



Waiting

1. Pray

2. Penitence

3. Perseverance

4. Praise

A Song for every season Psalm 130-Waiting

Read

- **Psalm 103**

Intro

Waiting is not easy. If we ask our children to wait, we can often see an immediate frustration sometimes leading to a tantrum. This almost automatic resistance to waiting can lay hidden in us even as adults. We also live in a world that has declared war on waiting. Everything is designed for instant gratification through the delivery mechanism of the internet – be it amazon or food or binging out on our favorite series or film on Netflix.

The world may have lost patience with waiting but waiting is part of God's design for our life. We see many biblical examples of people that had to wait for the fulfilment of God's promise or purpose – King David was anointed to be King but had to wait for twenty years before he was crowned; Abraham had to wait until old age to bear a son.

The Psalm is entitled a song of Ascents – and these are a series of Psalms (120-134) written in the way of a journey from travail to worship and honoring God. These psalms would have been savored by the people of Israel when they were taken away into captivity.

Sometimes we can say to God we don't want the journey just the outcome. So how do we wait well? What about during lockdown are we waiting well?

1. Pray

First Instinct of Psalmist is to cry out to God

- We are not sure who wrote this Psalm but we know from the beginning that they are in the depths of despair and their first response is to cry out to God.
- This is not a whimper – or a shallow whisper – this is a full-blooded cry from the heart
- The Psalmist's first instinct is to bring this turmoil to God.
- How do we respond when we are in a dark place? Do we go to prayer or internet shopping?
- Are we prepared to wait in communion with God through prayer?



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Expressing sorrow and regret

- The Psalmist communes with God in prayer and then comes to a place of repentance – expressing sorrow and regret.
- He has an instant awareness of his own sin. If God kept a record of sin and carelessness who would be able to meet God's standard? Our life would be pretty hopeless if the story ended there.
- But the Psalmist declares that with God there is forgiveness. He is reminding himself of his identity – that he is loved by God and that he is forgiven.
- We can do this too – not through a process of self-flagellation – not by beating ourselves up. Nor is it about being blasé about our sin – we repent out of a fear of God.
- But not the fear of anger – our Father's nature is gentle loving and kind. But He is a Holy just God.
- Fear here is a Holy awe – yes, we have been forgiven but this has come at the huge price and sacrifice of the wonder of Jesus death on the cross.
- I once had a business account that I thought I had closed but continued accruing costs – after a number of years the bank threatened me with the debt recovery of the £1,000 bill. I was so terrified because I didn't have the money. I phoned them and explained my mistake and they reviewed the account and then removed the charges. I was so grateful for this debt being wiped out. How much more incredible is the debt that has been cleared by Jesus death on the cross?

3. Perseverance

Waiting is a clear part of our sanctification

- When things are taking too long, we can struggle but it is clear in our bible that waiting is a clear part of our sanctification
- Jesus had to wait 30 years before His public ministry on earth would commence.
- The Psalmist repeats the refrain that 'I will wait for The Lord' a number of times and seems to be at peace with the fact that waiting is good for him.
- Our waiting may go on for many day, months and years but we can learn to trust in God's timing. With my own planned move of my family to Whitstable we have had to learn that waiting won't change our circumstances but we can trust God. One of the first things a person said to me after I felt called to Whitstable was that we were starting a period of waiting. It wasn't what I wanted to hear but we have learned much through this time.



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Why is a period of waiting necessary?

- **External circumstances** are right for us and that going too early is not in our best interest
- **Waiting stops us getting things too early** – waiting may be necessary for our character development which may take a long time to mold
- **Waiting attacks self-reliance**, it demonstrates that we are not in charge of things God is.
- **Waiting tests our faith** – it exercises our faith muscles. Larry Osbourne writes that a diamond can be heated up to an incredible temperature and dropped suddenly in cold water and will not crack or shatter. Mere glass or a bauble will always shatter.
- **Waiting teaches us to be like a watchman** – the watchman had a critical job looking out all night for the morning sun to rise. They would have real purpose and activity whilst they waited – they had a job to do in their waiting in keeping alert. I have had times in lockdown where I thought I would just hide away and wait and do nothing until it was over. But we have a responsibility to be active and proactive in the waiting. We have demonstrated this as a people in launching this church during lockdown.

3. Praise

- Our song of ascent culminates in v8 with the declaration that 'I will Hope in the Lord's steadfast love'.
- He finishes the Psalm with a declaration to hope in the Lord because of His steadfast love and His plentiful redemption

Steadfast love

- Gives us hope for what we are going through now.
- Dictionary definition says steadfast means not being subject to change – His love is constant and resolute

Plentiful redemption

- Gives us hope into eternity
- Our momentary struggle cannot overcome our delight in our union with Jesus
- In revelations it says that Jesus will receive us and wipe away every tear from our eyes

We don't know when this time will come – but we want to be a people who will wait in prayer, in soberness about our sin, and actively watching out for the outworking of God's plan in our lives.