

When Waiting Feels Impossible

Discussion Notes - August 16, 2026

1. Think of a time you had to wait on something you really wanted. What was that like while you were in the middle of it?

This sermon looked at three kings and how each of them handled waiting. Solomon had everything handed to him and never had to wait for anything. He got it all and still ended up saying it was a waste. David spent years in the fields, hiding in caves, running for his life, before he ever got the crown. And Saul? God told him to wait seven days. He couldn't do it. He acted on his own, and it cost him the kingdom. The big takeaway is that God uses waiting seasons on purpose. He is more interested in shaping who you are than in just answering your prayers fast. A waiting season with God is never a wasted season.

Read 1 Samuel 13:8-12

"He waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him. So Saul said, 'Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings.' And he offered the burnt offering. As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came. And Saul went out to meet him and greet him. Samuel said, 'What have you done?' And Saul said, 'When I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash, I said, Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the favor of the Lord. So I forced myself and offered the burnt offering.'"

Gilgal was a significant place for Israel, and Samuel had a clear pattern of meeting Saul there. So, this was not a random test. Saul watched his army go from 3,000 men down to 600 while the Philistines were coming with thousands of chariots. It looked like a disaster. When he said "I forced myself," that is one of the most honest things anyone says in the whole Old Testament. He did not want to disobey. He just could not make himself keep waiting. And the moment he finished the offering, Samuel showed up. God's timing was never the problem. Only Saul's trust was.

2. Are you willing to wait on God after all your plans, preparations, and goals have already been set?

Read Lamentations 3:25-26

"The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord."

Jeremiah did not write this from a comfortable place. Jerusalem had just been destroyed. He was sitting in the rubble. And right there, he says waiting on God is good. The Hebrew word for "wait" pictures a rope pulled tight under tension. It is not passive at all. It is active, strained trust. Jeremiah chose to trust in the middle of his worst moment. That is what makes this verse so powerful.

3. Where in your life right now are you most tempted to just take matters into your own hands? What would it look like to wait on God in that area this week?

Read Habakkuk 2:2-3

"And the Lord answered me: 'Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it. For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to its end, it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay.'"

Habakkuk was frustrated and told God about it. God's answer was not to speed things up. He said to write down what He promised and trust that it is coming. God has an appointed time for everything He has promised, and our impatience does not change that. When it feels like God is slow, He is actually just being precise. His timing is not late from where He is standing.

4. The sermon ended with this: "The only thing harder than waiting on God is wishing that you had." Where do you draw the line between Spirit-led initiative and just being impatient? How do you tell the difference in your own life?

Read Isaiah 40:30-31

"Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for 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 was written for people who were worn out and felt like God had forgotten them. The prophet does not sugarcoat it. He says even the youngest and strongest will eventually hit a wall. But people who wait on God get something different. The Hebrew word for "renew" means to exchange, like turning in worn-out strength and getting something brand new back. Picture an eagle coasting on wind currents instead of flapping hard just to stay in the air. Waiting on God is not where your strength runs out. It is where a completely different kind of strength kicks in.

5. What is one thing you can commit to this week to choose trust over taking control? And how can we as a group check in with you on that?

Prayer Points

- For patience and genuine trust in whatever waiting season we are each in
- For discernment to know the difference between God's timing and our own impatience
- For hearts shaped by the waiting, like David's, ready to receive what God has promised in His way and His time

DEEPER DIVE: David - A Life of Waiting on God

David is the person the sermon kept coming back to, and for good reason. He is the clearest picture in Scripture of what it looks like to wait on God faithfully, not just for days or weeks, but for years, while the promise seems to be going the wrong direction. He was anointed king as a teenager and then sent right back to the sheep. He spent years running from a man who wanted him dead, living in caves and wilderness. He had two clear chances to end the waiting himself and walked away from both. By the time he finally received what God had promised, the waiting had already done its work in him.

Read 1 Samuel 16:11-13

"And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all your sons here?' And he said, 'There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep.' And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here.' And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the Lord said, 'Arise, anoint him, for this is he.' Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward."

David was not even brought to the gathering. Jesse presented seven sons and none of them were chosen. David was out with the sheep. He was the last person anyone expected, and he was not even in the room. When God's promise came, it came to a shepherd boy in the middle of an ordinary day. What makes this moment so important is what happens next: after the anointing, David goes right back to the sheep. No coronation. No throne. He receives the promise and returns to the pasture. The gap between that anointing and the crown would be years of wilderness, caves, and being hunted. The promise came long before the fulfillment.

Read 1 Samuel 24:4-7

"And the men of David said to him, 'Here is the day of which the Lord said to you, "Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you."' Then David arose and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's robe. And afterward David's heart struck him, because he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe. He said to his men, 'The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the Lord's anointed.' So David persuaded his men with these words and did not permit them to attack Saul."

This is one of the most dramatic moments in David's waiting season. Saul, the man who has been hunting him for years, walks into the very cave where David and his men are hiding. His men see it as a sign from God. David's own conscience stops him. He cuts a corner of Saul's robe and then feels bad about even that. His reasoning is striking: Saul is the Lord's anointed, and it is not David's place to remove what God has not yet removed. David had the chance to end his waiting season right there, and he walked away from it. That is not passivity. That is one of the hardest acts of active trust in the whole Old Testament.

Read Psalm 27:13-14

"I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living! Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!"

Psalm 27 is thought to have been written during David's years as a fugitive. The phrase "land of the living" suggests he was not entirely sure he would make it through the season he was in. But he chose belief over fear. Notice that "wait for the Lord" appears twice in just two verses. In Hebrew poetry, repetition means: this is the one thing. Do not skip it. And what he puts between the two commands is telling: be strong, let your heart take courage. Waiting on God is not passive. It requires strength. It requires courage. David knew that better than almost anyone, and he still chose to wait.

Deeper Dive Discussion Questions

1. David was anointed king and then sent right back to the sheep. Has God ever given you a clear promise or sense of direction and then seemed to go quiet for a long time after? What was that like?
2. In the cave, David's men told him this was his moment. His own conscience told him to wait. How do you handle it when the people around you say "go for it" but something inside you is not at peace?
3. David wrote "wait for the Lord" twice in two verses, in the middle of one of the hardest seasons of his life. What does actively waiting on God look like for you right now, as opposed to just sitting still?