

WAITING

Sunday, April 26, 2020

Most of us find ourselves in a place of waiting right now. Waiting for things to change, waiting for Covid to go away, waiting for test results, waiting for restrictions to be lessened, waiting for a stimulus check to come in, waiting for unemployment to start, waiting for the economy to get started again, waiting for a furlough to end, waiting for business to open up again, waiting for our kids to go back to school, waiting for public church services.

But waiting isn't something relegated to the circumstances surrounding the corona virus pandemic. We are all too familiar with waiting - and we do not like it. Men and women throughout the scriptures were also familiar with waiting. And they didn't like it either.

*Remember that {**Abraham**} waited until he was {100 years} old for the son she had {longed for}; **Moses** waited for 40 years on the backside of the desert for God's call; **Joseph** languished in prison for 15 years before God vindicated him. Even **Paul spent 17 years in preparation** before he began the ministry that God called him to on the road to Damascus.*

The Psalmist sums it up perfectly when he says...

Psalm 130:5-6 (NIV)

5 I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope. **6** I wait for the Lord

How good are you at waiting? Do we know how to wait? What processes are taking place while we are waiting? What does God want us to do while we are waiting?

For the next several weeks I want to share with you what I believe The Word of God has to say about waiting. We will look at various types of waiting, how we can wait with faith and expectation and what God may be doing through it all

As we do, I want us to keep three truths in mind...

In every kind of waiting, in each situation that we may face in our lives there is...

- **What is going on AROUND us** (The facts and realities surrounding our situation)

- **What is going on INSIDE us** (The thoughts, feelings, emotions, responses, fears, plans, battles, and hopefully spiritual development going in inside of us)
- **What is going on INSPITE of us** (Bigger than what is going on around us and more than what is going on inside us. Both God and the Enemy have a plan. We may not see it; we may not completely understand it; but at the very least we should be aware of it)

WAITING FOR PROVISION

1 Kings 17:1-16 (NIV)

Elijah Announces a Great Drought

17 Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word.”

Elijah Fed by Ravens

2 Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah: **3** “Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. **4** You will drink from the brook, and I have directed the ravens to supply you with food there.”

5 So he did what the Lord had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. **6** The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.

Elijah and the Widow at Zarephath

7 Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. **8** Then the word of the Lord came to him: **9** “Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food.” **10** So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, “Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?” **11** As she was going to get it, he called, “And bring me, please, a piece of bread.”

12 “As surely as the Lord your God lives,” she replied, “I don’t have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.”

13 Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make

something for yourself and your son. **14** For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord sends rain on the land.’”

15 She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. **16** For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah.

Here are some things we need to remember when we are waiting for Provision

1. God knows what we need before we need it

Matthew 6:25-32 (NIV)

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life^[a]?”

²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you— you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

Let’s consider the Hagar’s experience with God. When she became pregnant with Abrahams child, Sarah became jealous and mistreated her. Genesis 16 tells us she ran away. Alone, probably scared and wondering what she was going to do, God met her at a spring in the desert.

Genesis 16:7-11, 13-14 (NIV)

⁷ The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. ⁸ And he said, “Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?”

“I’m running away from my mistress Sarai,” she answered.

⁹ Then the angel of the LORD told her, “Go back to your mistress and submit to her.” ¹⁰ The angel added, “I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count.”

¹¹The angel of the LORD also said to her:

“You are now pregnant
and you will give birth to a son.
You shall name him Ishmael, {God hears},
for the LORD has heard of your misery.

¹³She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: “You are the God who sees me,” for she said, “I have now seen^[c] the One who sees me.” ¹⁴That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi {Well of the living one who sees me}; it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered.

God hears, God sees, and God knows exactly what we need before we even need it. Not only does He know what we need before we need it; He knows when we need it.

“We look at the clock, God looks at the calendar” – Andy Stanley

Which brings up the issue of timing... It is God’s timing not ours. Our waiting might be short, or our waiting might be long but remember... God hears, God sees, and God knows exactly what we need before we even need it and when we need it.

2. Provision doesn't always look the same from day to day

- Provision can be **NATURAL**

Waiting on God’s provision is not an excuse for being lazy and doing nothing. In fact, one of the ways that provision comes into our lives is through hard work. At the start of this drought, God told Elijah to GO to the **Kerith** Ravine and to **DRINK** from the brook. The provision at this point is very natural and depends on Elijah’s participation through work.

Proverbs 13:4 (ESV)

⁴The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied.

God expects us to work

Proverbs 12:11 (ESV)

¹¹Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits lacks sense.

2 Thessalonians 3:10 (ESV)

¹⁰For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.

- Provision can be **Extraordinary**

God's provision of meat and bread from the ravens was an extraordinary means of providing for Elijah's needs

- Provision can be **Supernatural**

Later, when God used the widow's handful of flour and little bit of olive oil to feed her, her son and Elijah for many months, the provision was supernatural

*I encourage you to read the rest of 1 Kings 17, 18 and 19 to find even more evidence of God's provision both Naturally, Extraordinarily and supernaturally

- ✓ The provision of healing for the widow's son who died
- ✓ The provision made for 100 prophets through Obadiah's hard work
- ✓ The provision of victory over the prophets of Baal on Mt Carmel
- ✓ The provision of rain
- ✓ The provision of food and strength for Elijah when he ran from Jezebel

3. It requires trust and obedience

Can you imagine how challenging it would have been for Elijah and the widow of Zarephath to trust God and obey his instructions. But because they did both were miraculously provided for.

I have always cherished David's words in Psalm 37

Psalm 37:25 (NIV)

²⁵I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.

So, as we wait, we trust and as we wait, we obey... Abraham did. When God told him to sacrifice his son, his only son whom he loved, Abraham trusted in the goodness of God who had provided that son in the first place. He obeyed the word of the Lord and set out for Mount Moriah. When Isaac asked him why they had wood and fire for the sacrifice but no lamb, Abraham replied. "The Lord will provide" – Jehovah Jireh. And HE DID!!!

And God will provide for us as well as we trust and obey. Listen it may seem counterintuitive to let go of what we have when we already don't have enough (like tithing and giving to others) but like the widow, I believe generosity can be the key to opening the door for provision

Proverbs 11:25 (NIV)

²⁵A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.

4. Provision is dependent on God's goodness not ours

The righteous are not preserved from the effects of sin in this world or the judgements of God nor do they escape the trial of waiting

Not based on what we deserve but on God's goodness

Psalm 103:10 (NIV)

¹⁰ he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.

Romans 8:32 (NIV)

³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

Philippians 4:19 (NIV)

¹⁹ And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.