

Tuesday, May 5, 2020
Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...

"Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!"
(Psalm 27: 14)

This verse makes it sound like "being strong" and "having courage" is a choice that we make, rather than being innate characteristics that some people have and others do not have. In fact, it might even be considered poor "counseling." How would it be if you or I went to a counselor and said that we are feeling "weak" or "afraid," and the counselor simply said, "Just be strong," or "Have courage," and "That'll be \$150, please." We would no doubt feel like we were being ripped off.

Nonetheless, this verse does seem to be telling us to "choose strength" and to "choose courage." How do I do that? I think we can only choose strength and courage if we notice the two "bookends" in the verse. They are identical, as most bookends are. The bookends of the verse are, "Wait for the Lord!" It's as though this verse is telling us that everything having to do with having strength and courage is really only possible in the context of waiting for the Lord.

So, maybe I don't need to be counseled or taught so much about "being strong" or "having courage"; but rather, I need to be taught what it means to "wait for the Lord." Once I have that part down, "strength and courage" will just happen naturally.

So, what does it mean to "wait for the Lord"? Maybe it would be easier to talk about what it looks like when I am not "waiting for the Lord." When I do not "wait for the Lord," I fear the worst. I have little or no patience in the midst of the circumstances. I become irritated by the situation. I start to feel like God has removed His loving hand from my life. When I am not "waiting for the Lord," I begin to form an opinion of how I think God should handle the situation. I reach my breaking point earlier than I should, if I should at all.

So maybe I am "waiting for the Lord" when I do not expect the worst to happen, or if it does, I know that God will be with me. Maybe "waiting for the Lord" means that I learn patience; that I am not so easily irritated by the situation; and that I am certain that God has not removed His loving hand from my life. And when I am "waiting for the Lord," I refrain from forming my own opinion of how I think God should handle the situation. And because of all of this, my "breaking point" is further down the line ... if it exists at all.

When I learn what it means to "wait for the Lord," before I know it, I find myself living with strength and courage. It just happens because of the identical bookends. In between these bookends is a complete "library" on the topics of "being strong" and "having courage."

God's peace!
Pastor Jim