When God Waits

Isaiah 30:18
18 And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.

Intro

I read this verse last week and it struck a chord in my soul.

• There are a few things that just jumped out at me.
  • First of all sometimes God chooses, intentionally, to wait.
    o Think about it for a minute.
      ▪ There is something a little unsettling about that.
    o Sometimes God hears my cry.
      ▪ Sometimes God entertains my plea.
      ▪ Sometimes God looks down on my hopeless situation and...
        • He chooses to wait.
    o That’s never what I expect.
      ▪ That’s never what I’m looking for.
    o When I lift my voice in my despair,
      ▪ I do so with the expectation that He will hear my cry
        • and move on my behalf.
    o When I cry out to him from the ends of the earth,
      ▪ I do so in the unshakable belief
        • that he who hears me is faithful.
  • But Isaiah says and, therefore, will the Lord wait...

What’s even more unsettling about this verse is the fact
  • that the “therefore” isn’t really clearly defined.
    o God doesn’t explain why he’s waiting.
      ▪ He doesn’t clarify the “therefore”
      ▪ that has compelled him to wait.
    o He just says, therefore, I will wait.
  • I have to understand that I don’t see everything that God sees.
    o I have to understand that I don’t know everything that He knows.
    o I’m not fully aware of His divine plan.
      ▪ As a matter of fact, I’m very short sighted.
      ▪ All can really see is the right here and the right now
        • and all I can really understand is that I need God to move.
    o But he sees something that I can’t see,
      ▪ He knows something that I don’t know
        • and “therefore” He waits.
God Waits With Purpose

God’s motivation for Waiting seems to be intentionally obscure.
- He’s the master and I’m only the servant.
  - He knows what tomorrow holds.
    - I only have to know that He holds tomorrow.
- I know that my soul cries out to Him.
  - I know that my very heart of hearts is in despair.
  - I know that it seems as it I can’t wait another moment.
    - But, for whatever reason, he waits!
- I am thankful, though, that this isn’t the end of the verse.
  - While God’s motive in the verse is concealed,
    - the promise of the verse is plain and unmistakable.
    - **When God waits, he waits with a purpose!**

*And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you!*

- When God Waits, He waits that he may be gracious unto us.
  - Listen to what I’m telling you tonight.
- When God waits instead of answering your plea,
  - when God waits instead of delivering you from trouble,
  - when God waits instead of bringing you out of the valley,
    - He doesn’t wait in vain.
- He waits so that he can show you his great grace in your life!
  - God doesn’t wait out of neglect.
    - He doesn’t wait out of apathy.
    - He doesn’t wait just because the whim strikes him.
- When God waits He does so for your benefit.
  - He waits for the perfect time for His grace to shine through in our lives.
    - He waits for the right moment.
    - He waits until the fullness of his time has come.
- When God waits, you can mark it down, there’s a blessing coming.
  - When God waits, you can rest assured,
    - His grace is getting ready to shine.
  - When God allows His people to walk through trial and trouble
    - and holds back, as it were, the answer to your prayers
    - you can rest assured that He isn’t waiting in vain!
- Like the bright light of the sun that breaks through the dark stormy sky,
  - the majesty of his grace is about to pierce the darkness of your valley.
    - **When God waits, He does so because He is getting ready to let his grace flow in due season!**
When God Waits

Why?

Sometimes you want to throw up your hands and ask:

- What is he waiting for?
  - I don’t guess we will ever fully know.
- Maybe he is waiting for your ability to be completely exhausted.
  - Maybe He is waiting for you to try everything else, to expend all of your resources.
  - Maybe He is waiting for the circumstances to finally get impossible;
  - maybe he is waiting for the situation to get beyond all human ability.
- One thing is for sure, just because he waits
  - doesn’t mean he’s not going to answer.
- He waits so that when the answer comes, his grace will shine.
  - He waits for that perfect moment.
    - When the dark hopeless background is fully established,
    - that is when the magnificent light of God’s presence cuts through the gathering storm
      - with the brightness of His glory and His grace shines!
  - Every promise of God has a season.
    - And every promise of God is yea and amen.
  - But, rest assured, it will never come to pass out of season.
    - When the fulness of Gods time is come, then the promise will be fulfilled
  - Until then, God waits!

That’s why he waits, because He’s an on-time God.

- He knows exactly when his glory will shine in your life
  - in such a measure that it cannot be ignored.
- He knows exactly when he can crown your trial and suffering
  - with the indisputable magnificence of his grace
  - and cause everyone around you to see
  - the mighty hand of God in your life.
- When God waits, Isaiah said, he waits so that He may be gracious to you!
  - It is in your darkest hour,
    - in your most desperate time,
    - in the trying of your faith,
When God Waits

- that is when his Grace really shines in your life.

If he had moved sooner, you might have been tempted to take credit for it yourself.
  - If he had moved when you asked Him to,
    - you may never have recognized the grace of God at work in your life.
  - If He had moved before all earthly effort was spent,
    - you might have given the credit for your deliverance to some other thing.
  - Instead He waits.
    - But don't mistake his waiting for a reluctance to show you grace.
      - He waits specifically because he wants you to see His grace in your life!

Listen to your pastor tonight.
  - Don't misjudge the time spent waiting for God.
    - Don’t misjudge the intentions of God.
      - Don’t think for a moment that just because your answer hasn’t come yet that God has abandoned you.
  - Sometimes God waits.
    - Sometimes God lets things develop in your life,
      - sometimes God leads you to the valley
        - and causes you to walk through it.
  - Rest assured, when the time is right,
    - when the stage is set,
    - when the season is fully come,
      - His grace will shine through!
  - That’s why God waits – so that He may be gracious to you!

**Wait On God**

So what do you do when God waits?
  - The answer is simple, you do the only thing you can do,
    - you wait upon the Lord!
  - We don’t like to wait.
    - We don’t like to linger between the prayer and the answer.
      - We don’t like the long slow transition from darkness to dawn.
  - But hear what I’m telling you:
    - Your waiting is not wasted.
  - Isaiah said, blessed are they that wait upon the Lord!
    - You can’t get from where you are now
      - to the outpouring of God’s blessing by any other means.
      - You have to wait!
    - Waiting is a struggle for our flesh,
      - waiting is the bane of our carnal nature,
• but patient trust is a posture that God blesses in the life of a believer.
  o It runs counter to everything that is natural,
    ▪ we want an answer and we want it now.
  o But when we learn to wait on God
    ▪ we open up the avenue by which his richest blessings flow.

Waiting is all about faith.
• When we patiently wait on God we demonstrate our faith in God.
  o When our hands long to do something!
  o When our feet long to go somewhere.
  o When our flesh cries out for us to save ourselves.
    ▪ Faith rises within us and says,
    ▪ I will not take matters into my own hands
    ▪ – I will wait on God.
• That is when his blessings flow into our lives.
  o I am convinced that sometimes the Lord shuts us up in a place of waiting
    ▪ in order to drive us to the exercise of our faith.
  o Sometimes God puts us in impossible situations
    ▪ and waits for us to finally come to the conclusion
      ▪ that the only thing that we can do is wait upon the Lord!

There is a blessing in simply waiting for God.
• Those that wait for him will, eventually encounter Him.
  o Because, when God waits,
    ▪ it is not so He can abandon you,
    ▪ it is so He can show you His goodness.
• The scripture reminds us that weeping endures for a season
  o but joy comes in the morning.
• Blessed is the man or woman who doesn’t abort the process of faith
  o during their season of weeping.
• If you will just hold on,
  o if you will just wait for the Lord,
  o if you will just trust in him,
  o you will soon discover that joy comes in the morning!
• There is an answer to your prayers
  o lingering on the horizon of your faith,
    ▪ don’t give up now!

The Watchman

David said, in Psalm 130:5-6
When God Waits

5 I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.
6 My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning.

David looks to the weary watchman to demonstrate the principle.

- That faithful guard whose cloak is wet
  - with the dew of the night,
  - and stiff with the bone chilling cold
  - He stands on the wall and watches,
  - faithfully, for the first glimpse of the coming daylight.

- He doesn't control the rising sun,
  - he doesn't have any power over it
  - but even though it lingers
  - and even though it seems to wait before appearing,
    - he knows in his heart
      - that if I will just watch and wait for it,
      - sooner or later the eastern sky is going to begin to change.
    - And the darkness is going to give way to the bright hues of morning
      - and the brisk cold that dampens my spirits
      - is going to yield to the warm light of the morning sun.
        - If I can just wait!

David said that’s how you wait on God, you wait with expectation!

- The answer hasn’t come yet,
  - as a matter of fact, I have no influence at all
  - over when the answer will come,
    - but I wait!

- Because I know that I know, that I know,
  - that even when God waits,
    - his grace is coming!
  - In time, I will have my answer.
    - In time my help will come from the Lord.
    - In time, the bright glory of God will set the eastern horizon on fire.
      - If I will just wait on the Lord!

I’ve spent a lot of mornings hanging on the side of a dark, lonely, cold tree in the middle of God’s own wilderness.

- And I can tell you a few things about waiting for morning.
  - It seems like the more I want it to come, the slower it comes.
- It seems to be impervious to my anxious wishful voice
  - urging the warmth of the sun to finally rise.
• But, even though it delays its coming,
  o I've learned from experience that delay is not the same as denial!
• Sooner or later that sun is going to rise.
  o The same is true with the blessings of God.
  o Don't mistake a delay on God's part with denial.
    ▪ Sometimes God waits
    ▪ but, in time, you will have your answer if you will wait.
    ▪ In time His glory will shine through,
      ▪ if only you will learn to wait!

My Expectation

Listen to what David said to his own soul:

Psalm 62:5-6
5 My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.
6 He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defense; I shall not be moved.

My soul, David said, wait on God!
• My expectation is from Him and Him alone.
  o He is my rock.
  o He is my salvation.
  o He is my defense.
• If I trust in him,
  o if I wait on him,
  o I shall not be moved!
• I come to this pulpit tonight to encourage you to put your trust in God,
  o regardless of the circumstances of your life!
    ▪ Wait on the Lord.
• Your waiting is not wasted.
  o In the waiting, God strengthens you.
  o In the waiting God establishes you,
  o in the waiting your soul learns to trust in God.
    ▪ There is a blessing in waiting for him.

Forty-three times in the Old Testament the people of God are commanded, “Wait on the Lord.”
• God promised Abraham a son,
  o but 25 years elapsed between the call of Abraham and the birth of that child of promise.
• When Lazarus fell sick,
  o Mary and Martha sent runners to Jesus
  o and Jesus told them he would come.
    ▪ But Jesus waited.
When God Waits

Notes by Pastor Tony McCall

The Pentecostals of Lake City

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When God Waits

o And Lazarus was three days in the grave
  • before Jesus ever showed up.

• The Lord told 500 followers to go and tarry at Jerusalem
  o and wait for the promise of God
    • but it was 10 long days
    • before the promise was finally fulfilled.

The Blessing

Sometimes God waits.

• You won’t always understand why.
  o It won’t always make sense.
    • It won’t always seem to benefit you.

• But mark my words.
  o When God waits,
    • he waits that he may be gracious unto you.
  o You can count on it.
    • If you wait on God,
      • you will be blessed.
      • Because there is a blessing in the waiting!

In a different passage, Isaiah tells us that there are immeasurable benefits in learning how to wait upon God.

Isaiah 40:31 *But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

Blessed is he who learns how to wait on God!

• Blessed is the man or woman that learns
  o that just because God hasn’t moved yet,
    • it doesn’t mean that he has abandoned me.

• Blessed is the man or woman
  o that learns that there is strength,
    • there is rest,
    • there is refreshing
      • in waiting on the Lord!

Isaiah said that the soul that learns to wait on the Lord, learns to rest in the Lord!

• They renew their strength!
  o They mount up with wings like eagles.

• When the time comes, they will run and not grow weary...
  o Because they waited on God!

• They shall walk and not faint...
  o Because their confidence is in God!
• It really doesn’t matter how deep the valley is,
  o it really doesn’t matter how dark the storm clouds are,
    ▪ there is rest and refreshing to be found
    ▪ in simply waiting on God!

Close

The Chinese bamboo tree is one of the most remarkable plants on earth.
• Once the gardener plants the seed,
  o he will see nothing but a single shoot coming out of the bulb
    ▪ - for five full years!
• That tiny shoot, however,
  o must have daily food and water.
• During all the time the gardener is caring for the plant,
  o the exterior shoot will grow less than an inch.

At the end of five years, however, the Chinese bamboo will perform an incredible feat.
• It will grow an amazing ninety feet tall in only ninety days!
  o Now ask yourself this:
    ▪ When did the plant actually grow?
      ▪ During the first five years,
      ▪ or during those last ninety days?

The answer lies in the unseen part of the tree, the underground root system.
• During the first five years,
  o the root structure spreads deep and wide in the earth,
    ▪ preparing to support the incredible heights the plant will eventually reach.
• In the five years of waiting,
  o the root structure is firmly established
    ▪ that will sustain the plant in its rapid growth cycle.
• Perhaps that’s why God Waits.
  o Because we grow when we wait!

Altar Call

From the day that Adam fell into sin the whole world waited for the fulfillment of a promise.
• Thousands of years passed
• Humanity waited.
• But finally, when the fullness of God’s time was come
There was a promise, there was a child, a cross, an empty tomb and an upper room.

When God waits, there is always a blessing in the making.

I don't know where you are or how long you've been waiting

But I come to admonish you to hang in there!

Trust in him

Keep the faith

There's a blessing in the waiting.

He will come through!

Someone in this place needs to make the choice to trust him.

God's timing is perfect.
  - He doesn't always move according to my time table.
    - But he always moves right on time!

18 And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.