

THE DISCIPLINE OF WAITING: KEEP LOOKING UP!

(2 Peter 3:1-13 / James 5:16-18)

Series: The Disciplines of a Godly Life (Part 9)

- ...Don't you love to wait! Waiting at long red lights, for a long awaited letter or phone call, for the end of a school year, for medical testing results, for a job or a better one, and for the numerous things for which we find ourselves waiting. No, we as Americans hate to wait. Ours is an instant society, "Give it to me now..."
- ...Christians should be known for many things some of which include our love for all others, our kindness to those in need, our suffering with those who suffer, our joyful spirit, and growth in holy living. However, there is another quality that describes us as disciples of Christ and that is we are found waiting. Waiting for our God.
- ...Waiting seems to be God's classroom designed to grow us up as we fix our eyes upon our Lord and Savior Jesus.

TWO KINDS OF WAITING DESIGNED BY THE LORD FOR OUR MATURITY AS WE KEEP LOOKING UP

...Both of these will keep us close to Him!

I. Unanswered Prayers: Waiting For Jesus To Answer Our Deepest Prayers.

...Many of us as Christians have prayer requests that we have prayed for years, and still we wait...

- A. God has designed prayer to be a vehicle for His glory. He invites us to come to Him with our many burdens, fears, needs, and desires. Life is hard, but He is there and hears our prayers.
1. Prior to the Fall in the garden, both Adam and Eve had direct contact and communication with the Lord. Sin brought with it separation from Holy God.
...God can be approached only through the blood. (Remember the Tabernacle)
 2. Jesus invited us to pray, "Ask, seek, and knock." (Matt 7:7-11)
 3. We are told God is "The Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6)
 4. Elijah is held up for us as an example of a person like us who prayed... and God held the rain for 3½ years. (James 5:16-18) Then he prayed and it rained. (1 Kings 17:1)
..."The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous person has great power ..." (James 5:16)
 5. Peter wrote "Casting all our cares upon the Lord, for He cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7)
- B. Jesus showed us the importance of prayer by spending "great time praying."
1. At the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus' words are most helpful. (John 11:41-44)
..."Jesus lifting up his eyes said, 'Father, I thank you that you have heard me, but I said this on account of the people standing around..."
 2. Even in His final hours, Jesus prayed 3 times "Father remove this cup from me...
...nevertheless not my will, but your will be done." (Matthew 26:39,42,44)
...In this Jesus shows how to keep casting our burdens on the Lord and leave it there, for no matter the outcome His will is best and certain.
- C. We pray and wait for God's unseen hand to move, drawing near to Him daily pouring out our burdens and requests. We wait in God's waiting room. (Psalms 13, 27:14, and 130)
1. While waiting we cry out "How Long, how long Lord?" (Psalm 13)
 2. We spend sleepless nights waiting... (Psalm 130) Waiting, waiting...

- D. A couple of things to remember while we do the hard work of waiting:
 1. God is sovereign over everything. This world is not "out of control." (Ephesians 1:11)
 2. God's time-table is not ours, but it is perfect. He is right on-time. (Galatians 4:4)
 3. God gives us burdens to keep us close to Him and when He answers, He receives all the glory. "He works in us both to will and do of His good pleasure." (Philippians 2:13)

II. Blessed Hope: Waiting For Jesus To Return From Heaven For Us. (2 Peter 3)

...We await our Lord to come and take us home. "Maranatha!!!" (1 Corinth 16:23) "Our Lord, Come!"

- A. Jesus talked a lot about His Second Coming. (John 14:3) "I will Come again and take you..."
- B. On the day Jesus ascended into Heaven, the disciples were told of His coming. (Acts 1:11)
- C. Paul: "Waiting for our Blessed Hope, the appearing of...great God and Savior Jesus..." Titus 2:13
- D. Jesus is coming: "We who are alive and remain until the Coming of the Lord" (1 Thess 4:13-19)
- E. Jesus' coming would be mocked in "The last days." (2 Peter 3:1-13) "Where is the promise...?"
...The world willfully forgets God's wrath displayed the day the world perished.
- F. The book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible, closes with this: "He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am Coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus"!!! And so, we wait for Him!!!

SO WHAT? WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD THIS MAKE IN MY LIFE?

1. If God has given you great burdens and troubles, keep giving all of them to God in your prayers. Keep casting... He sees, knows, and cares for you. Trust Him to do the very best thing, whether you can see it or not. Draw near to Him... keep knocking.
2. Develop a little prayer book if you have never done so. Record your many specific requests... and keep it with your Bible. Pray daily/weekly through your prayer book... and you will grow to love the Lord more and more and be amazed at His work in your life.
3. Develop the discipline of daily looking for the Lord's return. It may be within our lifetime... there is no prophecy needing to be fulfilled before He returns. While you wait for Him, be busy serving the Lord in your church, family, and community. Keep looking up!!!
4. If you have never trusted in the Lord to save you from your sin, then you are still lost in sin, and under God's judgment. God is holy and just, so all people who have ever lived will pay for sin's penalty either by the Cross of Christ, or through the suffering of judgment in Hell forever. Today, receive Christ as your Savior and Lord. Call upon His name... "Lord Jesus, be merciful to me a sinner, I receive you as my Savior and Lord. Thank you for dying for me."