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SERMON TITLE While You're Waiting

SERIES

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KEY SCRIPTURE Proverbs 13:12

SYNOPSIS There is a purpose in the waiting period.

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ While You're Waiting

Proverbs 13:12

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.

This verse talks about two seasons of our life: a season of waiting and a season of fulfillment. Inevitably all of us go through both these seasons in life.

We all go through periods of waiting in our life. We keep hoping for the best things to come our way, although sometimes nothing seems to happen. Not everyone waits for the same thing. Some wait for a long time to find a spouse, some to have a child, some to get a job, some to buy a house, some to get a promotion, some to see a promise from God fulfilled. Whatever the reason for the wait may be, King Solomon here says the season of waiting is not easy. In fact, he says it makes our hearts sick.

Again...nobody likes to wait. Waiting isn't fun. It isn't enjoyable. It's hard. It's discouraging, it's ☞ confusing, it's testing, it's challenging. There are at least **three dangers during a season of deferred hope.**

1. Depression. This is the simplest meaning of the text where it is called a sick heart. It's discouraging and depressing when we have to wait for something, especially if it's a long time in coming.

☞ **2. Hindered prayer life.** A sick heart is sick in more than one way. A dangerous result of a long wait is that some people turn away from God in that situation. When you've been waiting for something that God promised and it gets to be a long time in coming, you may tend to give up and even walk away from God.

☞ **3. It provides an opening for a spiritual infection.** A long wait can be like an open wound. Germs get in through wounds. If we are not careful an infection of temptation or even unbelief can slip in through that wound. Be careful in a season of depression that you don't go looking for solace in all the wrong places. Hope deferred has led to many a single person shacking up or marrying an ungodly person. Hope deferred has led to many returning to alcohol and drugs.

So, when you're in a waiting season you must be on your guard to keep the faith and remain faithful to the Lord. As Christians, we have a purpose behind our waiting. Maybe you don't ☞ understand, but God has a purpose. **Why does God give this waiting period? What does He want us to do during the waiting period?** Here a few thoughts:

☞ **1. God is preparing you for His purposes.** During your waiting period, God is working on you. He is also working on your circumstance. He prepares you and your circumstances for the future He has planned.

Moses was 80 years old when he led the people of Israel out of Egypt. His first 40 years were spent in the palace and the next 40 years in the wilderness (A total contrast!). Why didn't God call Moses to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt when he was 40 years old? By then, it was



clear he had zeal for the Hebrews and was willing to defend them. Why did God wait until he was 80?

There was a purpose. During those 40 years that Moses was in the wilderness, God was working on his character. At 40, Moses was young and energetic. However, his character was not refined. He was an angry man. He saw an Egyptian and a Hebrew man fighting and he killed the Egyptian. He saw two Israelites fighting, and he went to be their judge but was rejected. Imagine if that same angry Moses had led the people out of Egypt. He probably would have killed half the stiff-necked Israelites himself!

So, it was important for God to work on his character. During those 40 years in the wilderness, Moses was becoming more and more humble. He was getting ready for God's greatest call for his life. And do you know how the angry Moses was later described in the Bible? Numbers 12:3 says, Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.

Look at the life of Joseph. He had a dream and a vision about his future from God. But everything that was happening in his life was completely opposite. Imagine what would have been in Joseph's mind when he first got the vision of his family bowing down to him. He could have easily become conceited, thinking he would somehow take over his own clan. But God had a totally different and bigger plan. God wanted to exalt Joseph, not in the land of Canaan, but in the land of Egypt so he could save two nations, including own household from famine.

In order for that plan to be fulfilled, it was necessary for Joseph to wait in prison until the day appointed by God. The prison experience helped Joseph get closer to God.

Or look at the life of David. David was anointed when he was very young. But he did not immediately become king. He had to wait until he was 30. Do you know why? It was a time of preparation.

We live in a generation that wants everything now. Quick delivery. Wish today, order now, get it tomorrow. Amazon even has same day delivery now. But, God's promises do not work that way. There is a process involved.

☞ During the waiting seasons, God prepares you for the task that he has called you to. **He works on your skills, your abilities, and your character.** Are you waiting? Cheer up. God is working on you and your circumstances for something important.

Jeremiah 29:11 – “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” God is preparing you for his purposes.

☞ **2. Be faithful during your waiting seasons.** This is the season of life when most people are tempted to take shortcuts. You want to see your dream come into reality, and sometimes can't wait. Remember those dangers we already talked about? Be careful and remember, **God is looking at your attitude during the waiting season.**



Sarah tried to take a shortcut in order to fulfil God's promise. She brought Hagar into the picture and messed with God's plan, which caused all kinds of problems, even to this day.

David had a great attitude during his waiting period. Although the next anointed king, he was still shepherding his father's flock, being faithful in his work. David didn't have to risk his life to save the sheep. No one appreciated his work. His father didn't seem to care. His brothers didn't appreciate his efforts. But David was faithful when no one was watching him. That is really important.

Proverbs 28:20 says, "A faithful person will be richly blessed." And don't forget God's reward in heaven is for the good and... faithful servant. Don't murmur against God in your waiting period. Speak words of faith. God promised the land of Canaan to the Israelites but they constantly kept murmuring against God. What was the result? They did not obtain the promise.

☞ **Ask God for patience** if you are getting impatient. What is important is to know that God is with you during the periods of waiting. When Joseph was waiting in the prison, not knowing anything about the future, not knowing when his situation would change, God was with him.

Genesis 39:21, 23 (NLT) - "But the Lord was with Joseph in prison and showed him His faithful love." ... "The Lord was with him and caused everything he did to succeed."

☞ Someone said it like this, ***"It may be difficult to wait on the Lord... but it's worse to wish you had."*** Be faithful during your waiting season.

☞ **3. Focus on God rather than the thing you are waiting for.** Sometimes we are too desperate to get some things in life that our focus shifts from God to that thing. Let me give you an example. If you are desiring a promotion or a house, you are constantly thinking only about that, so that becomes your idol. That thing begins to take the place of God. **Our desire or longing, even our promise from God, should not become our idol.**

If your focus is on God what will happen? God will take control of your desires. Sometimes God will make us realize that our desires are not His plans for us. He has bigger plans.

Isaiah 55:8,9 - "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

☞ **Only when your focus is on God will you understand God's mind for you.** You will realize that God has the best things stored up for you. Matthew 6:33 says, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." So, keep your focus on God rather than the thing you are waiting for. It may be that God has something even greater in mind.

Let me wrap this up with some encouragement.



Genesis 2:8 – “And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.” You are probably wondering what in the world that text has to do with this message.

In Genesis 1&2 is the story of creation. God creates light, animals, vegetation, man etc. But He didn't create a garden, He planted one. That is a very important distinction. Almighty, all-powerful God stooped to plant a garden when He could have simply said: "let there be a garden."

Why did God plant a garden? Picture Him doing it in your mind. He takes a seed, carefully moves the dirt around and places the seed in the ground. Then He waters it and the plant grows and He takes great pleasure in what He sees happening. In other words, God enjoys bringing forth life in barren places. He enjoys making beauty out of dirt. Your personal desires and hopes may seem like arid and parched ground, with little or no vegetation. You may be thinking nothing good will ever happen in this ground. I want to say to you that God takes great pleasure in making desert lands bloom.

Isaiah 35:1,6 “The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom” ... “Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.”

Isaiah 43:20 “I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen”

Isaiah 51:3 “The LORD will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the LORD. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing.”

☞ God creates beauty from nothing. The things you hope for are important to God!

Romans 4:18 MSG “When everything was hopeless, Abraham believed anyway, deciding to live not on the basis of what he saw he [couldn't] do but on what God said *he* [would] do. And so he was made father of a multitude of peoples.

Psalms 27:14 “Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.”

And just as waiting is real, fulfilment is also real. King Solomon doesn't stop the verse with “Hope deferred makes the heart sick.” Rather the verse continues, “but a longing fulfilled is a ☞ tree of life.” **God has a plan, and his promises never fail. There will be a day of fulfilment and it will be worth the wait.**

While you're waiting, God is preparing you and your circumstances. Remain faithful and keep your focus on God. It will be worth it.