

5/7/2023

“WAIT FOR IT”

Acts 1:4-5

4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

SPECIAL MUSIC:

“While I Wait”

Lincoln Brewster

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uvSD57FJKLc>



THE LONG WAIT

I hate to wait

It is my least favorite

Thing to do

I'd rather hesitate

And even not participate

Than have to stand in queue.

If you make a vow

I want it now

Not sometime in the years ahead

I'd rather plow

Through the here-and-now

Than wait for a promised thread

I want not to twiddle my thumbs

Or turn my fingers to marching drums

I'm ready now for my reward

To wait and see what will become
The promise of the rising Son
And His brightly brandished sword.

Two thousand years and still we wait
For God's return, the advocate
He promised to return
So that we could rise and celebrate
Rather than wallow and vegetate.
Commonly waiting out our fate.

But Jesus gave us things to do
The fields are ripe, but workers few
We find a place beneath the shade
While watching what those workers do
On Sunday morning fill our pew
While we sing and pray.

Jesus told us we need not worry

Nor should we try to hurry

His return to this world of ours.

We're not the judge nor on the jury

Our job is not to bury

Or wistfully stare at the endless stars

We are here to make a difference

As we gather in remembrance

Of all that God has done for us.

None of this is happenstance

And Christ's return is not by chance

Together we will wait, for in God we trust.

How many of you like to wait? Maybe it's your passion. You get up in the morning, take a quick shower, throw on your clothes and say, "I want to go wait somewhere. Where should I go that I can enjoy a good, long, wait?" I'm sure there are some people out there who get up at three in the morning on Black Friday, clutching their ads and head out to go shopping so that they can stand in line for hours to get into a particular store with a great deal. I just don't know any of those people. And I am certainly not going to allow them to drag me along for the ride.

How many of you have a predetermined time limit that you have set for waiting to get waited on in a restaurant before you get up and walk out? If you don't have one, you'll never convince me that you haven't thought about one. How about a doctor. I think we all want to be conscious of our physician's time, but what about our time? I can also tell you first hand how hard it is to continue to wait when you are hurting and sick, knowing that if you leave you may never get to feeling better. You start thinking it must be some kind of conspiracy because the chairs in the waiting room are sooooo... uncomfortable, and you left the book you are reading on the nightstand at home, and your phone only has a 10% charge, and there are no outlets in the waiting room. That doctor must have it in for me, keeping me waiting for hours on end. Even knowing why doesn't make the time go by faster.

And waiting to board an airplane at the airport. For years, I have said that if the airlines would just load the plane from the back forward they could cut the

boarding time in half. Trying to get to you seat while having to push through so many people can bring on anxiety and claustrophobia.

But we have all kinds of things in our lives where we are forced to be patient and wait. We wait for Social Security and Medicare to kick in. We wait for appointments to see government officials called us and won't tell us why they want to talk to us. We wait to hear back from potential employers or medical labs with the results of tests. We wait for people to show up for meetings and then we get upset when they cancel at the last minute or never at all. We feel that it has all been a waste of our time. We wait for answers to our questions, and we wait for packages in the mail. We wait for parking spaces and for people who drive too slow. We wait for our cars to be repaired or for the roofers to show up. I know that we love those words, "The technician will arrive between 8:am and 12:pm. Please have someone available," when we know it will probably be afternoon before they get there and if we are not there or do not answer the door or phone, they do not wait for us.

Our lives incur a significant amount of waiting. Sometimes, we can use that time to accomplish other things while we are waiting, but that is not the norm. Most often, it becomes wasted time for us. I say wasted even though it is we who waste it by being unprepared to wait. We realize that we should have brought that book, or that paperwork we needed to work on, made sure our phones were charged so that we could call a few making their day, or any one of another of positive things minds occupy our minds and our hands. It could even

be a journal with blank pages that we could use to jot down our ideas for changing the world.

We do not like to wait. We want to get on with it. We want to jump on this theme park ride and conquer our fears, but there are 500 people in front of us, so it might be a little while before we get to do it. In the meantime, the line moves at a snail's pace, meandering back and forth. It's difficult to maintain our enthusiasm. It is also true that there are a number of people that will get so discouraged that they will step out of the line having come to the conclusion that it is just not worth the wait.

Luke is unique in his writings. The books of Luke and Acts fit together. You could almost call the book of Acts, Luke Vol. 2. One of the really neat insights that he gives us is that he provides us with a contextual setting after the resurrection.

Verse 4 of our scripture today says:

4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

"On one occasion" implies that there were other occasions; that Jesus was continuing to feed into His disciples after the resurrection. Catching them up to speed. Giving context to the crucifixion and the resurrection. He wasn't going to leave them in the dark without explaining what was going on. He had told them what was going to happen before His death, but the pieces of the puzzle remained

somewhat of a mystery until He joined them together, helping them as the light bulbs went off in their heads.

He was making sure they understood the nature and power of the gift that they were about to receive. It was nothing to be taken lightly. It was important enough that they face their fears by staying in Jerusalem even while they feared they might be hunted down.

Jesus wants them to be patient. God has a gift for them. **“Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.”** I believe that it is extremely important to point out here that Jesus says, “wait for the gift.” He does not say, “wait for the reward.” Just like salvation, the gift of the Holy Spirit is free. We cannot earn it. We cannot buy it. We cannot borrow it or steal it. It merges with our own spirit when we give our hearts, minds, and lives to the Creator to be used for His purposes. The Holy Spirit keeps us centered on God’s purpose. But only if we allow it.

I love the way Jesus approaches this knowing that He isn’t going to be there when it happens. “Hey, guys. I have been telling you for three years that the Father is going to send the Holy Spirit to you as a gift. It’s a tremendous gift that comes with great responsibility. But it is coming. And it’s coming soon. In order to receive it you will have to go back to Jerusalem, and I know that might be frightening. Once there, you are going to have to wait. It could take a couple of days. But it will happen. I promise, it will happen.”

Jesus doesn't try to explain what the Holy Spirit is or how this baptism is going to come about, but He does liken it in a way to John's baptism in the desert. John's baptism of the people was part of the cleansing ritual of the Jews seeking a pardon for their sins.

To bring this full circle, we need to go back to John the Baptist prophesizing in the desert as he baptized those sincerely seeking forgiveness for their sins. Let me read you what it says in the third chapter of Luke, verses 15-16:

15 The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah.

16 John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

This is John the Baptist telling the people that the best is yet to come. It is good that the people are seeking a cleansing of their souls in preparation for what's next. It is good that they are still, after 500 years, still waiting for Messiah. I love the way Luke phrases this in verse 15, "The people were waiting expectantly." He also says the one coming who's sandals he is unworthy of tying, is the one that will bring this new baptism.

There is freedom for each of us bought and paid for through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Freedom and cleansing from our sin. Freedom of the gift of salvation. Freedom of allowing the Holy Spirit to work through us. Freedom to sit in the presence of the Creator of the universe. Freedom to love and be loved

when all the strings and contraptions of the world around us seek to break us down. Freedom to lift the people around us. Freedom to preach the Gospel and let everyone know what Christ has done for us.

We have these freedoms because Jesus paid the cost. We have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit because Jesus paid the cost. We have a relationship with the Creator of the Universe because Jesus paid the cost. And knowing all of that, believing all of that, we still have a hard time waiting for God's timing rather than our own. The really sad part is when we decide that it seems like God must be really busy because He is taking too long and is making us wait. So, we decide to help Him out. That never seems to turn out well for anyone involved. When God tells us to wait, it is always for a good reason and most of the time that reason is to protect us or bring us into a better space than the place we are.

It must have been nerve racking for those disciples to sit in that room, waiting for something that they weren't even sure they wanted. But sit they did.

When we pray for something, even if it has a deadline, are we willing to wait for God's timing? Are we willing to trust that God will bring the solution in His way and His time for the best outcome for all concerned? Have we taken time to consider that when God answers our prayers, they might also be solutions to other people's prayers as well?

I want us all to ponder the things that we are waiting for this week. I do not want us to worry about whether or not we will receive them by the time we have to have them or even receive them just because we want them in a hurry. Instead,

**let us be grateful for when they do arrive. In the meantime, let's to the work that
God has at hand.**

God Bless You All

AMEN

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