

## **What are We Waiting For?**

We covered the topic of “waiting” last year. In reading through notes and old sermons, another aspect presented itself and it is worth addressing again.

We can all agree that waiting is not always a pleasant experience. For the impatient, it can be an inconvenience and even an extreme waste of time. We can admit this lack of patience is of our own doing and supported by the society and times we live in. We have been conditioned for decades into a “fast food” culture. Drive-thru fast-food locations and associated advertising has whipped us into the mind-set that we must have our needs met right now. “Have it your way,” “Just do it” and other catchy slogans. Patience is a virtue and one I sadly lack on occasion.

With Al Gore inventing the internet..., we can now log onto a website and order pretty much any item from a vendor and have it shipped overnight by Fedex, all with the stroke of a key on a keyboard. Are we any better off? This is debatable.

Email has all but replaced the “snail mail” system of the U.S. Post Office. Again, with the stroke of a key, you can send correspondence to virtually anywhere in the world in less time than it would take to lick a stamp.

Before our calling and finding God's Truth, what was our life like? Was there something we were waiting for? I am not meaning a package or a vacation or even meeting the right person. I am referring to what was it that was missing in our spirit that we were waiting for? What led us to look for God? Was there a hollow spot in our lives that remained void until God filled it with His truth? If this makes sense then you are getting the drift.

**Genesis 49:18-** "I have waited for Your salvation, O LORD."

I can remember all the churches I have been to in my life and while they appeared to be uplifting, there was always a void. Maybe we did not realize it then, but we were waiting for God to reveal Himself to us. This may sound a bit self-centered but it was God's will that made us hunger for His truth in the first place. It was His presence through His Holy Spirit around us that led us to the feeling something was missing. We may not have been in the proper condition or place in our lives to where the seeds of His Word would have fallen on good ground. He knew when the time was right. God was preparing us for the time when He would reveal His truth to us.

**Psalms 25:21-** "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait on You."

For most of us, we have been waiting a long time. God's truth is fairly new to some of us. Most of us came from Protestant or Catholic backgrounds and were not raised in God's true church. How much different would our lives have been if we

would have come to know God's truth at a much younger age? Quite different I would imagine.

While we may have wandered for decades with a question or two and that empty feeling, God was searching His creation for the hearts that were seeking Him.

**Psalm 53:2-** "God looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any who understand, who are seeking after God."

**Isaiah 34:11-16-** "For thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock in the day that he is among his scattered sheep, so I will seek out My sheep and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land and feed them on the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the places of the land where people live. I will feed them in a good pasture, and their fold shall be upon the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie in a good fold, and *in* a fat pasture they shall feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed My flock, and I will cause them to lie down," says the Lord GOD. "I will seek that which was lost, and bring again those that were driven away, and will bind up

the broken, and will strengthen the sick. But I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.”

Jesus came to Earth to seek and save the lost and to heal the broken-hearted.

**Luke 4:18-** “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; for this reason, He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal those who are brokenhearted, to proclaim pardon to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to send forth in deliverance those who have been crushed,”

**Luke 19:10-** “For the Son of man has come to seek and to save that which is lost.”

The longing in our hearts to know God’s Truth was evident of our desire to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

**John 4:23-** “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father is indeed seeking those who worship Him in this manner.”

We are certainly not the first people to have waited on the Lord. For centuries, prophecy foretold of the coming Messiah, the Redeemer. Generations lived and died waiting His arrival without ever having seen Him. How blessed we are!

**Hebrews 11:13-** “All these died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them from afar, and having been persuaded of *them*, and having embraced *them*, and having confessed that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth.”

We too have not seen Him but we are so blessed to have been given His complete Bible. His promises are set and the price of our salvation has been paid.

**John 20:29-** “Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen Me, Thomas, you have believed; blessed are the ones who have not seen, but have believed.”

I cannot imagine what it would have been like to meet Jesus in person, knowing the prophecies from the Old Testament.

The Samaritan woman at the well.

**John 4:25-26-** “The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming, Who is called Christ; when He comes, He will tell us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I Who speak to you am He.”

Jesus had told her things of her own life that only she would know and a stranger such as He would not.

**John 4:28-29-** “Then the woman left her waterpot and went away into the city, and said to the men, “Come and see a Man Who told me everything that I have done. Can it be that He is the Christ?”

The infirm man at the pool called Bethesda.

**John 5:5-8-** “Now a certain man was there who had been suffering with an infirmity for thirty-eight years. Jesus saw him lying there, and, knowing that he had been there a long time, said to him, “Do you desire to be made whole?” And the infirm man answered Him, “Sir, I do not have anyone to put me in the pool after the water has been agitated. But while I am going, another one steps down before me.” Jesus said to him, “Arise, take up your bedroll and walk.” How many years did the man wait there only to be healed by the one who made the angels?

Simeon from Luke 2.

**Luke 2:25-30-** “And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and reverent, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. Now it had been divinely communicated to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents

brought in the little Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, He also received Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, “Now You may let your servant depart in peace, O Master, according to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation,”

Our hope lies in God’s promises and our future meeting with Jesus Christ at the harvest of His first fruits.

**Romans 8:22-25-** “For we know that all the creation is groaning together and travailing together until now. And not only *that*, but even we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, also groan within ourselves, awaiting the sonship—the redemption of our bodies. For by hope we were saved; but hope that is seen is not hope; for why would anyone still be hoping for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we ourselves wait for it with patience.”

Waiting on God is the very foundation of our hope. Hope is used in the Bible not as something wished for but as a promise and the confident trust in a future event. We have the promise of God in His Word for our future redemption and adoption when we are resurrected at The Lord’s return. But until that event occurs and our hope is fulfilled, we wait.

Impatience may lead us to believe that God is delaying His return. First off, who are we to judge God?

**Matthew 24:48-51-** “But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, ‘My lord delays *his* coming,’ And shall begin to beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, The lord of that servant will come in a day that he does not expect, and in an hour that he does not know. And he shall cut him asunder and shall appoint his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

God is patient and merciful in His timing. He desires all of us to come to repentance and not perish. He is so merciful to mankind.

**2 Peter 3:9-** “The Lord is not delaying the promise *of His coming*, as some in their own minds reckon delay; rather, He is longsuffering toward us, not desiring that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

With this in mind, we have our work cut out for us. Can we say with certainty in our hearts that we are ready? Having the promises in His Word, are we to sit idly by and “hang out” waiting for Christ’s return? Certainly not. We must work out our salvation with fear and trembling.



**Philippians 2:12-13-** “So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God Who works in you both to will and to do according to *His* good pleasure.”

Not all of our waiting is actually "waiting on God." He is more likely waiting on us. Procrastination on our part, our lack of growth and bearing good fruit. It could be our stubbornness, pride, or outright laziness. It could be we are dragging our feet because we are fearful, uncomfortable, or like Jonah, we just flat out do not want to do what God wants us to do.

“And the Word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.” But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. And he went down to Joppa. And he found a ship going to Tarshish. And he paid its fare, and went down into it, in order to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.”- **Jonah 1:1-3.**

God used the “great fish” to get Jonah’s attention, “And the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.”- **Jonah 1:17.** In this, we see that there is a difference between

God's promises and God's instructions. When God tells us to jump, “how high” would be the proper response. The time to wait on God is not when He gives instructions. When He instructs us, He expects us to act on it. Our time to wait on God is when God promises to do something or says that something will happen. He provides us with scripture that may give us a glimpse of the future, but we will have to wait on Him to bring it to pass. That waiting is not always pleasant. It takes work, it takes discipline, restraint, patience, and our all-out effort. Has God used anything lately to get your attention? What is He trying to teach or show you? With all the blessings you have been given and all that you have learned, is God truly calling you to be in His family? If so, what are you waiting for?

**Acts 22:16-** “And now why do you delay? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” There is still time, just how much we do not know.

As we do not know the day or hour of Christ’s return, we should be striving to grow in spiritual righteousness while we still have time.

**2 Peter 3:12-14-** “Looking forward to and striving for *the* coming of the day of God, during which *the* heavens, being on fire, shall be destroyed, and the elements, burning with intense heat, shall melt? But according to His promise, we look forward to a new heaven and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. For this

reason, beloved, since you are anticipating these things, be diligent, so that you may be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless.”

Our waiting is a time for preparation. It can be strenuous but our reward is eternal and God will give us the strength we need.

**Isaiah 40:31-** “But those who wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up *with* wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”

**Hosea 12:6-** “Therefore return to your God; keep mercy and judgment, and wait for your God continually.”

All things are in God’s time.

**James 5:7-9-** “Therefore, brethren, be patient until the coming of the Lord. Consider the husbandman *who* waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient for it, until it has received *the* former and latter rains. You also be patient. Strengthen your hearts because the coming of the Lord has drawn near. Do not complain against one another, brethren, so that you may not be condemned. Behold, *the* Judge stands at the door.”

We no longer have to wait on filling the void we once had. He called, we listened. We have been filled with His truth. God has given us His Word, His Son, and His Holy Spirit. We have the example of Christ Jesus to emulate and God's Commandments to follow. Waiting teaches us patience and endurance and is a foundational aspect of faith, hope, and love. We look forward to the return of our Savior Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. We will wait with all hope and anticipation.

**Psalm 27:14.** Wait for the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall make your heart strong; yea, wait, I say, *wait* on the LORD." Amen.

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