

Sermon: What To Do While Waiting

Text: 2 Peter 3:11-16

Discussion Questions:

Nobody likes to wait. We're annoyed with lengthy checkout lines at the store (and if you're anything like me, you ALWAYS pick the slowest line!); we get frustrated by long red lights; we're forever waiting for things to arrive in the mail, or to get the results of a test, or the seemingly endless string of commercials that pepper our favorite TV show.

Singer Tom Petty and his band The Heartbreakers got it right way back in 1981 when they sang:

*The waiting is the hardest part.
Every day you get one more yard.
You take it on faith, you take it to the heart.
The waiting is the hardest part.*

Talk a little about this with your group—

- What are some things that frustrate you when you have to wait for them?
- Have there been certain “seasons” in your life, when the waiting seemed more pronounced?
- What do you tend to do when you are required to wait? (What did you do before the invention of cell phones?)
- Why do you think waiting is so very hard?

The Bible isn't silent on this topic. There are numerous times when the idea of “waiting on the Lord” is mentioned. Read each of these examples, and discuss: 1) Who do you think the verse is addressing (what circumstance do they find themselves in)?; and 2) What does the Lord wants us to learn in the midst of our waiting?—

Psalm 33:20-21 “We **wait** in hope for the Lord; He is our help and our shield. In Him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in His holy name.”

Psalm 37:7 “Be still before the Lord and **wait** patiently for Him; do not fret when people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.”

Psalm 38:15-17 “Lord, I **wait** for you; you will answer, Lord my God. For I said, ‘Do not let them gloat or exalt themselves over me when my feet slip.’ For I am about to fall, and my pain is ever with me.”

Psalm 130:5-6 “I **wait** for the Lord, my whole being **waits**, and in His Word I put my hope. I **wait** for the Lord more than the watchmen **wait** for the morning, more than the watchmen **wait** for the morning.”

Isaiah 40:29-31 “He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might He increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who **wait** for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”

Psalm 46:10 “**Be still** and know that I am God.”

Examination:

- Read **2 Peter 3:8-13**
 - These six verses articulate the fact that the day and age in which we are currently living—is actually a time of waiting. What are we waiting for?
 - Is the return of Christ something you can honestly say that you are waiting for? Or, perhaps, are you really NOT looking forward to His coming?
 - What would be some reasons that people ARE looking forward to the return of Christ?
 - What would be some reasons that people are NOT looking forward to the return of Christ?
 - What does the Bible have to say about this? Read the parable in **Matthew 25:1-13**. What happens to those who AREN'T ready and prepared for Jesus to return? What happens to those who ARE ready and looking?
 - What is God waiting for? (v. 9)
 - According to verse 11, what ought we be doing while we wait?
 - Peter makes it clear in verse 12 that we can actually “speed up” the return of Christ. What do you think he means by this? How do the words of Jesus in **Matthew 24:14** help in our understanding of this truth?
 - What are we to be looking forward to? What will happen to the current earth? What will the new earth be like? Why is this something we ought to be looking forward to?

- Read **2 Peter 3:14-16**
 - The idea of “looking forward” features prominently in this passage. How many times (in the NIV) does Peter use the phrase “looking forward” between verses 11 and 16? What is it we are looking forward to?
 - There are certain actions that ought to accompany our “looking forward.” What are those actions?
 - What actions do we take in order to be found “spotless”?
 - What actions do we take in order to be found “blameless”?
 - What actions do we take in order to be found “at peace with God”?
 - How does the Lord’s patience “mean salvation”? (v. 15) Salvation for whom? Salvation from what?
 - Why do you think Peter refers to some of Paul’s letters? What level of authority does Peter ascribe to Paul’s letters? What happens to those who ignore God’s Word?
 - People who are running from God—or who have no interest in the things of God—view passages such as this as just another example of why they don’t believe. They view God as some “cosmic killjoy” who piles all kinds of rules on us, and takes great delight in “slapping our hands” when we fail to measure up. But that isn’t Peter’s (or God’s) heart whatsoever. When Peter calls us to “make every effort to be found spotless,” he’s saying this for our own good! Like it or not, there is ultimate accountability for our actions. Why is ultimate accountability a good thing—and why do so many people hate the thought of facing this truth?

Application:

This call to living a holy and godly life isn’t something we should simply gloss over. We need to take this to heart. Pray about one area in your life that needs to change, and ask God to help you change it.