

## God's Waiting Room

*Presented by Julie Busteed*

Air Dates: September 29 – October 3, 2025

### Day One

Waiting is not my favorite thing! Whether it is waiting in a store line, waiting in traffic, waiting for a doctor's appointment, or waiting for the coffee maker to finish! The most challenging thing can be to wait on God to answer my prayer or give direction. Or waiting for a difficult situation to resolve, or a hard season of life to ease up.

We are called to persevere. To continue to trust God and wait on him.

*The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him (Lamentations 3:25).*

When I read the account of Noah in Genesis 8—a familiar story to most of us—I am encouraged to trust God in the waiting. Noah obeyed God in building the ark and gathering all the animals. Scholars think the entire time he and his family were on the boat was about a year. After all the rain and flooding, Noah sent out a dove to see if the water had receded from the surface of the ground. But the dove returned and so he waited some more and sent the dove out again.

Finally, the dove returns with an olive leaf. Now Noah could see the water was gone but he waited until God told him it was time to get out of the boat—till the ground was completely dry. It probably seemed like he could have left the boat earlier since he couldn't see any water. But he trusted, obeyed and waited. After being in that boat for a year, I imagine it had to be challenging! But he trusted God. There was purpose in the waiting.

Another familiar story about waiting and trusting is raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11). Jesus and his disciples get word that his friend Lazarus is ill. And Jesus' response is to wait! He says to his disciples,

*Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him (John 11:14-15).*

What? How does that make any sense to the disciples!

When they finally arrived, Lazarus had been dead and in the tomb for four days. And to everyone's amazement Jesus calls him to come out of the tomb. Now up to then Jesus had done many miraculous things—many healings, providing food, casting out demons. But here he publicly shows even more of his glory by raising Lazarus from the dead. If they had not waited, but gone to Lazarus right away, then it would have been just another healing. But by waiting—being patient—and even suffering as the sisters of Lazarus, Mary and Martha had done, they are given even a greater view of who Jesus is—his character and his love.

Maybe that's where you are right now. Deep in the middle of a dark time. You don't have any hope. You look around at your circumstances and it seems bleak and hopeless. But maybe God is using this waiting time to draw you closer to him, so that you can trust him more deeply, and then be shown his glory more greatly.

## Day Two

When you're in God's waiting room do you ever think that if you just pray more or fast more or do something more that this will get God's attention? That there is something you need to do. I used to think maybe I'm not in his will, doing something wrong, or not being persistent enough—which is why he's not hearing or answering my prayer.

Are you familiar with the parable of the persistent widow (Luke 18:1-8)<sup>1</sup>? Jesus begins by telling his disciples this parable to show them they should always pray and not give up. And to me that meant relentlessly praying, even begging, and almost trying to bend his will to my prayers. But I don't think that's the point! Briefly the parable goes like this:

*He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' "For some time he refused. But finally, he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me'" (Luke 18:2-5)!*

Here is an unjust corrupt judge who doesn't fear God or care about people. And a widow, who particularly in those days is quite vulnerable. She has no provider or protector. And she's asking for justice. Repeatedly. But the judge refuses. Finally, she wears him down because she keeps "bothering" him and he gives her justice. And to me this meant I need to wear God down with my prayer requests in order for him to answer. I thought that I needed to continually bug him to get his attention. That somehow the accumulation of my prayers would make a difference.

I don't think this is what Jesus was talking about. That would be equating God to this unjust judge, and he is not at all like that. He cares about us, he cares about justice, it's his unchangeable character. And I am not like the nameless widow. God knows me, loves me, provides for and protects me. Jesus tells us why he told this parable in verse 1 to show that we should always pray and not give up. And that can be hard to do when you're in that waiting room.

When you and I persist in praying, in talking to God, our hearts become more inclined to his. It's a life of prayer that we are called to—a life of continual conversation with God. And it's more about how our hearts and minds can be transformed to his. So yes, pray continually. And trust that in his perfect timing he will answer.

As the Psalmist said: *I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word, I hope* (Psalm 130:5 ESV).

## Day Three

Waiting on the Lord is hard. But he gives us promises that we can hang on to during this time.

*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* (Isaiah 40:31 ESV).

Years ago, I was in a job that was not my favorite. There were many things that were fine, but the work itself was not really what I wanted to do. I felt like it wasn't a good fit for me, and it was work that didn't come naturally to me. For a long time, I complained about this. I would complain in my heart, to God, to my husband and search for ways to move on to something else. But the opportunity didn't present itself.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Kent Hughes, "Living in the 'Not Yet'" Series: Luke, January 8, 2008, [https://preachingtheword.com/av\\_item.php?avid=579](https://preachingtheword.com/av_item.php?avid=579)

Finally, I remember crying—literally—to God about this and just pouring my heart out to him. And it's not that I heard a loud voice, it was a soft gentle reminder that he is sovereign and to trust and wait on him. Instead of trying to change my circumstance, I began to change my thoughts—my mindset about the situation. It's not that I became content and happy overnight, but I tried to focus on the things that were good. I also gave myself little rewards or encouragements for doing some of the hard things of the work. And by that, I mean taking a quick walk, getting another cup of coffee and so on. And slowly, I wasn't as miserable! I think I complained less!

Changing my attitude made a huge difference. My situation didn't change right away either. I would still have some valleys of despair, but they became fewer and far between.

Then, when an opportunity did arise, I was almost surprised! I was now actually more prepared for this next step having stayed where I was. And I wasn't leaving my employer on bad terms—not burning any bridges.

I know there are many different situations and some more difficult than what I was experiencing. And for your own mental and physical health you may need to take different actions. But I tell you this, for a couple of reasons. First take some time to reflect and think on the situation as objectively as possible. Are there some good and positive things about where you are right now? Then pour your heart out to God. Continue to seek him. Realize he has purpose in the waiting. And that nothing is ever wasted.

## Day Four

What happens when you are not patient and run ahead of God and take things into your own hands? That's exactly what happened to King Saul.

You can read the entire account in 1 Samuel 13:1-15 but let me summarize. Saul is the newly appointed first King over Israel. They've had some success at defeating their enemies. I guess King Saul is feeling pretty good about this. Then the Philistines—the enemy—assemble to fight and they have many chariots and soldiers *as numerous as the sand on the seashore*.

When the Israelites see this, they are *quaking with fear*. Saul waits seven days for Samuel (the prophet and priest) to arrive to offer the burnt offering. He was following Samuel's instructions (1 Samuel 10:8). But something happens—we're not told what—but Samuel doesn't show up in seven days. He's late. And Saul seeing that his soldiers are frightened, seeing the strength and number of his enemies, takes things into his own hands and he offers the sacrifice to God (which by the way was against the law—only priests were to do this). And then guess who shows up at this exact moment—Samuel! And he asks Saul what's going on, and Saul explains:

*“When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Mikmash, I thought, ‘Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the Lord’s favor.’ So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering” (1 Samuel 13:11-12).*

Oh wow. Did you hear that? Saul's saying things weren't going as he thought they should. He was looking at his circumstances around him and becoming fearful and not looking at God. And so, he took things into his own hands—he felt “compelled” to ask for the Lord's help in this way. And Samuel then tells him that he's done a foolish thing. That he's not kept the command that the Lord God gave him and as a result the Kingdom of Israel will be taken away from him, it will not endure.

I do feel for Saul sometimes. It sounds like he convinced himself he was doing the right thing in rushing ahead of God and offering these sacrifices and seeking the Lord's favor instead of waiting for Samuel. But it was not the right thing. How many times have you been anxious, got tired of waiting for God and

took things into your own hands which then resulted in more trouble? Maybe you are so desperate to get out of a job or a project that you'll do anything.

I know. It's hard to wait. But it can be even more dangerous to not wait. To make poor decisions and suffer those consequences. You might not have your kingdom taken away from you like Saul, but it could still end in difficulty.

As the Psalmist says, *wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord* (Psalm 27:14 ESV)!

## Day Five

I used to think there were seasons of waiting on God, but now I think there is always something I am waiting on from him. Maybe it's waiting for some direction in one area of my work or waiting for something to come to an end or waiting for the next big thing. But aren't we always waiting to hear from him? And since we are always in this "waiting room" of God's timing for some kind or another, then what is the purpose? What is the benefit?

*Yet the Lord waits to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him* (Isaiah 30:18).

*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. May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you* (Psalm 33:20-22).

There's a blessing in the waiting room. There is hope. It's not always my favorite place to be, but I'm not as anxious there as I used to be. I've grown in my trust of God, that he has what's best in store for me, even if it seems difficult. I know I can trust him no matter what.

And my goals and focus are ever more on my hope in him. Yes, you and I are living in the now and it's a fallen world. But if you are a Christ-follower, there is hope of eternal life with God. The more I get to know him, study his Word, read his Word, pray, and meet and talk with other Christ-followers, the more I can rest in his timing. Not that it's never frustrating or scary, but I know he will never leave me or forsake me.

Do you have confidence in your relationship with him? If not, please, take some time right now to pray and ask for his help to get into his Word. He alone is our hope and salvation. He is trustworthy and loving. He waits to be gracious to you.

If you are struggling with waiting on God and having patience to endure in a situation, then think about this. God's silence doesn't mean that he doesn't care. He hears you and knows you. But maybe he has something better in mind for you. Or maybe the answer is no or not right now. But you are building your faith muscle as you wait and trust in him. I think Oswald Chambers says it beautifully:

Some prayers are followed by silence (from God) because they are wrong, others because they are bigger than one can understand. It will be a wonderful moment for some of us when we stand before God and find that the prayers we clamored for in early days and imagined were never answered, have been answered in the most amazing way, and that God's silence has been the sign of the answer.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Chambers, Oswald, Oswald Chambers Daily Thoughts for Disciples, Christian Literature Crusade, 1976, p. 75.