

## Please Wait

Romans 8:23-25

### Preface

Illus: Play on hold message and music.

None of us like to be put on hold. Even as you were listening to the recording just played, I'll bet your blood pressure was beginning to rise. You were probably thinking, "You've made your point now get on with it."

Most of us do not like waiting for anything. We live in the day of fast everything and waiting for anything just isn't cool. I must confess I don't like waiting either. I don't like standing in line at the bank or post office and I sure don't like waiting in traffic.

Illus: Pam jokingly says my problem is not that I have to be first but that I can't stand to be second.

There is casual everyday waiting and there is the more serious and difficult waiting. I am afraid I can't help you much with the everyday waiting. However, God's word has some important things to say about the more serious life challenges and waiting upon God's timing.

### Scripture

*<sup>23</sup> Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. <sup>24</sup> For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. Romans 8:23-25 NIV*

### Introduction

Christians often find themselves having to patiently wait for things which they long to have resolved.

There's the waiting of a single person to see if God has marriage in store for him or her.

There's the waiting of a childless couple who desperately wants to start a family but day after day, week after week, their prayers seem to go unanswered.

There's the waiting of someone who longs to have work that's meaningful and significant, but the opportunities don't come.

There's the waiting of a spouse that's trapped in a hurting marriage that seems unlikely to change.

There is the waiting of those who are suffering from an illness and long to be well and able to return to their normal lifestyle.

Quote: Lewis Smedes described waiting like this: "Waiting is our destiny. As creatures who cannot by themselves bring about what they hope for, we wait in the darkness for a flame we cannot light. We wait in fear for a happy ending that we cannot write. We wait for a 'not yet' that feels like a 'not ever.'"

Waiting on God can be difficult. It challenges our faith. But, waiting on God is extremely important to our growth as a Christian.

### 1. Waiting on God requires obedience to Him

When we turn to the Bible, God himself - God who's all-powerful, all wise, and all loving - assures us over and over that we are to be obedient and wait upon Him.

Psalm 37:7: "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him." Wait for the Lord, the Psalmist goes on, keep to his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land.

God comes to Abraham. Abraham is old and God says, "Abraham, you're going to become a father. You'll be the ancestor of a great nation." But it won't happen today, it won't happen tomorrow. You know how long it was before that promise came true? Twenty-four years. Think about being told you're about to become a parent—and then waiting 24 years. **That's how long Abraham had to wait.**

So the Messiah came. Jesus lived and taught among the people. His disciples kept waiting for him to bring in the kingdom the way they expected, to right all the wrongs. But he was crucified.

He's getting ready to ascend, and so they ask again, "Are you going to restore the kingdom? Is our waiting over now?"

Jesus had one more command, in Acts 1. He says, “Don’t leave Jerusalem, but wait.” So they did. They waited in the upper room, and the Holy Spirit came. **What if they had not waited on God?**

But that didn’t mean the time of waiting was over for the human race as we see Paul writes in our text today.

We wait and we wait. **Forty-three times in the Old Testament the people are commanded, “Wait upon the Lord.”**

This runs all the way through the Bible to the very last words. In the last chapter of Revelation, John closes by saying, “The one who testifies to these things says, ‘Behold, I am coming soon.’” It may not seem like it, but in light of eternity, it’s soon. Hang on. And then John writes, “Amen, even so. Come Lord Jesus.”

Like it or not, waiting is part of the Christian life and waiting requires obedience.

Question: Why does God make us wait? If he can do anything and if he’s all-loving, why doesn’t he bring us relief and answer our prayers immediately?

The answer to that question is the essence of this sermon and it is worth noting. **What God does in us while we wait is more important than that for which we are waiting.**

Paul says while we’re waiting for God to set everything right, we suffer. But suffering produces perseverance, and perseverance produces character, and character produces hope. God is producing these qualities in us while we wait.

What this means is that biblically, waiting is not just something we have to do until we get what we want. **Waiting is part of the process of becoming who God wants us to be.**

Biblical waiting is not all-passive. It is not waiting around with our hands in our pockets. We must be active in serving and working towards our goal with responsibility. But we must also be willing to wait on God’s timing and results.

Waiting on the Lord is a confident, disciplined, expectant, active, sometimes painful process of clinging to God.

Waiting on the Lord is the continual, daily decision to say, “God, I will trust you and I will obey you even though the circumstances of my life are not where I want them.

Waiting on God means saying, “I’m betting everything on you, God, and there is no Plan B. I will be obedient.”

## 2. Waiting on God requires trusting Him

Waiting on the Lord requires patient trust. Will I trust that God has good reasons for telling me to wait? I don’t know what they are. But will I trust that God knows what he’s doing.

Peter explains this in 2 Peter 3:8-9; “But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord, one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise as some think of slowness but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.”

God has a different perspective and thus a different time table from us. God’s has His own divine timing.

Illus: A business man read this passage and was quite amazed. He decided to have a sly conversation with God.

“Lord, is it true that a thousand years for us is just like one day to you?”

The Lord said, “Yes.”

The man said, “Is it true that a million dollars to us must be like one penny to you.”

The Lord said, “Well, yes.”

The man said, “Well, Lord, will you give me one of those pennies?”

The Lord said, “Yes but you will have to wait a day for it.”

**That is the way we are. We want God’s resources and blessings but we don’t want his timing. We want the fortune but not the wait.** We want his work, but we don’t want his calendar.

**We forget that his work in us while we wait is more important than that for which we are waiting.**

Waiting means you must trust that God knows what he’s doing.

Illus: Perhaps you are single and you feel the pain of loneliness. You feel a legitimate longing for intimacy. Waiting is so hard, and maybe there’s a relationship at your fingertips that promises to take that loneliness away. But you know that relationship will not honor God. Maybe you know in your heart that this is not the right person. Maybe this person does not share your commitment to God. Will you wait on God and trust His timing?

Maybe you are madly in love with someone and eager to get married. Will you wait for the marriage in God’s sight before you

live together? Or, will you miss the blessing God has in store for you because you cannot wait on God? Sadly, many young couples pay a great price today for this mistake. Will you wait on God and trust His word?

Perhaps you are in a marriage that is struggling and divorce seems to be the simple way out. Others tell you divorce is not the solution and God's word tells you divorce is not the solution. But, you want relief now. Will you wait on God and trust His timing?

Perhaps you are struggling in other areas such as your job or health. Will you wait on God and trust His timing?

Whatever your circumstance, will you wait on the Lord? Will you courageously say, "OK, God. I will take you at your word. I will not make the mistake of choosing the world's solutions. I will seek to build the best life I can right here where I am. Not knowing what tomorrow holds and even though I sometimes feel like nobody in the world understands how painful it is, **I'll trust you. I will wait upon you.**"

## Conclusion

*<sup>31</sup>But those who <sup>b</sup>wait on 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 NKJ*

Illus: They say an eagle knows when a storm is approaching long before it breaks? The eagle will fly to high spot and wait for the winds to come. When the storm hits, it sets its wings so that the wind will pick it up and lift it above the storm. While the storm rages below, the eagle is soaring above it. The eagle does not escape the storm; it simply uses the storm to lift it higher.

You and I cannot escape life's storms. They are sure to come. But the storms need not overcome us. We can rise above the storms by Obeying and Trusting God.

Will you wait with obedience and trust God?

Will you experience what God has in store for you or will you attempt your own desperate shortcuts and miss all that God's has planned for you?