

What does God want us to know, to feel, and to do?



“In The Midst of Waiting”

Acts 1:12-14

(Communion)

Intro: Life is interesting... One of the toughest things to learn in our relationship with the Lord is how to wait on Him...

Isaiah 40:30-31 (ESV) “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.”

- God gives power and great strength to the weak... Those who are proud and confident in their own wisdom and strength will receive no strength from God.
- God’s strength is reserved for those who know they are weak and who know they have no might.
- How do we receive strength from the Lord? We receive it as we **wait on the Lord**...
- The idea behind waiting on the Lord is not a passive sitting around kind of thing... God brings His strength to us as we seek Him... and rely on Him instead of our own strength. If we are weak, it is because we do not wait on the Lord!
- *“they shall mount up with wings like eagles”*: This is the measure of strength that the Lord gives us... strength to soar above everything else.

When we are in the midst of waiting or when we are in these seasons of waiting, what are we as followers of Jesus Christ supposed to be doing?

How are you guys doing with waiting? Some of you here tonight are waiting to receive clear direction from the Lord about what you are going to do with your life... some of you are waiting for God to bring that

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certain man or woman in your life that you will eventually marry... some of you might be so in the midst of waiting that you feel as though your life is at a complete standstill and you are just surrounded by unknowns...

And to complicate things even more... when you and I are in these seasons of waiting, and maybe you're in one tonight, we often come face to face with many important decisions that need to be made about life... and as young adults, you find yourself alone in this process... Yeah, you can call your parents and run things by them... you can ask close friends what they think you should do about a particular thing... but at the end of the day, it's just you and God... doing life together...

I want to talk to you tonight about 3 things I believe you and I are to be doing when we are in the midst of waiting...

3 things to do while I'm getting my wait on:

1. Obedience
2. Fellowship
3. Prayer

And these 3 things are also meant to be a part of our lives whether we are in seasons of waiting or not, but if we can learn them now, they will become a natural part of our lives from here on...

Now earlier in verse 4, we read, **Acts 1:4** "On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "**Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.**"

Acts 1:12 "Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city."

- I want us to see tonight that one of the first things the disciples did after the Lord ascended to heaven was an act of **obedience**, they obeyed His command to return to Jerusalem and wait...

➤ God has given us His word for direction – we are meant to obey it

When we obey God's word there is blessing and provision... when we disobey God's word, there are consequences... and those consequences ultimately lead to disaster.

For example, **(T) 2 Corinthians 6:14-15** “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? (15) What harmony is there between Christ and Belial?” What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?”

(Marriage/Dating/Inner circle of close friends: If 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 is obeyed, there will be blessing and provision... if it is disobeyed, there will be disastrous consequences. As Pastor Mark says all the time, “Chose to sin, chose to suffer.”)

➤ In the midst of waiting :
1. Obey God

As you walk in obedience of God's word, remain strong and faithful in your relationship with Jesus and in your convictions that you will not allow Satan's plan of destruction to distract you from God's perfect plan of blessing.

1 John 2:3-6; 17 (ESV) “And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, ⁵but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: ⁶whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. ¹⁷And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”

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It's not too late to stop living in disobedience... and to receive God's grace and kindness and allow Him to lead you in every area of your life... the Bible says in (**Rom. 2:4 (ESV)** "*Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?*") Because of who He is, we can turn to Him in forgiveness and follow His direction and leading...

Acts 1:13-14 "When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. (14) They all joined constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers."

- In the midst of waiting:
 - 2. Fellowship with one another

When we spend time with one another connecting, it is an opportunity to listen to what God is doing in other people's lives, to learn from them, to encourage them, to receive encouragement ourselves and to grow in our relationships with our brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Christian fellowship does not only take place at church... it's wherever there are two or three believers... then there is that "*koinoonia*"... that fellowship together...

Acts 2:42 "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to **prayer.**"

- In the midst of waiting:
 - 3. Pray – for wisdom and direction

When you and I are in the midst of waiting on God to accomplish a particular thing in our lives... the greatest resource we have is prayer.

What does God want us to know, to feel, and to do?

(Wisdom)

James 1:5 “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.”

(Direction)

Proverbs 3:5-6 “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”

Isaiah 30:21 “Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way; walk in it.”

Q. When should we pray?

Luke 18:1 (The Parable of the Persistent Widow) “Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that **they should always pray and not give up.**”

(When my heart is overwhelmed or grows faint)

Psalms 61:2 “From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.”

Q. How should we pray?

(In the Spirit)

Romans 8:26 “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the **Spirit himself intercedes for us** with groans that words cannot express.” (Also 1 Cor. 14:15)

Jude 20 “But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.”

What does God want us to know, to feel, and to do?

(According to His will)

1 John 5:14 “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything **according to his will**, he hears us.”

Q. Hindrances in prayer?

(Iniquity [wickedness or evil] and sin)

Isaiah 59:1-2 (NKJV) “Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. ² But your **iniquities** have **separated** you from your God; and your **sins** have **hidden** His face from you, so that He will not hear.”

(Doubt)

(T) James 1:6-8 “But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.”

(Asking for the wrong reasons/motives)

(T) James 4:3 “When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”

(Trusting in self: Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector)

Luke 18:9-14 “To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ ¹³“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ ¹⁴“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

➤ Prayer brings results

This season of fasting and fervent prayer serves as a great reminder of how powerful prayer is and that it is to be on-going in the life of a Christ follower and with expectancy...

Result of united prayer: “There was an old deacon in a city in Michigan who was connected with a church which had no conversion for sixteen years. He came to his death-bed, and felt that he could not die in peace. He sent for the minister, but he had been too long accustomed to the darkness to be easily awakened. Failing with all the male members of the church he sent for the ladies, and pleaded with them to pray for a revival. They prayed and fasted before God. In a little while the whole church was moved. I received a dispatch from the minister. On my arrival he took me into a room filled with these ladies praying that the Lord would reveal His power. I felt, as soon as I entered, that God was there. The next night the power came, and in forty-eight hours there was scarcely a young man or young woman who was not converted to God, or anxious to be saved.”

(D. L. Moody.)

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Pray: Salvation/Rededication (Have band guys come)

Communion: 1 Corinthians 11 (Have time of pray during communion for wisdom and direction in seasons of waiting)

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2 Chronicles 20:10-12 “But now here are men from Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, whose territory you would not allow Israel to invade when they came from Egypt; so they turned away from them and did not destroy them. ¹¹ See how they are repaying us by coming to drive us out of the possession you gave us as an inheritance. ¹² O our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. **We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you.**”

- Next week... Acts 2:1-13... Teaching on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit... the issue of speaking in tongues... followed by a time of prayer for you to be personally baptized in the Holy Spirit...