

# Pausing for the Psalms

What Are You Waiting For? (Psalm 27)

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**Synopsis:** Waiting on God changes the way we see.

Category of thanksgiving - *to create a heart of thanks towards God.*

[Psalm 27 \(NIV\)](#) (*I will read the whole chapter here*)

**Intro:** Overdue baby. What are you waiting for?

## **We are all waiting for something**

Joyful things like a baby, marriage, graduation, retirement, revival. Oftentimes it's far more difficult - grieving a loss, terminal illness, caring for an aging parent or young children, strained relationship, unemployment, infertility, systemic reconciliation.

Everyone: waiting for the end of a seemingly endless season of staying at home, trying to school kids and work remotely or on the front lines, staying afloat as the world has been turned upside down.

Why is waiting so difficult?

## **We have an incorrect view of waiting**

Two problems with how we wait:

### **1. Waiting shaped by worry.**

David understood - begins with this strong declaration in vs 1:

[Psalm 27:1 \(NIV\)](#)

The Lord is my light and my salvation—  
whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life—  
of whom shall I be afraid?

And then alludes to the possible trials to come:

Vs 2 - When the wicked advance against me to devour me...

Vs 3 - Though an army besiege me...though war break out against me

Vs 5 - in the day of trouble...

Vs 10 - Though my father and mother forsake me...

He had plenty to worry about that hadn't even happened yet! Sound like you and me?

His life was often marked by betrayal, war, family difficulties. His father-in-law Saul tried to murder him repeatedly. He lived as a fugitive on the run. He was regularly attacked by his neighbors. His son tried to kill him and take his throne. He experienced deep doubt, anxiety, and worry as we see in his psalms. He knows what it is to struggle with worry in the waiting.

**Clarification: It's okay to experience worry and fear and express those emotions to God.** It's good! David expresses this to God. Yet he returns to a trust and confidence of who God is!

**Genre:** psalm of confidence. *when feelings of trust dominate the entire psalm.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tremper Longman III, How to Read the Psalms, p. 31.

## 2. Waiting shaped by change

Life is hard! See David's immediate problems:

Vs 6 - the enemies who surround me

Vs 11- because of my oppressors.

Vs 12 - Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes,  
for false witnesses rise up against me,  
spouting malicious accusations.

We are often restless, needing something to look forward to and hold onto when life is hard. Often we try to take it in our own hands.

Contrast David to Saul his predecessor. Couldn't wait for God, did it on his own - time and again (1 Samuel 13). God promised David the throne of Israel, and it took almost 15 years to see this happen. He even had a chance to kill Saul and become King.

*Illustr.: Moving here, so lonely. Grad school and Colorado. Told God what he needed to do and when.*

*Have you ever felt this way?*

**When we focus on what we want God to do, we can miss what He is already doing in our lives.** Rest of the story. God used the time of waiting to shape David into a man after his own heart.

But how does this happen? How do we go from waiting based on worry and change in our circumstances, to waiting on the Lord?

### **We need a greater awareness of the presence of God!**

Psalm 27:4 (NIV)

**One thing** I ask from the Lord,  
this only do I seek:  
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord  
all the days of my life,  
to gaze on the beauty of the Lord  
and to seek him in his temple.

**This is the ONE THING.**

**Context:** temple/tent represents the place where God makes his presence known to his people.<sup>2</sup>

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord that we have access to the presence of God right here, not defined by a place or building.

**This is the ONE THING.**

We need to wait on God himself! We are all waiting - but what creates transformation is *holy waiting*.

**Holy waiting is defined by an awareness of God's presence!** Look at what follows this one thing:

Psalm 27:5-6 (NIV)

For in the day of trouble  
he will keep me safe in his dwelling;  
he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent  
and set me high upon a rock.  
Then my head will be exalted  
above the enemies who surround me;  
at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy;  
I will sing and make music to the Lord.

<sup>2</sup> Tremper Longman III, Psalms. 149-152

Instead of focusing on what we want, the outcomes, the problems we need fixed, the trials, the future, we are instead called to wait, to be aware of who God is, and from there see what he is already doing! *Waiting on God changes the way we see!*

This is what we were made for - to seek God, to enjoy him, to listen to him!

Psalm 27:8 (NIV)

For My heart says of you, "Seek his face!"

Your face, Lord, I will seek.

Our hearts were made to seek and be found in God- that's why we wait for something! We are waiting for God. But we fill it with other distractions. Nothing else satisfies and we are left wanting more. **We can only regain that by re-turning to him. It takes being so desperate for him that nothing else can compare.**

**Are you desperate for God's presence?**

Psalm 27:9-10 (NIV)

Do not hide your face from me,  
do not turn your servant away in anger;  
you have been my helper.

Do not reject me or forsake me,  
God my Savior.

10 Though my father and mother forsake me,  
the Lord will receive me. (context - It is more likely his own parents would leave him than God)

When we return to God and recalibrate our hearts to his presence, what is the result? CONFIDENCE

Notice that David never clarifies that God delivers him from the circumstances or that the waiting ends. He is able to declare these truths about God even before he sees them come to pass.<sup>3</sup>

Can we believe God's promises are true even before we see them come to pass in our lives?

**Confidence = Faith!**

Hebrews 11:1 (NIV)

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see

Because of Christ we have an even greater confidence - **Who Jesus is (Savior) allows us to express deep confidence in our relationship with God!**<sup>4</sup>

Romans 8:38-39 (NIV)

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## How do we do this?

**Just like any relationship, an awareness of God's presence is cultivated by communicating.**

### 1. Invite Him in

Waiting on God begins with inviting him into your life - into the moments, hours, days.

What does this look like?

- **Stop**

Inviting God in means slowing down enough to even start that conversation. And that's hard to do. It requires intentionally, periodically ceasing the hurry.

<sup>3</sup> Derek Kidner, Psalms 1-72. 120-22

<sup>4</sup> Tremper Longman III, How to Read the Psalms, 31.

- **Recalibrate**

Jesus - I invite you into this moment. Instead of asking "why," start asking, "what, where, how."

*"What are you saying to me?"*

*"Where are you working here?"*

*"How can I serve your purposes in this conversation?"*

A greater awareness of God's presence has direct implications on every part of our lives (*work, family, thoughts, marriage, singleness, injustice, prejudice, hypocrisy, future, death itself.*) Whatever occupies your mind and actions throughout the day from most basic to complex.

## 2. Listen to Him

One key way to listen to God is to open up his Word, living and active, and allow him to shape you through what you hear! That's where you see who he is and what he says. When we start listening to God, we start believing that what he says is true. We have to actually know who he is and what he says!

- Knowing him
- Knowing his promises

Open up your Bible - even 5 minutes. Familiarize yourself with his truths and watch how they begin to shape your thoughts, your heart, your actions.

Look again at this Psalm - Listen to how David overflows in this poetry with truths about God's character and presence, deeply ingrained in his heart. Hear this today as truths written centuries ago that remain true about God and what he says about you:

The Lord is your light and your salvation (vs 1)

The Lord is the stronghold of your life (vs 1)

God has been your helper (vs 9)

God is your Savior (vs 9)

he will keep you safe in his dwelling (vs 5)

he will hide you in the shelter of his sacred tent and set you high upon a rock (vs 5)

Your head will be exalted above the enemies who surround you (vs 6)

Though your father and mother forsake you, the Lord will receive you (vs 10)

Remain confident of this: you will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living (vs 13).

*Does anyone need to hear that today?*

As you immerse yourself in God's word and know who he is and what he says, it pours out into the rest of your life.

## 3. Respond to Him

One of the most natural and powerful responses to God's presence is thanks! **Psalm of thanksgiving.** Reorientation to God. Thanking God for how he has shown up - I have a reason to praise. Giving thanks is what sets God's people apart! We always have a reason to give thanks.

Imagine what your life, what the church would look like if we lived as though all of the character and promises of God are true? Imagine if we acted, thought, spoke, rested, worked, related as though all of the character and promises of God are true? *We can genuinely give thanks even if nothing changes.* Why do we settle for less?

We learn to cultivate this awareness of God's presence as we invite him in, listen to what he says, and then respond with thanks. See how waiting on God changes the way we see.

So I encourage you:

**Psalm 27:14**

Wait for the Lord;

be strong and take heart  
and wait for the Lord.

**Right now: Wait on the Lord together.** *Waiting on God changes the way we see.* **Let's begin practicing a greater awareness of his presence.**

Let's do this together as we close:

1. **Invite God into this moment.**
2. **Listen to His Word.** Look through this psalm again - listen for what he might be saying to you.
3. **Respond to what He says.**

Church, let's wait on the Lord together.