

In the Beginning, God...

Introduction

Why does God make us wait?

That is a question that many faithful followers of Christ have asked. We tend to look at our lives as if the thing promised or the thing hoped for cannot wait.

Rather than allowing God to mature us and our trust in Him, we plow ahead not realizing the danger of ignoring God's schedule.

Let me give you some biblical examples:

The Lord speaking to Abram,

Genesis 15:16 (ESV) 16 And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.

Gabriel speaking to Daniel,

Daniel 8:23 (ESV) 23 And at the latter end of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their limit, a king of bold face, one who understands riddles, shall arise.

John's vision of martyred saints,

Revelation 6:11 (ESV) 11 Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

It seems that God has pre-determined that certain things would be accomplished, that to our human eye seems wrong.

Why would He not step in and do what we perceive to be right, why not protect His own from the sorrow and the hurt that waiting imposed on so many?

Message:

Genesis 16:1–4 (ESV) 1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. 2 And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. 3 So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. 4 And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress.

We are finishing the toledot of Terah and looking at Abram's life and choices as God has met with him, promised to him but as yet has not completed the promise.

Abram was 75 when God made the first promise and Abram moved from Ur, but now 15 - 20 years later, the promise has yet to be fulfilled.

God's Promise to Abram was;

1. "I will show you" a land (12:1).
2. "I will make you into a great nation" (12:2).
3. "I will bless you" (12:2).
4. "I will make your name great" (12:2).
5. "You will be a blessing" (12:2).

Four were in actuality being fulfilled during the time frame when Abram heard God's call and the passage we just read. But the second, "a great nation" had not begun.

It seems that for Abram and Sarai that was the most important one, and now, humanly speaking it was an impossibility.

So why does God wait?

When Scripture speaks about waiting, it consistently points us to what God is doing in us while we wait, not just what He is withholding from us."

1. The Testing of our faith refines the believer

Job 23:10 (ESV) 10 But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold.

The contrast between God's wisdom and man's is refining our faith and commitment to Him is painful but necessary if He is to bring out the very best in our lives.

By best, I mean, God's greatest glory and our highest good.

Our faithful lives are like gold regarding the value we offer for the glory of God.

But refinement is not the end of God's purpose in testing —God also uses trials to prepare His children for reward.

2. God tests us to reward our commitment

James 1:12 (ESV) 12 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

There is no glory in a participation trophy. We must be proven by the trial, the exercise of our faith and our faithfulness.

Only God understands where our breaking point is, and He brings us to that point, shows us where it is, and then He begins to build us beyond that lack of faith.

He wants to reward His children, but He cannot reward us just because we are His, we must be proven if we are to be rewarded.

And that leads us to an important question—what kind of faith willingly submits to that kind of testing?

3. Real Faith is willing to be tested

1 Peter 1:6–7 (ESV) 6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Peter was reminding the church that the deposit of eternal life was secured by the resurrection of Jesus, and it is guarded in heaven through faith.

Amazing, my place in heaven is guarded by faith. Thus my faith must be proven to be genuine. I willingly and joyfully submit myself to the trial to prove that my faith is genuine, trustworthy.

This is not for God but for us His children.

When faith is willing to be tested, God uses that testing to move us toward something even greater—spiritual maturity.

4. The testing of our faith brings us to full maturity

James 1:2–4 (ESV) 2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Trials are not punishment, a curse or calamity, they are purposeful and have an outcome that is great and good. Which is why we should look at our trials as something to be embraced and rejoiced over.

God is working on me and for me!

“*Count it all joy*” “*Consider it pure joy*” James the half brother of the Lord is telling us that there is no grieving in this, it is to be received with joy.

No scheming as to how to make it pass more quickly. No prayer to ask God to stop it, but simple, straightforward joy that acknowledges that God has brought this into my life and will do exactly what I need to bring me to full maturity.

Abram’s story reminds us what happens when we refuse that process.

Conclusion

Abram and Sarai were not rejecting God—they were simply tired of waiting on Him.

They believed the promise.

They trusted God's power.

But they lost confidence in God's timing.

Instead of counting it joy, they tried to control the outcome. Instead of allowing faith to mature, they forced a solution. And the result was not peace, blessing, or fulfillment—but conflict, sorrow, and lasting division.

Church, waiting is not wasted time. Waiting is where God refines us, proves us, rewards us, and matures us.

The greatest danger is not that God is slow—it is that we are impatient.

So the question before us today is not “Will God keep His promise?”

The question is “Will I trust Him enough to wait?”

In the waiting, God is still at work.

In the testing, God is still good.

And in His perfect time, He always finishes what He has promised to begin.