

“Waiting on the Lord” Part 2

Introduction

As we continue in our study of “Going Deeper”, we consider this week the issue of *waiting on the Lord*.

- We have established that the overall theme is about a quest, a pursuit of God.
- Living our lives for this very short time on earth in light of eternity.

Today we see that our roots need to reach deep to God’s eternal resources, (Jer. 17:8)

- Realizing that there are things in our lives that will deepen that relationship and knowledge of him.
- A *season of waiting* is one of those things.
- Some may even come to faith believing that it will save them from some of the difficulties of life.
- Ironically, it is these times when God does the deep things in us.

Main Text

*“Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the ever-lasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.²⁹ He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.³⁰ Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall;³¹ but those who hope (**wait upon**) 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.” (Isaiah 40:28-31)*

Waiting leads to purified motives and increased maturity

Isaiah has shown us the God who through strength and tenderness rescues us from exile and bondage

- Now we see a God who doesn’t grow weary and never gets tired
- There is a weariness that can come into our lives, in our spiritual walk, doing good, walking in integrity, our vocation, staying pure and many other areas.
- In due time we will reap a harvest, but how do we get the strength that we need to avoid stumbling or falling?

During our *seasons of waiting* God is working and preparing you, scriptural examples:

- Abraham and Sarah, “you’re going to have a child”...24 years later
- Moses, “you will deliver my people”...40 years later
- David “you will be King”...on the run for his life for a decade
- Go to Jerusalem and wait for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit...

We learn that it’s really more important what happens *during* the waiting season

- Not all of us are naturally patient, but God is always patient with us
- Waiting brings out the best and worst in people, but it will also show your true motivations
- This opens the possibility to allow God to purify our motives and work a maturity

motivations

- This opens the possibility to allow God to purify our motives and work a maturity in our lives and walk

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” (James 1:2-4)

God is like a great artist, who can see the final product as he shapes our lives:

“God is more interested in what we are becoming as opposed to what we are doing”
“When we’re anxious we are saying if I was in charge...rest and trust in the Lord”

God hasn’t forgotten you but He is preparing you

- Although during the waiting times, we can feel like God has forgotten us, even deserted us.
- Be confident this is a sure promise, he is working and preparing us
- We will also find during the wait the answer to this question; “what is your first thing”?

“One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple”. (Psalm 27:4)

- When it is settled who sits on the throne of our hearts, when he is our loving focus...we can grow because we know the master.

Waiting Builds Anticipation

Like a kid at Christmas, God becomes the longing of our heart

“We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. 4 And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. 5 And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.” (Romans 5:2-5)

- There was 400 years of silence, then Jesus was born
- We can also lose heart as we wait for his return today

Waiting builds intimacy and dependency upon God

This may be the most crucial truth we study today

- Waiting shows helplessness and will bring intimacy with Him who can help us
- For many of us as parents, the older sibling, abandoned in some way, leaders in various settings, we feel a need to come up with an answer...problem solve
- For those this season can seem like wasted time, but in the original Hebrew, “wait” does not imply stop, but an *active trust*

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“Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.” (Isaiah 64:4)

What do we need to do?

- **Obey**

*“Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? 47 I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. 48 He is like a man building a house, who **dug down deep** and laid the foundation on rock. (Luke 6:46-48)*

Keep doing what you know is right, not leveraging God, but “going all in” “I’m betting everything on him” attitude.

- **Relax**

“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. 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.” (2 Peter 3:8-9)

- **Expect**

We have an expectation that God is going to show up...keep moving forward

Soar; there will be times when we get to rise above and soar

Run; other times when it’s moving faster and it’s like sprinting

Walk; but most of the time, its one foot in front of the other and we just keep moving forward

Life Group Sermon Application Curriculum Leader's Guide

Week of 01/18/15

"Going Deeper Part 3" (Waiting on the Lord Part 2)

"Author Mary Ann Bird shared this very personal story in The Whisper Test. She wrote, "I grew up knowing I was different, and I hated it. I was born with a cleft palate, and when I started school, my classmates made it clear to me how I looked to others: a little girl with a misshapen lip, crooked nose, lopsided teeth, and garbled speech."

"When classmates asked, 'What happened to your lip? I'd tell them I'd fallen and cut it on a piece of glass. Somehow it seemed more acceptable to have suffered an accident than to have been born different. I was convinced that no one outside my family could love me."

"There was, however, a teacher in the second grade that we all adored—Mrs. Leonard was her name. She was short, round, happy—a sparkling lady."

"Annually we had a hearing test. Mrs. Leonard gave the test to everyone in the class, and finally it was my turn. I knew from past years that as we stood against the door and covered one ear, the teacher sitting at her desk would whisper something, and we would have to repeat it back—things like "The sky is blue" or "Do you have new shoes?" I waited there for those words that God must have put into her mouth. They were seven words that changed my life. Mrs. Leonard said in her whisper, "I wish you were my little girl"

During our difficult, quiet, waiting times God is at work in us and for us. You may hear him whisper something to you that may change your life.

Main Sermon text: (Isaiah 40:28-31)

There are some consistent themes, and key points, that emerge from these passages:

- Waiting leads to purified motives and increased maturity in our lives. We begin to understand that sometimes it is really more important what happens during the waiting season than the actual thing we're waiting for.
- God hasn't forgotten or abandoned you but He is preparing you. Important areas in our lives like motives and what is your first or a priority in your life may be addressed.
- Waiting builds anticipation, we need to let this build as we are in the quiet, waiting periods of our lives because we know he is faithful to his promises.
- When we realize that we are helpless to make happen what we are waiting for, this will build intimacy and dependency upon God. When God tells us to wait, it does not mean that everything stops, but an active trust is in play.
- We are instructed during these times to obey, relax and expect. We remain obedient to the Lord and his word, we enter his rest and we remain expectant and full of anticipation, moving forward.
- We may soar above the circumstances, run with strength and energy or just continue walking and trusting in his faithfulness.

Discussion questions/prompts for your group: (These questions are designed to help your group go deeper, understanding and applying the Bible passage(s) and the sermon)

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- We're learning that many things can transpire in our lives as we wait on the Lord. One of those is that our motives can be purified, what does this mean to you? Secondly we may experience an increased maturity in our lives. If this has been your experience would you share it with the group?
When we are in the middle of this season it can feel like we're the only one who is experiencing this or nothing is happening. It will be very encouraging if one or more choose to share.
- At times we can feel like he has forgotten or even abandoned us, have you ever felt this way? Two areas of God's work were identified in this teaching, *purification of motives* and *what or who is first in your life*. We know from elsewhere in scripture that Jesus needs to be first, the top priority in our lives. What are some of the "things" that can push him out of the position in our lives?
Some in your group may have some wounds from feeling abandoned, be sensitive to this possibility. Psalm 27:4, gives us a glimpse into David's life where he realized what was really important.
- There is nothing more precious or important in our lives than growing in **intimacy** and **dependency** upon God. Describe *how* these two things are worked in our lives during the waiting process and *what* that looks like practically in our daily walk?
Many times we fool ourselves into believing that we can handle the situations we find ourselves in or have the answers. Seeing our inadequacy or helplessness is actually a good thing, unlike how the world that sees' it as weakness. What a wonderful prospect to grow in intimacy with our Father, but we learn it is in the difficult times that we many times find this opportunity.
- Okay, what do we do when we find ourselves in this waiting period? Randy suggests three things: **Obey**, **Relax** and **Expect**. Break down what these three things are and how they help us through these times.
"Obey", stay obedient to what you know is right. "Relax", find his rest and believe for his promised peace in your circumstances. "Expect", Thank him for what he is doing and anticipate what he is going to do. Keep moving forward, don't give up, if you're not soaring or running, just keep walking in active faith!

For those who might like to use visual aids in their Bible storying, or study preparation, especially for groups with children, here are some helpful links:

<http://ministry-to-children.com/many-silent-years/>

<http://www.raisingourkids.com/coloring-pages/printable/bible/index-02.html>

Log on and check "Right now Media" there are several good resources that will relate to this study for the kids. Some are for pre-school and older, so go surfing and see if you can find something for your group.