alone. Instead, they were being used as instruments of Satan to persecute Jesus' churches. Nothing in this text implies that all Jewish synagogues are satanic, however, nor does this justify anti-Semitism. The "synagogue of Satan" refers only to those specific first-century assemblies who harassed the followers of Jesus.

Q Why do some versions of the Bible leave out Mark 11:26? Is this verse part of Scripture?

A In the *New King James Version*, Mark 11:26 says, "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses." But other translations, including the ESV, NLT, and NIV do not print the verse, and the NASB and HCSB print the verse with brackets and notes

indicating that the textual tradition following the earliest manuscripts of the New Testament does not contain this verse. When the KJV was translated, the earliest manuscripts to which modern translations have access had not yet been discovered.

In the case of Mark 11:26, later scribes and those tasked with copying the Scriptures by hand likely had access to Matthew 6:14–15 and 18:35, which have similar words and concepts. It is likely a copier added the verse in Mark, thinking that they were missing since they appeared in the passage in the Gospel of Matthew.

Most scholars agree that the older manuscripts that were copied closer to the time of the original writings of the New Testament are more accurate than those copied during a much later period of history. It is also known that later scribes were more likely to make a reading easier to read than harder and more likely to add words than take away words known to be inspired.

Mark 11:26 agrees with the testimony of inspired Scripture in the Gospel of Matthew, and in that sense it is not a false or untrue word. But this verse almost certainly was not in the original text of the Gospel of Mark, which our contemporary translations indicate with brackets or a note.

WEDNESDAY
NOVEMBER

15

*It is good to wait quietly
for the salvation of the LORD.*

Lamentations 3:26

Waiting for God’s Love and Compassion

Musician and author Carolyn Arends wrote: “The Bible encourages us to move toward faith and away from doubt. And yet, the ‘Hall of Fame’ believers held up as examples in Hebrews 11 were almost unanimously a questioning lot. The point seems less that they never doubted and more that they came to God with their doubts. Some of them argued with or even hollered at God. But they didn’t walk away. . . . God wants us to wrestle with Him.”

Waiting on the Lord is a kind of wrestling, taking our doubts and questions to Him because we know He’s the only One who can help. Thankfully, as today’s passage reminds us, no matter how hard the questions or the situation, His mercies are new every morning (vv. 22–23). As another translation puts it, “Your faithfulness is abundant!”

God’s love and compassion are always with us, for He never abandons us (see

Deut. 31:6; Matt. 28:20). But in another sense, we wait to see His love in action or to experience it in our circumstances and relationships. In this sense, His mercies are renewed daily.

This is the only reason we’re not crushed under life’s burdens and difficulties (vv. 21–22a). The challenges to faith are very real, as we know from the vocabulary in this passage, including “affliction,” “wandering,” “bitterness,” “gall,” and “downcast” (vv. 19–20). Yet they are outweighed by God’s faithful love, because His faithfulness and love are absolutely perfect.

The most hopeful thing we can say is this: “The LORD is my portion, therefore I will wait for him” (v. 24). Literally, the word translated here as *portion* means “share” or “inheritance,” and metaphorically this suggests that the Lord sustains our very lives. It is indeed good to wait for His salvation!

APPLY THE WORD

What does it mean to “wait quietly,” or patiently (v. 26)? The meaning here most likely refers to an exhortation to wait without grumbling or complaining, for these indicate a lack of faith. If we wait with the expectant hope we’ve been learning about this month, our minds will be steadfast (see Isa. 26:3).

PRAY WITH US

In conclusion, lift up in prayer these Admissions team members: Lucas Manning, Randle Bishop, and Reichert Zalameda. May they always look to the Lord in their interactions with future and current students.

*He was waiting for the consolation of Israel,
and the Holy Spirit was on him.*

Luke 2:25

THURSDAY
NOVEMBER

16

Waiting for the Consolation of Israel

Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Sanhedrin that condemned Jesus to death. He dissented from the council's decision, however, and was in fact a follower of Jesus. He had been "waiting for the kingdom of God" and recognized it when it came in the person of Christ. After the Crucifixion, he obtained permission to wrap and bury Jesus' body (see Luke 23:50–56). For a Jewish religious leader, this was a bold step indeed!

In our passage, we find another Jewish believer waiting for the kingdom: Simeon. He had waited a lifetime for this moment in the temple courtyard. Specifically, he had been waiting for "the consolation of Israel" (v. 25). He had waited with the attitude of expectant faith and hope that we've seen in the biblical example of *godly* waiting, as enabled by the Holy Spirit (v. 26). He wasn't the only one. Anna is mentioned a few verses later as also

"looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem" (v. 38).

The term *consolation* means "comfort," in the specific sense of "help" or "rescue." Simeon was waiting for Israel's deliverance in the person of God's Messiah. In his words over the infant Jesus, Simeon talked about God's sovereignty, fulfilled promises, and salvation for all nations (vv. 29–32). His words to Mary reveal his understanding about the Messiah's mission (vv. 34–35).

When we consider that spiritual waiting means waiting for God's justice, grace, forgiveness, and love, it's no surprise to find the theme of waiting interwoven with passages on Christ's first and second comings and His mission of redemption. Waiting and God's plan of salvation are so closely linked, in fact, that in this section of our month's devotional, we'll spend ten days exploring the interconnections.

APPLY THE WORD

Simeon could never have waited as long as he did and as faithfully as he did without the Holy Spirit's power and wisdom (v. 26). Expectant hope, after all, is not natural but supernatural! As you seek to cultivate godly waiting throughout your own life or in a current tough situation, pray for the Spirit's power and wisdom to fill you for this challenge.

PRAY WITH US

Steven Mogck, executive VP and chief operating officer, requests your prayers today for the Moody staff who serve to keep our campuses and all its ministries running efficiently. Thank the Lord for the service that may be behind the scenes but is done for Him!

FRIDAY
NOVEMBER

17

The friend who attends the bridegroom . . . is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice.

John 3:29

Waiting for the Bridegroom

According to *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*, “A ‘friend who attends the bridegroom’ (John 3:29) negotiated on behalf of the prospective bridegroom and his father with a representative of the bride’s father. Arrangements had to be made for work compensation (the *mohar*) to be paid to the woman’s family, and a dowry had to be paid to the bride’s father.”

By referring to himself in this way (v. 29), John the Baptist communicated that he saw his ministry as one of preparation. Preaching a message of repentance helped prepare the way for the kingdom of God and the coming of Christ. It was very important, but it was not the main event. Without the wedding itself, the activities of the best man (as we might call him today) would have no purpose.

So when Jesus arrived on the scene, John celebrated that the Bridegroom—

the whole purpose and point of his ministry—had come (see Matt. 9:15; Rev. 19:7)! This wasn’t their first encounter. John had already baptized Jesus, identified Him as superior to himself, and called Him the “Lamb of God” and “God’s Chosen One” (see John 1:15–37). He had been consistent in saying he was only the forerunner. He had even sent his own disciples to follow Jesus.

Apparently not all had understood him; during an argument over ceremonial washing, they asked John about Jesus’ ministry in a way that reveals they saw Him as a competitor (3:26). Somewhat exasperated, John repeated what he had said before: his ministry was defined by God. It was to prepare the way for Messiah (vv. 27–28). Now that Christ had come, John rejoiced to step aside: “He must become greater; I must become less” (v. 30). There was no regret in being displaced, rather, his joy was “complete” or “fulfilled” (v. 29).

APPLY THE WORD

Do we see our service as John the Baptist did? Do we understand we’re members of the wedding party and not the main event? American culture expects growth, success, and recognition, not “I must become less.” We tend to think God is lucky to have us on His team. The truth is, “We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty” (Luke 17:10).

PRAY WITH US

One of the teams in our Operations division is the Facilities staff, who take care of heating, plumbing, and electric systems on our Chicago campus. Thank God in prayer today for Al Campa, Eric Rathbun, Gerald Malozienc, and Israel Ledee.

He has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Hebrews 9:26

SATURDAY
NOVEMBER

18

Christ Brings Salvation to Those Who Wait

In his classic devotional book *Morning and Evening*, Charles Spurgeon wrote: “[Waiting] is one of the postures which a Christian soldier learns not without years of teaching. Marching and quick-marching are much easier to God’s warriors than standing still. . . . But wait in faith. Express your unstaggering confidence in him; for unfaithful, untrusting waiting is but an insult to the Lord. Believe that if he keep you tarrying even till midnight, yet he will come at the right time.”

Christ brings salvation to those who wait. In one sense, our redemption is already accomplished, but in another sense, its full realization lies in our future (v. 28). It is both “now” and “not yet.” “To bring salvation to those who are waiting for him” means to bring the fulfillment or results of salvation, its full accomplishment, the completion of God’s currently ongoing redemptive work in our lives (see Phil. 1:6).

Christ’s work of redemption required the offering of His blood. The blood of animal sacrifices had purified, though imperfectly. Christ offered Himself as the superior sacrifice needed to purify perfectly. He was in fact both sacrifice and priest, mediating between God and man (vv. 22–24; see 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 9:15). Unlike the previous inferior sacrifices, Jesus’ sacrifice needed to happen only once. It occurred “once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin” (vv. 25–26).

In Christ’s first advent, He bore our sins, rose victorious, and ascended to the Father. In His Second Coming, He will bring the fullness of salvation. These are two sides of the same coin, and they are as certain as death and judgment (vv. 27–28). For “so great a salvation” (Heb. 2:3) we can indeed wait in hope and faith!

APPLY THE WORD

Have you joined the fellowship of “those who are waiting” (v. 28)? Have you trusted in Christ for salvation? He died so we wouldn’t have to pay the penalty for sin. He rose again so we can receive His gift of eternal life. We have a choice: Wait for death and judgment, or wait for life, love, and eternity with the Lord. Choose Him today!

PRAY WITH US

Keeping Engineering Operations staff in prayer, we ask for God’s encouragement and strength for Jaime Ixcaragua, John Fraats, Scott Schaeffer, and Paul Siebold. We are thankful for their diligent maintenance work.

SUNDAY
NOVEMBER

19

He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

2 Peter 3:9

God Waits Because He Wants All to Come

David Nasmith had a heart to bring the gospel to the poor in Glasgow, Scotland. On January 1, 1826, he opened the first city mission known in the Protestant world. This organization ministered to spiritual and physical needs, including preaching, worship services, literature distribution, health care and medical services, schools, visiting prisoners, and legal advocacy. His model inspired many other city missions around the world.

Nasmith shared God’s heart for all to be saved. It should encourage us that waiting is not only a human experience. In some mysterious way, it is a divine experience as well. God waits patiently because He wants “everyone to come to repentance” (v. 9). He “wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). Though lengths of time mean nothing to Him (v. 8), He still chooses to “wait” as part of His plan. To us, this may

feel “slow,” but it just means that God is patient in His promise-keeping. Patience is the virtue or attribute that empowers waiting.

God desires for His gift of salvation to be received by as many as possible. As the apostle Paul described it, He desires “the full number of the Gentiles [to] come in” (Rom. 11:25). He takes no pleasure in sending people to hell. Without this patience and love, there would be no reason for time to continue. The Day of the Lord might as well arrive immediately. When it does arrive, it will do so suddenly and disastrously, “like a thief” (v. 10).

How should we live while God waits (vv. 11–14)? We should live “holy and godly lives.” We should joyfully anticipate the Day of the Lord, for the old will be destroyed and “a new heaven and a new earth” will be born.

APPLY THE WORD

If God wants “everyone to come to repentance,” how can we want any less? Sharing the good news with others is an excellent way to learn and reflect the heart of God. Consider unbelievers He’s put in your life, such as family, friends, neighbors, or work colleagues. Pray for opportunities to witness through words and actions.

PRAY WITH US

In conclusion of our prayers for Engineering Operations, please mention Roger Vinlasaca, Thomas Drost, and Tiffany Dickerson during your time with God. Ask the Father to watch over them and protect them in their work responsibilities.

*God's kindness is intended
to lead you to repentance.*

Romans 2:4

MONDAY
NOVEMBER

20

God's Patience Leads Us to Repentance

“The Savior Is Waiting” by Ralph Carmichael is a famous gospel song and hymn of invitation. “If you’ll take one step toward the Savior, my friend, / You’ll find His arms open wide. / Receive Him and all of your darkness will end; / Within your heart He’ll abide. / Time after time He has waited before, / And now He is waiting again / To see if you’re willing to open the door—O how He wants to come in.”

How amazing that the Son of God Himself “waits”! As we saw yesterday, God’s waiting is not exactly the same as ours; all that happens is His plan, not ours. But in another sense, His patience is a model for our patience and waiting, because God’s desires should be our desires. What God desires is repentance, what He offers is grace.

Those who reject grace can expect only judgment. Unlike human judgment,

which is flawed and hypocritical, divine judgment is consistent and truthful (vv. 1–3; see Matt. 7:1–2). That God’s judgment is delayed does not mean it has been escaped. No evasion or deception could do that. To even think that God will not hold sinners to account is to “show contempt for the riches of his kindness” (v. 4). The only reason that they’re not immediately judged is that God is patient. In His forbearance (also called “longsuffering”), He is waiting so that His love can lead more people to repentance.

Paul was writing here to moralists, that is, people who do their best and assume it will be good enough to get to heaven. But they’re wrong (v. 5). God will judge based on actions, but no one’s actions are good enough (vv. 6, 8). The only way to live as described in verse 7 is by faith!

APPLY THE WORD

Paul described his testimony as an example of Christ’s “immense patience” (see 1 Tim. 1:16). Sharing your testimony—the story of how you came to faith—is a great way to share the good news of salvation. Are you prepared and looking for opportunities to share your story in ways that make the gospel clear and show God’s patient love?

PRAY WITH US

Jim Elliott, vice president of Stewardship, welcomes your prayers today for his teams and for the sustained support of Moody Global Ministries, as we serve Christ globally in partnership with friends like you.

TUESDAY
NOVEMBER

21

Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

Jude 21

Waiting for Salvation's Completion

Christ's redemption is both "now" and "not yet." The past dimension of salvation is also called "justification." We now stand before God without condemnation; this is an accomplished fact (see Rom. 8:1–2). The present reality is called "sanctification." The Spirit is working in our lives to make us increasingly like Jesus. The future aspect is called "glorification." This is when that work will be finished (Rom. 8:29–30).

Waiting on the Lord for salvation's completion, then, is a complex Christian responsibility. Eternal destinies are at stake, as seen in today's reading, which contrasts those who do not wait on the Lord with those who do.

People who do not wait on the Lord are "scoffers" (vv. 17–19). They think the Day of the Lord will never come. Rather than living in faith and expectant hope, they "follow their own ungodly desires" and "mere natural instincts." They lack the

Holy Spirit, live by worldly values, and reject God's truth. Such false teachers mislead and divide the body of Christ.

People who do wait on the Lord are the opposite (vv. 20–21). They live according to God's truth and values. They grow toward spiritual maturity and pray in the Spirit. They stand firm in the love of Christ, from which nothing can separate us (vv. 24–25; Rom. 8:35–39). They are therefore enabled to wait in sure hope and faith for "the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life"—the completion of our earthly pilgrimages!

What about those who "doubt" or "waver" because of false teachers (vv. 22–23)? We're to show them mercy (which seems like an appropriate way to wait for mercy!). The most merciful thing we can do is share the gospel with them, for if they believe it they'll be saved from the fires of hell.

APPLY THE WORD

Throughout the journey described in Paul Bunyan's allegory *Pilgrim's Progress*, the main character, Christian, is waiting to arrive at the Celestial City, yet his waiting isn't passive. He learns much at the House of the Interpreter, is tempted at Vanity Fair, imprisoned in Doubting Castle, and more. Read or re-read this timeless masterpiece!

PRAY WITH US

Please include in your prayers today Moody's computer system administrators from Enterprise Infrastructure Services: Paul Walker, James Hickman, Kyle Sparrow, and Michael Paniak. Thank the Lord with us for their computer skills.

If we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

Romans 8:25

WEDNESDAY
NOVEMBER

22

All Creation Waits for Redemption

An area known as the “Great Pacific Garbage Patch” can be found about 1,000 miles north of Hawaii, reported *The Week* magazine. Filled with bits of plastic from bottles, bags, and other human garbage, this area stretches for hundreds of miles. What’s worse, “the amount of debris found within has increased 100-fold in the past 40 years.” Fish and other sea creatures often mistake these plastic bits for food.

Creation indeed groans (v. 22)! We’re not alone in our waiting for redemption. Sin and death affected the natural world just as it did human beings. The relationship was to be one of rulership or stewardship (Gen. 1:28–30)—“creation care” is a current popular phrase for this—but it was corrupted and disrupted and will remain imperfect until our salvation is fully realized.

On that day, there is a “glory that will be revealed in us” (v. 18)—the glory of

God, as His work of redemption will be completed. The created world, including plants and animals, “waits in eager expectation” for this to happen (v. 19). Nature is not only a witness but a participant in God’s plan. It was dragged down when Adam and Eve fell, unable to fulfill its potential (v. 20).

This is part of God’s sovereign blueprint, which is why one day “creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God” (v. 21). The waiting is painful for all of creation, but rather than being the pain of “decay” or aging, it is the pain of labor, giving birth to new life. One day there will be no more pain, no more aging, no more death. “Our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies” will be complete (vv. 23–25; see 1 Cor. 15:42–44).

APPLY THE WORD

What might it look like when creation is liberated? Two Scripture passages for consideration are Isaiah 11:1–9 and 65:17–25. These are the original contexts for such well-known images as the lion lying down with the lamb, or the child playing near the cobra’s den. On that day “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD” (Isa. 11:9)!

PRAY WITH US

Please join Greg Thornton, senior vice president of Media, in prayer for Moody’s radio and publishing ministries reaching more people for Christ across cultures and generations. Thank God that we can use various media avenues for His glory.

THURSDAY
NOVEMBER

23

*They were longing for a better country—
a heavenly one.*

Hebrews 11:16

Waiting in Faith for the Heavenly City

Caleb waited a long time to enter the Promised Land of Canaan (see Joshua 14). He, along with Joshua, were the only two spies who had recommended moving forward in faith when the Israelites first arrived at the border. But at that time, the people chose to disobey. As a consequence, God condemned them to years of wandering in the wilderness. As he waited and grew older, Caleb had to watch his entire generation, except for himself and Joshua, die.

After 40 years, the time finally came to enter the land. Caleb proclaimed: “I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I’m just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. Now give me this hill country that the LORD promised me that day” (Joshua 14:11–12).

His faith-filled attitude was consistent with that of the saints in Hebrews 11, who

“were longing for a better country—a heavenly one” (v. 16). For Abraham, this meant he believed God’s promises and obeyed His instructions (vv. 8–10). He left his home and made another in a strange land, living in tents as a semi-nomad rather than building houses. Ironically, he lived as a foreigner in the land his descendants would later inherit. Why did he do all this? “He was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.” For Sarah, faith also meant believing God’s promises, specifically, His impossible promise that she would bear a son in her old age (vv. 11–12).

People like Abraham and Sarah persevered in waiting on the Lord for their entire lives (vv. 13–16). Though they saw the fulfillments of God’s promises only from a distance, they waited in faith, hope, and expectancy, sure of God’s faithful love and of a “heavenly country” far superior to any earthly option.

APPLY THE WORD

Thanksgiving Day is a good time to give God glory by looking back and looking forward. Look back at the exemplary faith of Abraham, Sarah, and others who have run the race before us, as well as God’s faithfulness to us personally. And look forward to all He has promised to those who stand firm and wait for Him (see Titus 1:2; Heb. 10:36).

PRAY WITH US

Today, we focus our prayers on WKES, Moody Radio station broadcasting to central and southwest Florida from its studios in St. Petersburg. Thank God for Andrew Leuthold, John Blok, and John Johnson who bring Christ’s truth and love to their listeners.

We wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Titus 2:13

FRIDAY
NOVEMBER

24

Waiting for Christ's Return

Memento mori is Latin for “remember that you have to die.” A *memento mori* can also be an artwork or decoration that reminds us of human mortality. In the sixteenth century, for example, statues of skeletons or decaying corpses were popular as *memento mori*. Whether full-size statues or tabletop sculptures, these typically featured a skeleton standing with clothes torn or rotting and some ribs and other bones visible. Their purpose was to remind people not to be attached to material or temporal things.

While such objects might seem strange to us today, knowledge of human mortality can help us keep in mind life's transience and live in light of eternity. As we saw yesterday, those in Hebrews 11 who walked by faith and trusted God's promises understood this truth. Now that “the grace of God has appeared,” this mystery has been revealed (v. 11). We understand that the

promise of a heavenly city has always been about Christ, the incarnate Son of God, who sacrificed Himself in our place to make us His own (v. 14).

Because this part of God's plan lies in our past, we can strive for no less than to “live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age” (v. 12). God's gift of salvation is not just a ticket to heaven. It is a gift that begins to transform our lives immediately. Ungodliness should be rejected, for it contradicts salvation's purpose and our identity as God's people. His grace provides the power to live righteously.

In our future is the culmination of God's plan, the return of Christ (v. 13). To wait for this “blessed hope” is to live in light of eternity. According to Paul, this is the simple but all-important core of what Titus should teach the young church in Crete (v. 15).

APPLY THE WORD

Are we indeed “eager to do what is good” (v. 14)? If so, we should be glad to know we're “created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Eph. 2:10). What might be a good work that He's prepared for you today? If you're not sure, pray and ask the Spirit to bring at least one such action to mind.

PRAY WITH US

Please continue to pray for Moody Radio's WKES, asking God that the ministry of Pierre Chestang, Ron Maxwell, and Kate Bruington would bring abundant fruit, joy, and healing in listeners' lives.

SATURDAY
NOVEMBER

25

*The day of the Lord will
come like a thief in the night.*

1 Thessalonians 5:2

Living in Light of Christ's Return

Pietist mystic and scholar Johannes Kelpius and his followers settled in present-day Philadelphia in 1694. Known as the “Hermits of the Wissahickon” because they lived along the banks of Wissahickon Creek, these 40 men thought the apocalypse and Second Coming would happen that very year. They were the first group in America to make such a prediction—though they were of course wrong.

Many false prophecies have been made about Christ's return. The truth is that no one knows the day or the hour (see Matt. 24:36). Like a “thief in the night,” it will be an unwelcome surprise for unbelievers (vv. 1–2). It won't come out of nowhere, however. A pregnant woman cannot say *exactly* when labor pains will begin, but when they do it's not usually a total surprise (v. 3).

In fact, believers shouldn't be surprised at all (v. 4). For us, His return will mark

a joyful end to our waiting. Like a pregnant woman who has her hospital bag packed and ready for when labor pains begin, we, too, can be prepared. After all, we are “children of the light,” meaning we're spiritually awake and attentive. God has given us the spiritual life and knowledge we need to be on the alert for Christ's return (vv. 5–7). Our daily waiting involves “putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet” (v. 8). By contrast, unbelievers live in darkness, meaning they're ignorant or oblivious (like a drunken person).

Christ's return is the consummation of God's plan of salvation (vv. 9–10)! Those who reject Christ will suffer God's wrath, but for believers His death has saved us from that fate and given us instead eternal life with Him. As we continue to wait, this is the most encouraging and edifying truth we can share with one another (v. 11).

APPLY THE WORD

A good prayer for today is *Maranatha*, or “Come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20). We do not wait in vain on a false prophecy or wishful thinking. The object of our faith is absolutely truthful and trustworthy. No matter how difficult our immediate circumstances, each of our days can be filled with hope and expectancy. Our Lord Jesus Christ is coming back!

PRAY WITH US

Dr. John Jelinek, VP and dean of Moody Theological Seminary, requests your prayers for the seminary students and their ministries that touch many lives. May their training at MTS enhance their work for Christ with power and depth!

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness.

Galatians 5:22

Patience and the Fruit of the Spirit

The book of Proverbs connects waiting with wisdom: “A person’s wisdom yields patience” (19:11). Similarly, impatience is foolishness: “Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly” (14:29). Patient people are peacemakers: “A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict, but the one who is patient calms a quarrel” (15:18). This makes them incredibly valuable: “Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city” (16:32).

As today’s reading makes clear, we cannot achieve patience on our own. It is part of the fruit of the Spirit (vv. 22–23). In this final section of our month’s study, we’ll consider how to apply what we’ve learned about waiting on the Lord in relation to the corresponding virtue of patience.

The “fruit of the Spirit” is a collective noun, and this fruit is what happens

when the Spirit controls a person’s life (vv. 24–26). As Jesus also taught, a tree is known by its fruit (Matt. 7:17–18). The cardinal virtue of love is the first fruit identified (see 1 Cor. 13:13). Joy and peace are named next. But it’s worth noticing that on this list, patience—as most translations have it, though the NIV uses the synonym “forbearance”—is number four.

Patience can be exercised in relation to hard-to-get-along-with people or difficult situations. But its core meaning is the spiritual discipline of waiting and submission to God. One study Bible explains: “Patience shows that Christians are following God’s plan and timetable rather than their own and that they have abandoned their own ideas about how the world should work.” We cannot live this way in our own strength. We need faith in Jesus and the power of the Spirit!

APPLY THE WORD

What Bible character’s life demonstrates patience? It might be one we’ve mentioned in an illustration or devotion this month, but many more examples are available. Reflecting on this Bible character’s life (it can be Jesus if you wish) can make the quality of patience less abstract. In what specific ways might you imitate him or her in this area?

PRAY WITH US

Your prayers are important to the staff of our Legal department headed by Janet Stiven, vice president and general counsel. Ask God to guide Janet and her team with His counsel and wisdom in all the decisions they make at the workplace.

MONDAY
NOVEMBER

27

The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride.

Ecclesiastes 7:8

Patience Works against Pride

William Shakespeare’s *King Lear* portrays one of the most prideful characters in English literature. In the first scene, he calls upon his three daughters to flatter him as the basis for dividing up the kingdom. Two comply, but the third cannot. In a rage, he banishes her, though she is the only one who loves him sincerely. It takes the rest of the play, and much suffering, for the king to learn the full extent of his pride and folly.

Patience or godly waiting can work against pride in our spiritual lives. That’s why yesterday’s reading linked the fruit of the Spirit, including patience, with the command, “Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other” (Gal. 5:26).

Today’s reading consists of proverbial sayings. Some show that wisdom is often an obvious part of common sense. For example, in comparing the rebuke of a wise person with the song of fools,

it’s clear which is more valuable (v. 5). Being quick-tempered is foolish (v. 9). There’s no real point in moaning about the good “old days” (v. 10).

While wisdom may often be as obvious as that, it’s also true that at other times wisdom is counterintuitive. For example: The day of death is better than the day of birth (v. 1). Mourning is better than feasting (vv. 2, 4). “A sad face is good for the heart” (v. 3). These mean that wisdom perceives accurately the hard truths of the human condition. Death is universal. Difficult experiences generally teach us more than pleasurable ones. And it takes time, patience, and perseverance to acquire wisdom.

Shallowness, corruption, and pride are on the side of foolishness. Waiting, patience, and self-control are on the side of wisdom (vv. 11–12). That’s how and why godly waiting or patience is better than and works against pride (v. 8).

APPLY THE WORD

Much can be learned from *King Lear* about pride, patience, and moral and spiritual choices and consequences. You could read the play or look for a live production to attend or a movie version to watch, such as the 1984 production starring Laurence Olivier. As you read or watch, pray for godly wisdom and patience!

PRAY WITH US

Today and tomorrow, please include our Human Resources staff in your prayer time. We appreciate the service of Corrie Ladd, Marcy Torres, and Peter Miller, who oversee the administration of our employee benefits.

*Be patient and stand firm,
because the Lord's coming is near.*

James 5:8

TUESDAY
NOVEMBER

28

Patience Waits on God to Work

Between his initial anointing by Samuel (see 1 Samuel 16), and his coronation as king over all Israel (see 2 Samuel 2, 5), David had to wait about 21 years. When first anointed, he was only a young shepherd, probably a teenager. After King Saul died in battle, David was anointed as king, but only over Judah. About seven years later, he was finally crowned as king over all Israel.

David displayed great patience during these years of waiting. He knew that God had a plan and always keeps His promises, so waiting on the Lord was the best choice. Patience is rooted in waiting on the Lord, including the faith, hope, and expectancy we've seen throughout our study. It waits on God to work, knowing that He loves to act on behalf of those who wait. It doesn't try to rush things along or "help" God out. It knows that God's plan done in God's way at God's time is the only path to God's glory.

Our own patience, as we've also seen, is further focused on Christ's return (vv. 7–8). Parenthetically, James mentioned one specific action we can take that demonstrates we're waiting in the right spirit: not grumbling against one another (v. 9). Showing patience with fellow believers honors Christ. It's one of the things He wants to find us doing when He returns.

James encouraged his readers to wait patiently despite their difficult circumstances. They were victims of social injustice and oppression by the rich (vv. 1–6). Even so, they could imitate the examples of the prophets and Job, who steadfastly endured because they trusted wholly in the Lord. Their stories of waiting, like all stories of waiting, are not primarily about those who waited but rather about our God, who is "full of compassion and mercy" (v. 11).

APPLY THE WORD

James compared waiting for Christ's return to a farmer waiting for the harvest (v. 7). There's nothing he can do to make crops grow or rain fall. He cannot control such things. Yet the land will yield results, if he waits. Although winter is upon us, a windowsill plant placed in a sunny room in your house could serve as a reminder of this truth.

PRAY WITH US

Please add to your prayer list the rest of the Human Resources team headed by vice president Debbie Zelinski: Darric Ofinger, Jill Douglas, Joseph Bolz, and Mia Gale. Ask God to grant them wisdom in their daily interactions with faculty and staff.

WEDNESDAY
NOVEMBER

29

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Romans 12:12

Patience and Love in Action

Commenting on Romans 12:12, John Calvin wrote: “If our joy is derived from the hope of future life, then patience will grow up in adversities; for no kind of sorrow will be able to overwhelm this joy. Hence these two things are closely connected together, that is, joy derived from hope, and patience in adversities. No man will indeed calmly and quietly submit to bear the cross, but he who has learnt to seek his happiness beyond this world, so as to mitigate and allay the bitterness of the cross with the consolation of hope.”

This is one way in which patience or godly waiting is part of love in action. Patience and love are closely linked in this passage and elsewhere in Scripture (v. 12; see 1 Cor. 13:4; Eph. 4:2). As we’ve seen in our month’s study, we wait because we know God loves us. One of our purposes in waiting is thus to experience His love and compassion. What we wait for most of all is the

consummation of our salvation, which is the greatest act of love the world has ever seen.

Many other dimensions of love-in-action are packed into these verses, such as empathy, hospitality, servanthood, and integrity. We’re to hate sin, love good, be devoted to God’s people, and honor others above ourselves. We’re also to be sincere, zealous, and humble. Finally, we should share with those in need, bless our enemies, not pursue revenge, and live at peace with others.

The phrase “patient in affliction” (v. 12) associates waiting and patience with enduring suffering or persevering through troubles. Given what we’ve found in our study, it’s no surprise to find it grouped with “be joyful in hope” (or “because of hope”) and “faithful in prayer.” Prayer is an essential part of waiting on the Lord.

APPLY THE WORD

Today’s reading contains many imperative verbs or commands to obey. Consider one of these to focus on today and do it! If you’re not sure which one to choose, ask God in prayer to show you, since being “faithful in prayer” is an excellent place to start. You could also share this idea with a Christian friend and do it together.

PRAY WITH US

Your prayer support is important for Moody’s publishing ministry, headed by Paul Santhouse, vice president of Publications. Thank God for all the work by Moody Publishers to create and distribute life-changing, faith-building literature.

Keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

Matthew 25:13

THURSDAY
NOVEMBER

30

Waiting in Readiness for Christ's Return

In his classic book *Waiting on God*, Andrew Murray explained the bottom line of godly waiting: “The giver is more than the gift; God is more than the blessing; and our being kept waiting on Him is the only way for our learning to find our life and joy in Himself. Oh, if God’s children only knew what a glorious God they have, and what a privilege it is to be linked in fellowship with Himself, then they would rejoice in Him, even when He keeps them waiting.”

Jesus taught in today’s parable the importance of waiting in this spirit or with this attitude. One might say the whole purpose of the Christian life is to be ready for Christ’s return! In the story, the “virgins” were the bride’s friends, or as we might say, bridesmaids (v. 1). The “lamps” were torches and burned olive oil. According to the *NIV Study Bible*, the oil would have had to be replenished every 15 minutes, suggesting that bringing along

enough oil was a rather challenging responsibility.

The parable’s first lesson is vigilance or watchfulness (v. 13). The Bridegroom could come at any time! The second lesson is wisdom through readiness. We’re ready for Christ’s return if we’ve trusted Him for salvation. The third lesson is consequences. Having or not having enough olive oil sounds small, but symbolically it means being in or out of the kingdom of heaven (vv. 10–12).

This parable captures several themes from our month’s study, as the wedding metaphor is a rich one: Something good and joyful *will* happen, guaranteed. Our waiting centers on the coming of the Bridegroom (see John 3:29). The event itself is largely about promises made and kept, and the theme of consummation is involved. Finally, our waiting is not passive, but requires active watchfulness and preparation.

APPLY THE WORD

Spend time reviewing your study this month, perhaps making notes about what God has taught you through these devotionals. What have you learned about God? What might change in your relationship with Him as a result? “I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope” (Ps. 130:5).

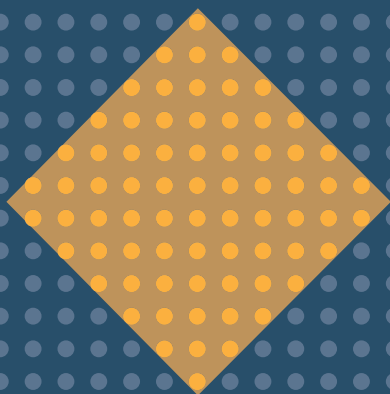
PRAY WITH US

Looking back at the lessons from the Bible this month, let’s praise God that He is teaching us to be faithful and patient, drawing us closer to Him with His love and mercy. Pray also for those who don’t know God, for whom He is waiting.

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