

Waiting: Reverence and Praise

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[0 : 00] So this morning what you're experiencing with daylight saving is equivalent to jet lag. I'm not kidding. I used to work for the Alberta Motor Association. We used to always talk about that. So you're getting jet lag this morning with no benefit of a warmer climate or a vacation.

So, but in all seriousness, take care as you travel the roads this week because people are tired and people have underestimated, I guarantee.

So good morning, Braymar Baptists. Thank you. My name is Ken Dixon, and it is my privilege to be the lead pastor here.

Now, this morning we'll be wrapping up our six-week series on waiting. I was talking to a friend of mine yesterday, and he said, so how's your first month been? And I said, well, it's been longer than that.

And he said, no, it hasn't. And I said, sure it has. I'm preaching my sixth sermon tomorrow. And he said, what? And I thought, six weeks, here we are. And six years from now, we'll think six weeks was nothing.

[1 : 04] So we've covered a lot of ground together in many ways, but I hope that you already have a sense that we've really just scratched the surface on the concept of waiting, both as human beings and as the people of God.

And as we wrap up this series this morning, I want to touch on one more important aspect, and that's the idea of perspective, the idea of waiting with reverence and praise.

Earlier in the series, I talked briefly about the fear of the Lord and what it means to us as we seek not only to draw nearer to God, but also to approach him with a balanced perspective and a correct attitude.

As the maker of all things, how appropriate that we sang a song with the children this morning talking about the maker loves us. The maker of all things.

God created us and our lives are utterly in his hands and literally in his hands. Every breath we take, as I was preparing this sermon, Connor thought I was going to talk about the police, if you know the band.

[2 : 12] Every breath we take, every blessing we receive every new day, it's all because of and thanks to God.

Amen? Knowing that God holds our ultimate destiny in his hands and that not only our salvation, but our daily bread, our daily breath is thanks to him.

How can we not fall on our faces with thanksgiving and reverence? But we're also not to become so paralyzed by that sense of overwhelming power that we miss also the overwhelming love that he has for each one of us.

He knows each of us so intimately, our joys and struggles, our faithfulness and our sin. That special way each of us have of struggling, complaining, as I talked about last week, resisting or pouting as he has asked us to wait.

And yet, my friends, he still loves us. And as we draw closer to Easter, and we'll explore together in our next series, God gets us.

[3 : 36] Because through Jesus, God completely understands your humanity. He understands your weaknesses and your temptation. He understands your selfishness, your impatience, your short attention span.

And yet, he still loves you. Psalm 33, verses 18 to 22, as we read, The eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him, on those whose hope, pardon me, is in his unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine.

We wait in hope for the Lord. He's our help and our shield. That's such a powerful image. In him, our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name.

And this prayer at the end, Are you hearing the message in these verses?

When we approach God in reverence and give him our full attention, seek him first, his attention, his full attention, is focused back on you.

[4 : 56] Right back at you. And I'm not suggesting that God only sees us when we decide to focus on or draw closer to him. Not at all. He is always there, and he never leaves us.

Because sadly, it's us who decide to wander off like a distracted child in a toy store. God's love covers our every need, from daily provision to our ultimate salvation.

And thankfully, I don't know about you, but neither of those things depend on anything we do. And that is encouraging to me. Because without God looking out for me, for me personally, both in this world and the next, I'd likely be in quite a mess.

There's also something fascinating at work here. We're told in Scripture that by fearing God, we can also put our hope in him.

So for us, fear and hope as humans are usually contradictions, aren't they? Those two concepts. Or at the very least, they conflict with each other. But it's in God, and only in God, where they seem to somehow be in perfect balance.

[6 : 20] As Andrew Murray says, in the presence and worship of God, they, meaning fear and hope, are found side by side in perfect and beautiful harmony.

And this, because in God himself, all apparent contradictions are reconciled. Righteousness and peace.

Judgment and mercy. Holiness and love. Infinite power and infinite gentleness.

A majesty that is exalted above all heaven. And a condescension that bows very low to meet and kiss each other.

It's in that balance of fear and hope, resisting our own urges and desires, and submitting to God's desires for us, where we truly experience God's will.

[7 : 31] Psalm 40, verses 1 to 3 says, I waited patiently for the Lord. He turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire.

He set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth. A hymn of praise to our God.

Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in him. So as many of us know, it's never been promised to us that waiting on God wouldn't be difficult or even painful.

Did you know that our English word patience is actually derived from the Latin word for suffering? I don't believe that's a coincidence. Waiting on God often means submitting to his will against our own will.

[8 : 40] It's awkward. It's uncomfortable. At times it's even terrifying. But as we see in these verses, it's when we focus on God and let go of a sense of needing to provide for ourselves that we truly begin to see his goodness and love for us.

If patience as you wait on God is not your gift, as I've said before, ask him for it. Don't be afraid to do that.

Don't be afraid to say, God, I don't get it. God, I don't understand. God, you're making me mad.

God, you're making me frustrated. What do I do? Ask him. He will help you.

If you're unsettled as you wait, ask God for comfort. Or better yet, ask him to reveal the root of your discomfort. He may be asking you to let go of something that you've got a tight grip on.

Or he may be asking you to step into something that you are consciously or unconsciously resisting. You're digging in your heels and saying, no, Lord, I won't do that.

[9 : 56] Submission to God's will for our lives leads to an amazing freedom from anxiety, from striving, from so many things that keep us awake at night.

Have you ever felt a true, deep sense of peace as you waited for someone? Knowing that you have a need and someone else has your back in some way and you can just completely trust them and let go of worrying about it?

Think about that for a minute. I was reflecting this week and I am so blessed that Michelle and I have the kind of balance in our relationship.

We have that balance. When I know she's got something covered, I can let it go. And she knows that that will free up valuable real estate in my mind.

And at times in my heart. And then I can focus on something else. Sometimes, heaven help me, I can focus on God, which is where I should be focusing.

[11 : 11] Or at times, I'm a guy, sometimes we need to focus on nothing at all. Ladies, if you ask your husband, what are you thinking about? Sometimes, nothing.

That's why there's reality TV. That's why we have sports. Sometimes we need to focus on nothing. And there's an amazing freedom and peace that we can have by trusting in someone else who cares for us, isn't there?

When you know someone else has your back. And that's the sense of peace and confidence that we can have as we wait on God. But the key is here that we have to let God.

We have to let him have control. We have to trust his will and trust that his plan for us, and I've said this before in this series, his plan for us is far greater, far better, far more exciting than any plan we can have for ourselves could ever hope to be.

There's also in these verses to me a sense of the great potential of witness we can have to the world when we wait on God and put our trust in him.

[12 : 28] Because our paths cross with so many people in our lives, sometimes without even realizing it. You have a conversation with somebody, if the peace of God comes across to them, they'll wonder what's different about you.

If your attitude is one of positivity versus complaining, they'll wonder. I have a friend who I went to university with, and still a good friend.

He said to me once, Ken, I don't believe what you believe, but I deeply respect what you believe, because he said, your actions match what you say you believe.

And he said, I'm not taking any credit, by the way. He said, you are passionate about what you believe. Your actions and your words are consistent with what you believe, and I respect you for that.

Didn't change his life that I know of. But it made a difference, and it planted a seed. One of our greatest witnesses to others is our attitude and perspective in any situation while we wait.

[13 : 41] Because our attitude can and should be different. But are we different as Christians? Are you different? This is conviction time.

Does our attitude reflect impatience and frustration? Or does it reflect confidence, peace, perhaps even praise?

Isaiah 26, verses 8 and 9 says, Yes, Lord, walking in the way of your laws, we wait for you.

Your name and renown are the desire of our hearts. My soul yearns for you in the night. In the morning, my spirit longs for you.

Bracketed. Your day is bracketed by focus on God. When your judgments come upon the earth, the people of the world learn righteousness.

[14 : 40] God's judgment will come. People will learn whether they've learned it before or not. It's our opportunity to help them see and help them learn through the way we behave.

And there's so much powerful instruction and direction in these verses because what are we supposed to do while we wait? We've talked about that in this series.

We need to focus on God, as I said previously, in prayers and by reading scripture. One of the greatest things that I've recognized about our church since I've come here, now I say our church, by the way, is that we are a church of prayer.

And I've heard from people that that's been a fairly recent development, the last six months to a year. We've become steeped in prayer. We smell of prayer. God loves that about us.

God will honor that. So do you see the perspective of reverence in these verses as well? The psalmist speaks of God's name and renown as the proper focus and desire of our hearts.

[16 : 00] Renown isn't a word, I was reflecting on this, renown isn't a word that we use very commonly these days. This day. Basically, it conveys a sense of being known by many people, being widely acclaimed.

being highly honored. Renown is very, very high praise and recognition. Is God renowned in our lives?

I have that question for you. Do we talk about him to everyone we know? Or is that something we're reluctant to do or we forget to do?

If you're a big movie fan, maybe you can imagine getting a chance to walk the red carpet at the Oscars and talk to your favorite actors.

Personally, I'd love to meet Tom Hanks one day. Or if you're a sports fan, maybe you think the idea of hanging out with Sidney Crosby or Connor McDavid or another athlete would be amazing.

[17 : 07] Being considered to be one of their inner circle, one of the people that they call when they just want to hang out, when they're out of the limelight. Being friends with someone famous has a great deal of interest and appeal for some of us, doesn't it?

Have you ever stopped to apply that perspective to your identity as a child of God? The one who created you, created all things, loves you more deeply and infinitely than any human parent could even remotely love you.

The one God, the creator of all things, Alpha and Omega, loves you.

And, here's the comfort part, he waits for you.

He waits with infinite patience, infinite understanding and infinite love.

[18 : 21] I love how so many of the Psalms smoothly transition from reverence to praise. And that's what we're called to do as well, even in our waiting.

Whatever you're waiting for, no matter how long you're waiting, return to God. Because he is worthy of our reverence.

He's worthy of our trust and commitment. And above all, he is worthy of our praise. And I think it's fitting that we complete our series on waiting with the words of Isaiah 40, 28 to 31.

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth.

He will not grow tired or weary. And his understanding, nothing no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.

[19 : 33] Even youths grow tired and weary and young men stumble and fall. But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint. You've likely recognized this as one of the most well-known passages in scripture on waiting.

And I've been saving it for this morning. Because this passage begins with such a joyful and exuberant proclamation of good news.

There's also a sense of conviction here for us. because how often do we proclaim our faith boldly?

Are we excited to share or are we afraid of rejection? Do we see it as someone else's job?

[20 : 39] Oh, I'm not good at evangelism. I really don't. Gosh, I'd rather. Oh, there's other people that are gifted in that. I'd encourage each of us to boldly ask God every day for the opportunity to share our faith with people.

With people in our lives who we have a connection with. Or people that we have a relationship with who just don't even know Jesus. And I'm not talking about Romans Road.

I'm not talking about giving them a tract. I'm not talking about flipping to your Bible and making it awkward. I'm talking about a relational connection you have with someone else that can help you build a relational connection between them and God.

If we care for someone else and want the best for them, would you agree that there's simply nothing greater that we can do for them than to introduce them to Jesus?

Jesus. And then this passage continues with such a great proclamation of the power and wisdom of God and the encouragement that for those who wait on God and put their hope in Him, that same power is available to them.

[22 : 04] in this series, we've considered many aspects of waiting and how we can take comfort in the presence and power of God with us while we wait.

We've also explored reorienting our perspective on waiting by seeking God and His will for our lives first. We've explored the importance of letting go of our own plans for our lives and how by seeking God first, we'll better be able to see Him at work in and through us.

Are we ready to say our series verse together? It's broken into three chunks, remember. Can we try it without? Wait for the Lord.

One chunk. Be strong and let your heart take courage. Yes. Perfect. One more time and then I'll actually give you the cheat.

Wait for the Lord. Not bad. Psalm 27 verse 14.

[23 : 25] Wait for the Lord. Be strong and let your heart take courage. Yes. Wait for the Lord. My hope is that through this series, this verse and the verses that we've shared over the past six weeks, some of this perspective change, this reminder that I've given all of us about waiting and

what it means to wait as people of waiting.

People who trust in God and have their faith in one eternal God who knows you better than anyone else. I hope that that is encouragement for you.

And as the people of Bramard Baptist Church, let's seek God first. Shola prayed that God would lead us in our next steps. Not that we would strive for, that we would plan for.

That's going to be part of it. But we want what God has for us next. As we look to him for the calling for the next chapter of our church.

Because we continue to be waiting people, my friends, but we wait together. As we continue in the season of Lent and approach Good Friday and Easter, we'll be starting a new series next week that I've called Famous Last Words, in which we'll explore the last seven phrases of Jesus from the cross, and how those powerful words apply to our lives today.

[25 : 12] Let's pray. Father God, thank you that you are our maker, and we know you, and you love us. Father, thank you that we are waiting people, but we do not wait alone.

We wait with you, we wait on you, we wait for you. Father, we pray your will be done in our lives, your will be done in the world through us, and that you will give us the power, the strength, and the courage to do that.

God, because it's in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen. So our benediction this morning comes from one of the verses that we covered this morning, which is Isaiah 40, 31.

those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary.

They will walk and not faint. My friends, we are waiting people, but we wait together, and we wait on God. Go in peace, and have a great week.

[26 : 27] God bless you.