

What Good is Waiting?

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[0 : 00] All right. This is going to be a sermon on waiting. Buckle up, strap yourselves in, ready for the next two hours.

All right, I'm not going to torture you like that, especially not our children's ministry workers who work faithfully and have to do a lot of waiting sometimes when I preach. But let me begin with prayer, and let's ask the Lord for help.

Our Father, I know that for many of us, waiting is hard. I pray, Lord, that just through kind of as we reflect on this subject of waiting in the Christian life, that we ourselves who find it hard to wait may start to see the good in it, may start to see that you are active in our waiting, and we too can be active.

That we ourselves may see that your kingdom, as BK read, it's like a farmer that plants seeds, and slowly, slowly, slowly a harvest is produced, a mustard seed that grows into a great garden plant. Lord, that is the world we are living in, that is the Christian life that we are living, and we need your help. And so I pray, give us eyes to see, ears to hear, a heart to understand, that all this waiting is not a sign of your neglect, and it is not a sign of your indifference, but as a sign of your love and your patience, as you are at work within us.

[1 : 46] Amen. Amen. Well, if there's anything that children love, boy, oh boy, it's hearing words like these from their parents.

You'll have to wait your turn, kiddo. Find a way to pass the time. We'll get there when we get there. And if there's anything adults love, it's hearing words like these.

All of our customer service agents are busy. Please stay on the line for the next available agent.

Our hours of operation are between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. Please call back tomorrow.

Please wait three to six months for your passport to be processed. Boo, no one likes waiting. Right? Don't you love being told to wait? Of course not.

Right? I don't even like waiting through a five-second ad to watch a YouTube video. What good is waiting? Well, I'm here this morning to assure you that, yes, waiting can, in fact, be a very good thing.

[2 : 54] It's interesting when you see waiting spoken of in the Bible, and as I was preparing for the sermon, it really struck me. Scripture talks a lot about waiting, and it associates waiting with words like patience, endurance, perseverance.

Confidence, steadfastness, trust, faith. Waiting can be hard, but waiting is where these things grow, and we are waiting for very good things if we persevere with faith.

And we know waiting can be a very good thing because, first, God himself chooses to wait. God himself chooses to wait. Perhaps you've never thought about that.

But Scripture makes it very clear that God himself chooses to wait. It happens right from the get-go. God did not create the world in the blink of an eye. Genesis chapter 1 makes it very clear.

He creates it over a span of time. That's something that bothered the ancient Greek philosophers who felt that God should have created the world just like that. Everything in an instant. But each day of the creation week, God speaks.

[4 : 07] The world is formed and filled. There is evening. Then there is morning again. And then God even chooses to rest on the seventh day of creation. God takes his time.

God waits to finish his work, step by step. When God decides to make a helper for the first man in Genesis chapter 2, God waits and watches and lets the man give names to all the livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field.

He waits for Adam to fulfill his instructions. He waits for Adam to learn that there is no suitable helper for him there before he then forms a wife for the man.

In Genesis chapter 3, Adam and Eve rebel against God by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The penalty? In the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die instant death. But God does not strike them down that day. He patiently waits. He approaches them first with questions. Where are you?

[5 : 16] Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? What is this that you have done? God asks questions and then he waits for them to answer.

It is in their answers that who they have become starts to emerge. The shameful, rebellious hearts of the man and the woman become revealed.

And as their descendants, as humanity grows from bad to worse, filling the land with their violence, God decides to purge the earth with a terrible flood. He saves only Noah and his family.

But even then, in the lead up to that flood, God does not lash out with instant destruction, sending the flood all at once. He gives them time.

Time to listen. Time to listen. Time to repent. Time to turn from their sins. In 1 Peter 3, verse 20, we are told, God's patience waited in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared.

[6 : 23] Centuries later, God called Abraham out of the land of his ancestors. God brought him into the promised land. And in Genesis chapter 15, verse 7, he tells Abraham, I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.

But here's the thing. The land is already occupied. There are already inhabitants. Canaanites, Amorites living there. The Lord did not drive out the inhabitants of the land before Abraham. Even though the people of this land, if you were to look at the list of terrible sins that they were guilty of, it would sicken you. It would horrify you.

And yet he told Abraham that he was waiting. Abraham's descendants, he said, shall come back here in the fourth generation for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.

Not yet. When that 400 years was up, God revealed himself to Abraham's descendants, the nation of Israel. God spoke to their leader Moses.

[7 : 32] And in Exodus chapter 34, verse 6, here is what he says. The Lord passed before him, before Moses, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

The Lord God says here that he is slow to anger. Now, many people love to claim that, oh, the God of the Old Testament, he's a God of wrath and anger.

You know, he just flies off the handle at people. Oh, he's so different from the loving God of the New Testament. First of all, when people say that, that tells me they don't understand their Bible at all.

They have not carefully read their New Testament. They certainly have not carefully read their Old Testament. Because such a claim betrays a careless reading of the Bible, and it betrays a lack of imagination.

A lack of putting yourself in God's shoes. Consider that the people of Israel broke their covenant with the Lord again and again and again, despite all the good that he was doing for them.

[8 : 41] And for hundreds of years, they would turn to idols again and again and again, and forsake him as their one true God. Let's put ourselves in God's shoes.

Imagine for a moment that you are married, and you discover your spouse has been perpetually unfaithful to you. How long would you put up with it?

A week? A month? A year? A lifetime? Could you endure an unfaithful spouse for hundreds of years?

The Lord God did that. That is the God of the Old Testament. How many adulteries would you put up with? One? Two?

Ten? Hundreds? The Lord endured with sin after sin, idolatry after idolatry, unfaithfulness after unfaithfulness beyond number.

[9 : 45] He persevered. He did not give up. He remained steadfast even when his people did not. He proved that he is slow to anger and abounding and steadfast love and faithfulness.

You see, the God of the Bible, the God of the Old Testament, is far more patient, far more willing to wait than you and I will ever be.

Only a delusional person would ever think they have more patience than this God. But we know that patience is not a virtue if it is unlimited.

Right? The whole point of patience is that you're waiting for something. Unlimited patience is nothing more than apathy. Unlimited patience is not seeking the good of the person that we're waiting for.

But God sought the good of his people. And God would at times act to discipline his people. For the Lord reproves him whom he loves as a father, the son in whom he delights.

[10:58] Yet still, he persevered with them until the time came that he was waiting and preparing for the time to send his own son into the world.

God sent his son, who is fully God, exactly like his father, and yet he is fully man at the same time. And as both God and man, his son, Jesus Christ, also knew how to wait. Jesus grieved at how many people refused to recognize him as their Lord and resisted and resisted.

In Mark 9, verse 19, Jesus cries out, O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you?

That is his lament. He endured with them, though they despised him and rejected him. Even his own disciples, the ones who should have figured out, the ones who should have been quick to accept him, even they were painfully, agonizingly slow to understand who he was.

[12:12] In Mark 8, verses 17 and 18, here's what Jesus asks them. Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Having eyes, do you not see?

Having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember? In John 14, verse 9, he asks one of his disciples, Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me?

Luke 24, verse 25, After he is crucified, has risen from the dead, he addresses two of his disciples, O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

And yet Jesus waited and hung in there with them. And he wasn't passive. He was active. He was patiently teaching and instructing and demonstrating again and again and again who he was. He did not give up on his disciples. He did not swear them off and walk away from them. He persevered with them. And even though he has ascended to heaven, that same Jesus is waiting even now.

[13:29] Jesus is waiting for the day that the Father has appointed for his return. The night before he was crucified, Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, what we sometimes call communion.

He broke bread for his disciples to eat and he passed around a cup to drink from. And then in Mark, chapter 14, verse 25, here's what Jesus says to them. Take note of this.

Truly I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

For 2,000 years, Jesus has not tasted the fruit of the vine. Jesus has deprived himself of that feast until the day when he comes again.

The day he has been waiting for. That day when we celebrate with him in the kingdom of God. And even now, Jesus Christ our Lord, he is eagerly waiting for that day. He is waiting for that day with more eagerness than you and I are.

[14:30] And why does he wait? He is waiting. He is waiting. He is waiting. He is waiting. He is waiting. To give opportunity for people everywhere to repent.

To turn from their sin. This is the clear teaching of Scripture. We look around at the world and it is easy to look at the world and to look at our own lives and to think that God is not troubled by our sin against him.

that it's okay. He is okay with our disregard for him. He's okay with our disobedience to his law. A lot of folks live their lives thinking God must be pretty happy with me.

I've talked with a few people living in disobedience to the Lord who are saying me and Jesus are okay they say. And why do they say that? Because their lives are going pretty well. So they assume things are okay.

We willingly misunderstand what is happening when we do that. We willingly misinterpret the heart of our God. We think that he is okay with sin when what's really happening is he is being unbelievably patient with each one of us.

[15:46] Whatever good you are enjoying in your life right now even the good you are not seeing and boy we have our eyes closed to a lot of good. We don't see it. but it all comes as a gift.

It is all grace. It all comes from a patient God. In Romans chapter 2 verse 4 we are asked we are challenged do you presume 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.

do not presume do not presume any longer that because there is much good happening in your life and you have received much good that therefore your way of life is utterly honoring and pleasing to God rather presume instead of presuming that instead look at it this way God has been endlessly kind and patient toward you so that you would open your eyes and see what he is like marvel at his goodness and see that he himself is choosing to wait and he is giving you opportunity to turn to him to believe in his son Jesus Christ to embrace his right paths to live a life of love toward him and toward one another he is giving you amazing opportunity and satisfying you with so many good things because that's who he is he has a patient heart

God's patience is on full display when the greatest sinners stop presuming on his kindness and instead humble themselves and repent the apostle Paul he was a man who by his own admission this is his own description of himself he was once a blasphemer persecutor and insolent opponent of Jesus Christ and his church how many of us would use those words to describe ourselves but he had the track record but the Lord waited with patience despite all that he was doing and one day he rescued Paul from his sin and so in 1st Timothy chapter 1 Paul wrote the saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the foremost but I received mercy for this reason that in me as the foremost

Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life that if the Lord can be patient with Paul and that is his heart towards him then that is his heart towards you and so God waits God delays the day of judgment God delays the return of his son relative to when we would make it happen he waits and in 2nd Peter chapter 3 verse 9 we are told the Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness but is patient toward you not wishing that any should perish but that all should reach repentance and then we're told in verse 13 according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells we are waiting it is that new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells that's what we ourselves are longing for we want God we ache for God to make all things new do we not so let us choose to wait for God let us choose to wait for God waiting for the Lord this is a necessary way of life for the Christian you cannot be a Christian without learning to wait it comes with the territory

[20 : 17] I know that's a hard thing for some of us that is a very hard thing to hear some of us find it harder to wait than others I think there in the Christian life some of us struggle with certain with certain sins with certain temptations more than others and some of you waiting is you know nobody likes it but some of you can you can do it a little more easily than others but you might find it harder to wait you might find it harder to wait if your natural temperament is you're a high energy hot tempered results oriented type A go getter you might find it harder to wait if your natural temperament is anxious emotionally volatile you're a black and white thinker you might find it harder to wait if you are an easily addicted fun loving wild at heart thrill seeking personality patience and perseverance they're going to be difficult for you so what I'm saying is you know we understand and the Lord is patient with us even as we learn patience patience and perseverance are going to be difficult to you learning to wait is going to be hard but if you would follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ you will have to learn it this is not optional you cannot live the Christian faith without learning to wait because waiting on the Lord is a core component of the Christian life what many of us want is not to wait at all right we want candy and we want it now we want money and we want it now we want status and success and we want it now we want good health and we want it now we want relief from our sorrow and pain and we want it now we want answers for our questions and we want those answers now we want answers for our prayers and we want them now

We want that feeling of certainty, of having arrived, having everything worked out, and we want it now. We want to live by sight, experiencing these good things now, seeing them right there in front of us, having them.

But our God is wiser than that. He is teaching us to live in faith, and he's teaching us to live in hope. We learn to exercise trust in him, like building a muscle of faith, as we wait for good things, as we wait for answers.

We learn to walk step by step through times of darkness and uncertainty. In 2 Corinthians 5, verse 7, we are told that to be a Christian is to walk by faith, not by sight.

[23 : 20] We learn to look toward the future, waiting with great expectations. And Paul talks about that in Romans chapter 8, verses 23 through 25. He says, We are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to return.

We are waiting for a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Oh, we want that righteousness now. We want our justice now. We want all the good now.

And yet, here we're told, it is not going to fully come until the Lord returns.

We're told in James chapter 5, Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains.

You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged.

[25 : 03] Behold, the judge is standing at the door. As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast.

You have heard of the steadfastness of Job. And you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

That full relief that you long for, that total justice you long for, when all things are made right, it is being delayed. Good news, though.

Some relief, some justice may be nearer than you might think. There is a kingdom that is yet to come in which righteousness dwells. And yet, in some ways, it is already present.

It starts to show up in bits and pieces here in this present age. It's almost like it trickles back in time into our world. God has given the first fruits of the Spirit.

[26 : 08] God is at work, even in the here and now. And sometimes you catch a glimpse of that life in that future kingdom that you were waiting for. Sometimes you catch just a breath of fresh air from that far-off country.

The Lord provides financially. The Lord heals your body. The Lord gives you some justice, even in this present age.

Even for these blessings, you must wait for them in their proper season. In Psalm 37, verses 7 through 9, we're promised these things.

Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him. Fret not yourself over the one who prospers in His way, over the man who carries out evil desires.

Refrain from anger and forsake wrath. Fret not yourself. It tends only to evil. For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land.

[27 : 16] As you hope for justice to come, you wait. You are trusting that God will bring it in His time, in its proper season.

And in its proper season, it will come. It will certainly come on the final judgment day, and perhaps some of it will come even sooner in this life as well. But, oh, we are warned by this.

Do not race headlong toward vengeance, toward forcing justice at any cost, toward demanding your pound of flesh.

Refrain from anger. Forsake wrath. Fret not yourself. It tends only to evil. And I have seen people try to pursue justice, try to get it now, and I have never seen that end well.

Not even once. trying to attain justice in the flesh, apart from the power of the Spirit, who works often in ways a little bit slower than we would like.

[28 : 25] often, when we do that, we become the very evil that we wish to correct. Instead, in Romans chapter 12, verse 12, Paul tells us, rejoice in hope.

Be patient in tribulation. Be constant in prayer. As you wait for God, you are told, be constant in prayer.

Prayer is the starting point of action. Prayer is what you do to wait. You pray because you know that the only good that can be done must be done by the work of the Holy Spirit.

You pray with perseverance and with patience, trusting that God will answer in the right time and the right season if you do not give up.

You follow Paul's instructions in Colossians chapter 4, verse 2. Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

[29 : 38] You keep your eyes open, watchful to see what good is God doing right now. What good starts to show up as I pray? And often that good shows up in unexpected places.

Oh, how many times have, when I've counseled people, they talk about God is not answering my prayers, God's not doing anything, God's not doing anything. And I'm like, are you kidding? Look at this, this, this. And they had blinders on.

They had in their mind, God has to answer my prayer in this way, in this way, and he's not. I said, but do you not see how his grace is showing up in your life in little bits and pieces here and here and here, and you do not have eyes to see it?

You write down what God has done because we're so quick to forget, so quick to filter out in our memories all the good the Lord has done for us. You write down so you can remember.

I actually keep a journal because I've got a terrible memory and I lose, I would like all of my life would disappear into a fog if I didn't journal. And the reason I started doing that consistently is because I realized I was going to forget all that the Lord has done for me.

[30 : 47] And I don't want to forget. And you read the Bible to remind yourselves of the promises of God and how he makes all his promises come true.

And in all this, you wait because God wants us to wait. He knows that as you wait, what's in your heart starts to come out.

What's in your heart is revealed. Whatever fear and anxiety and anger and despair that are in there, they emerge as you wait. And as they emerge, now the Lord works on your heart.

Now the Lord will lovingly deal with them. Your trust and your patience and your perseverance are built up as you wait.

If you're a parent, think of your children. Think about when they were toddlers. For some of you, a few of us, that's maybe a present reality.

[31 : 50] But what would have happened if you gave your toddlers whatever they wanted all at once and they never had to wait for it? All right, parents, what would happen? Would your toddler have ever matured?

I mean, physically, yeah. You know, they're going to grow up physically. But in their spirit, would they have remained? Would they not have remained childish?

Would they not become spoiled? Immature? Waiting is how God matures you. If you want to be mature, you will have to wait.

In James 1, verses 2 through 4, we are told to wait as we endure trials and temptations. He says, count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. That's James' way of saying, so that you may grow up.

[33 : 03] Do you wish to grow up in Christ? Do you wish to be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing? Do you wish to become as much like Jesus Christ as any human being can possibly be?

Is that the ambition of your heart? Then you must learn to be steadfast. You must learn to wait for the Lord to work, to remain obedient, to resist sin in that time of tension as you wait.

As James promises, blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

And then he tells us, know this, my beloved brothers, let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. Slow down. God has waited patiently for us.

[34 : 23] We are waiting for him. So let us choose to wait for one another. Let us choose to wait for one another. What the Lord has done for us, we in turn do for one another.

This is the way that the church is meant to be shaped by the character, the patient character of our God. We take on his character, his disposition.

As he is holy, we become holy, just like our father. And so we become quick to hear, slow to speak. This isn't just for counselors.

In my role as a counselor, I admit, I confess, I've had to learn to do this a lot. I am helped. I have a little bit of a natural advantage in that I'm actually kind of a slow thinker anyway, which doesn't always help me, but in that setting, it does, because I have to give the other person lots of room to speak, because I have no idea what to say.

So I just sit and listen. And the Lord, the Spirit, He provides the wisdom in time, in season. There are times when I feel like I do have the answer right away.

[35 : 34] And those times, I have to learn to resist that temptation to be quick to speak, quick to anger, and not to listen. Slow down, listen, ask questions.

Instead of responding quickly in anger, learning to respond instead with curiosity. Doing my best to understand rather than react. If you would be like Jesus, if you would walk by the Spirit of God, you

must learn to do the same.

You don't listen just so you can quickly fix the other person's problems. You don't listen so you can just jump in and defend yourself, listening for that opening. You don't listen so that you can hijack the conversation to turn it into what you want to talk about.

You are quick to hear, slow to speak. And as you give the other person space, space to talk, space to open up, their true heart begins to emerge.

And when the time comes, you will now have opportunity to speak into their heart, to address the real person. This is why we choose to wait for one another.

[36 : 54] We also come to one another without impatient demands, without insisting on total and immediate change now. Oh boy.

When we see, I mean, come on, we've all got that friend or that family member where we're like, oh boy, they need to change. And now, all at once, and so we come in like a wrecking ball.

Wham! With strong words, with a raised voice, trying to overpower them, trying to break them.

And boy, they do, they know that that's what we're coming at them with. What do you think they do? They get defensive. Because when you can see a wrecking ball coming at you, you're not just going to take it.

Our impatience leads to ugly and colossal resistance, but Proverbs 25, verse 15, it tells us this, with patience, a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue will break a bone.

[38 : 02] Paul also gives this advice, 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 14, and we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.

That's the verse that shapes my counseling and my pastoring probably more than any other. It tells us this, different people require different approaches. Some people are idle and unruly, and they need to be admonished.

Some people are faint-hearted and they need encouragement. Some people are just weak and they just need help. All of them require patience.

It is rare that somebody in your life will go from 0% obedience to 100% obedience overnight. If that is what you were expecting to happen, that, oh, they just need that burst of insight and then they'll start doing everything right.

Oh, no, no, no, no. If I demand instant change, instant, 100% transformation all at once, I am going to exasperate the person who is just starting out on a road of learning how to trust and obey.

[39 : 26] In fact, the Bible is clear that anyone who tries to push and force someone with an impatient, aggressive spirit, that person is not qualified, and so you can hold us accountable to this as elders, that person is not qualified to hold the position of elder in the church.

2 Timothy 2, verses 24-26, the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome, but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness.

God may perhaps grant them repentance, leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil after being captured by him to do his will.

It may take some time for people to come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil. I've rarely seen it happen overnight.

There's often a long process of breaking loose from his lies that they have embraced and believed. They may need a lot of gentle, patient correction.

[40 : 39] They may turn from their sin gradually, bit by bit. Their repentance may take a while to come into full force. This is a message not just for pastors.

This is a message for parents, spouses, friends. You may have to wait for your children to learn to obey.

You may have to wait for your spouse to learn to love and respect you well. You may have to wait for your friend to turn from anxiety or unbelief and start pursuing the Lord wholeheartedly again.

And as you wait, you learn to look at the other person with the eyes of faith. The eyes of faith see people differently. A biblical counselor, Bob Callum, and he recently described this in a way that I found very helpful.

He described this, imagine a teacher who, you know, back in the day when they actually used real paper and, you know, wrote things on it. Imagine a teacher who's got a red pen and a yellow highlighter.

[41 : 49] Which do you use first? You can mark up that paper with a red pen and, boy, you can go to town quick to point out everywhere everything that's wrong there, all the mistakes, correct them,

correct every last little spelling error, correct all the bad grammar, collect all the unclear thoughts, correct all the, correct all these things that are wrong, all the facts that they got wrong, all the bad arguments.

Some of us approach relationships that way. Red pen, red pen, red pen, all over everything. Quick to correct, quick to neg, quick to criticize for every fault.

I'm doing the Lord's work. But we ought to be far more earnest. And there is a time when you do need to correct. That red pen does need to come out, doesn't it?

But we ought to be far more earnest than using a yellow highlighter. Be eager to find and identify what's good. Be quick to celebrate and affirm whatever good you see, quick to call it what it is, the gracious spirit of God at work in people's life.

Highlight, highlight, highlight. If you doubt that, read the epistles, read the letters that the apostle Paul and the other apostles wrote. And he would write to these churches that you'd look at them and you're like, this is the exact kind of church that is so full of hypocrites, so full of horrible stuff going on, you would think that Paul would swear off this church and just be done with it, and yet he will so often start with, hey, I thank God for you, for this and this and this, before he breaks out the red pen.

[43 : 33] He starts with the highlighter. Highlight, highlight, highlight. That is the attitude of love. love. 1 Corinthians 13, verses 4 through 7.

Love is patient and kind. Love does not envy or boast. It is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way. It is not irritable or resentful.

It does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures.

all things. Love is learned in the waiting. If you do not know how to wait in all these ways, then you do not know how to love.

And because love knows how to wait, love knows how to forgive. Colossians 3, verses 12 and 13. Put on them as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, because you are chosen, holy, beloved.

[44 : 44] Put on compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another, and if one has a complaint against each other, forgiving each other.

as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. With a patient heart, you wait for the other person to mature and to grow.

You bear with their messy growth, that two steps forward, one step back. Sometimes it feels like two steps forward, two steps back. You learn how to forgive their offenses against you, because the Lord has forgiven you.

He has been patient towards you, and so you are called, you who know his heart, are called to do the same for other people. And in turn, if you are the one who is guilty of sin against another person, you don't presume on their forgiveness.

This is a pattern that is unfortunately quite common, and especially common among people with an abusive mindset, presuming on forgiveness. You do not demand immediate forgiveness, immediate reconciliation, manipulate people to get it, and you certainly don't demand immediate trust.

[46 : 04] You wait patiently as the other person processes, as the other person grieves the wrongdoing, as they ask God for help to let go and forgive.

You wait, you persevere in earnest obedience as you steadily work to earn their trust again. You choose to wait, knowing that there are no shortcuts in the Christian life.

There are no shortcuts to trust. There are no shortcuts to maturity. There are no shortcuts to wisdom. The Christian life is not about finding shortcuts. The Christian life is about waiting.

And this is because God has given the Holy Spirit, His very own Spirit, who is working to produce what is good in you. And to do that, He is causing you to learn how to wait.

But we want to be saved immediately. We want help immediately. We want things to change immediately. But the Lord, and the Lord sees that. The Lord wants things to change too.

[47 : 08] In fact, He wants it even more than you do, believe it or not. He wants more for you than just that. He wants you to change.

And He is patiently at work so that you will change. And as you learn to wait, here's good news. There is a, there is in turn even more good waiting for you than you could have ever believed possible.

We have settled for so much less when we try to take shortcuts. We want God to act now, now, now. When you want other people to change now. In Galatians 5 verses 22 through 23, we read that there is fruit of the Spirit that grows over time in your life.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Is waiting worth it? If that's what it takes for the Holy Spirit to make this kind of person in you. If you could be that kind of person, would the wait be worth it?

[48 : 24] What do you think? Yes or no? If you could be the kind of person that someone would look at you and say, you, I see in you love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

I see these things in you. They weren't there before and now they are. Would the wait be worth it? And we are promised that this fruit is going to grow if we wait patiently, if we persevere, if we remain steadfast.

A little farther down in Galatians chapter 6 verse 7 and 9, Paul continues to tell us, do not be deceived. God is not mocked for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption. But the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

And let us not grow weary of doing good for in due season we will reap if we do not give up. you will reap the fruit of the Spirit and you will reap eternal life.

[49 : 44] Life forever. The good life. If you wait and you learn patience, endurance, perseverance, steadfastness, trust, and faith, you will find that the waiting is worth it.

and there is coming so much good that not even the Bible can begin to describe it. Remember what we read in 2 Peter chapter 3 verse 13.

According to his promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. We are waiting for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

What a world it will be when he is with us forever and ever. What good is waiting? Well, waiting is hard. Oh, does it bring a lot of good with it.

It is good for you. What good will waiting bring you? More than you can ever imagine. Waiting is the work of God. God himself chooses to wait.

[50 : 46] So let us choose to wait for God. Let us choose to wait for one another. Our God, we come to you confessing our impatience, our short fuses, our lack of endurance, our faithlessness, our mistrust towards you, our unbelief.

We need hope. We need faith to wait. Open our eyes to see, first of all, this is who you are, a God who is patient, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love.

Open our eyes to see again and again that you are a God who has been patient with us, has been kind and gracious, towards everyone.

towards everyone. Open our eyes, Lord God, to see how we can, where we are called to wait, to learn how to pray, to learn how to pray together as we wait.

Open our eyes to see as we pray when the time comes to begin to act. Lord God, as your spirit is at work in us, as you are at work to bear the fruit of the spirit in our lives, to set us free from our idols, to set us free from allegiance to anything and everything except you.

[52 : 27] Lord, may we be patient as we are transformed, be patient with one another. Lord, may we be people who are known for our ability to hang in there and to wait because we have confidence in you and our hope is that we have so much good that is waiting for us in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

that your spirit, that this power that your spirit gives us in the wisdom and gives us just that first taste of the glory that is going to be revealed.

We long for that, Lord God. We say, come, Lord Jesus, and as we cry out, we wait. Amen.