



HATING THE WAITING

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Are you hating the waiting yet?

Do you get cabin fever? Do you find your nerves frayed and your temper shortened? Well, you're in good company.

Waiting is hard. Yet waiting has always been a part of God's design...

His promise of a son to Abraham took 25 years to fulfill; His covenant with Abraham took many generations to fulfill.

His promise of freedom and provision to Israel when they were slaves in Egypt took over 40 years to complete.

His promise of the throne to David took years to develop, while another was crowned, who maniacally sought to kill David.

His promise to return to earth has taken over 2,000 years (so far).

Through all this waiting, Jesus asks a penetrating question: *"When the Son of Man comes again, will He find faith on the earth?"* (Luke 18:8).

Evidently, waiting is a major challenge to trusting.

Which makes waiting the ideal test of genuine and persistent faith! (Not a test designed to record our failures, but a test designed to strengthen and perfect our trust in Christ.)

In a moment of crisis, even the most unexpected people may become heroes. But let that crisis drag on for days, or months, or years, and people begin to fall away like cut flowers.

*Luke 8:13 The seeds on the rocky soil represent those who hear the message and receive it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots, they believe for a while, then they fall away **when they are tempted by trouble.***

What can alter this all-too-natural tendency? (Only the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to us!)

Remember how the disciples behaved during the 3 days between the crucifixion of Jesus and His resurrection? They were anxious, uncertain, afraid, skeptical—which led to splintered community.

And now, consider the difference during the 10 days between Jesus' departure and the arrival of the Holy Spirit? They persistently gathered in community, as they prayed, conducted business, and remained expectant and receptive.

Even then, they were prone to miss the *strategy* of God's plan.

Jesus told them the power was to make them His witnesses "*in Jerusalem, all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*" Yet, they stayed in Jerusalem, just ministering to people like themselves; it took intense persecution to drive them from the city into the outer regions.

And after they had begun to branch out to other places, they still limited their ministry to the Jewish people, although Jesus had explained that His grace was for "all people."

Further revelation and unanticipated experiences were required to bring the Good News to the non-Jewish population. **Such is the natural sluggishness of human spirituality.**

But God has always had a people who believed... and waited patiently and expectantly. Just think about those mentioned in Luke's record:

Luke 12:1 **Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah to come out of the sanctuary, wondering why he was taking so long.** ²² *When he finally did come out, he couldn't speak to them. Then they realized from his gestures and his silence that he must have seen a vision in the sanctuary.*

Luke 2:25 **At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him** ²⁶ *and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah.*

Luke 8:40 **On the other side of the lake the crowds welcomed Jesus, because they had been waiting for Him.**

Luke 12:35 **"Be dressed for service and keep your lamps burning,** ³⁶ *as though you were waiting for your master to return from the wedding feast. Then you will be ready to open the door and let him in the moment he arrives and knocks.* ³⁷ **The servants who are ready and waiting for his return will be rewarded.**

Luke 23:50 Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph. He was a member of the Jewish high council, ⁵¹ but he had not agreed with the decision and actions of the other religious leaders. He was from the town of Arimathea in Judea, and he was **waiting for the Kingdom of God to come**.

From these few examples, we may see again that **waiting is common** in the plan to reveal God's Kingdom, and the reward for those who trust and wait is sure. The Letter to the Hebrews expresses it succinctly:

Hebrews 6:11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, ¹² that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who **through faith and patience** inherit the promises.

From long, long ago, God has promised this:

2 Chronicles 7:14 If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from Heaven, and will forgive their sins, and heal their land.

He asks of us just two things: humble prayer and penitent pursuit.

He promises us three things: His presence ("hear from Heaven), His mercy ("forgive their sins"), and our fruitfulness ("heal their land").

Safe Landing

One final story...

Mark 4:35 As evening came, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's cross to the other side of the lake."

³⁶ So they took Jesus in the boat and started out, leaving the crowds behind (although other boats followed). ³⁷ But soon a fierce storm came up. High waves were breaking into the boat, and it began to fill with water.

³⁸ Jesus was sleeping at the back of the boat with his head on a cushion. The disciples woke him up, shouting, "Teacher, don't you care that we're going to drown?"

³⁹ When Jesus woke up, he rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Silence! Be still!" Suddenly the wind stopped, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ Then he asked them, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

⁴¹ The disciples were absolutely terrified. "Who is this man?" they asked each other. "Even the wind and waves obey him!"

God has promised us a safe landing, but not a smooth voyage.

We can't change the direction the wind blows, but **we can adjust our sails** so that we may still reach our destination.

Are your sails set for prayer? Because *that's how* we may catch the wind of the Holy Spirit. *That is how* we may enjoy a Spirit-filled and Spirit-led life.

This week, take time to speak with God and listen for His voice.

We need faith and patience. For God's promises are waiting for us (*"reserved in Heaven"*).