

Series: **Christmas 2022 - Choir Program**

Today's Title: **"Waiting"**

December 11, 2022 – *Selected passages*

Objective: To help people trust in God as they wait for Him to act.

Opening prayer

Waiting in line...

Waiting for a table at the restaurant...

Waiting for the test results...

Worst of all...waiting for the page to load while the little circle thing spins and spins!

Nobody enjoys waiting – but it's an unavoidable reality of life.

Always has been.

Every generation has learned to wait.

Waiting is a test of our patience.

Waiting forces us to slow down.

Part of Advent is a focus on waiting.

The first advent / arrival of Jesus was about 2,000 years ago.

Faithful Jews who lived in the 1st century were waiting.

The Jewish people had been waiting centuries for the promised Messiah.

But just like us – waiting for a long period of time usually morphs into passivity – or despair – a sense of hopelessness that you will ever see the fulfillment of what was promised.

You might even begin doubting the promise is real!

A young couple was married – and started their life together. Like most newlyweds they were excited about their future. They had dreams of what it would be like to raise a family – and all the adventures that entails.

The first few years went by – but there was no pregnancy. So, they kept trying – and waiting.

They prayed...and prayed...and prayed some more.

Every day – every month – every year – they prayed.

And they waited.

The months soon turned into years – with no answer to their prayers – just silence from heaven.

When we are introduced to them in **Luke 1**, they are an old couple – Luke tells us “...they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.” (1:7)

But, despite their disappointment of not having children, they remained faithful to God.

They both came from priestly families – and Zechariah continued to serve as one of the many priests who would serve a rotation in the Jerusalem temple.

We’re told that when he was on duty at the temple, Zechariah was chosen to enter into the temple to burn the incense.

This was an honor – something a priest might do only 1x in their years of serving.

As Zechariah was inside the temple – by himself – an angel appeared to him – and told him an amazing thing.

“Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.” (vs. 13)

This is the first mention in the text of his prayer.

We have to connect the dots a bit – to realize his prayer - and likely Elizabeth’s prayer also – was asking God to bless them with a child.

After waiting so long...40-50 years (?) their prayer is answered.

Turns out God heard their prayers – every one of them.

When we zoom out from Zechariah and Elizabeth and look at the larger picture of the nation of Israel, we know the nation was waiting.

As I mentioned a few moments ago, the nation had been waiting for the promised One – the Messiah – the Anointed One – for centuries!

Since the time of King David – about 1,000 years before Jesus was born.

God made David a promise – a covenant – to King David – and it was a promise – a covenant resulting in waiting for the promise from God to be fulfilled.

2 Samuel 7:11, 16 – *God's covenant with David*

“...the LORD...will make a house for you (David)—a dynasty of kings! Your house and your kingdom will continue before Me for all time, and your throne will be secure forever.”

The promise of a future King – in the line of David - whose kingdom would never end.

We see this promise being fulfilled when we read Gabriel's message to Mary...

Luke 1:31-33

“You (Mary) will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name Him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His ancestor David. And He will reign over Israel forever; His Kingdom will never end!”

This is why one of the titles for Jesus in the N.T. is “Son of David” – a reference to the covenant promise God made to Israel's greatest king.

The nation had been waiting for at least 1,000 years for this promised descendant of King David – whose Kingdom would “be secure forever” – a never ending King and Kingdom!

But waiting is not easy.

We are impatient with many things in life – but one of them is certainly waiting for God to act.

Have you been waiting for God to act?

Have you prayed – but only heard silence from heaven?

We see in **Isaiah 30** a group who are in trouble, and they are waiting for God to act.

The Assyrian army is approaching – and they’re at great risk. They are tempted to stop trusting in God – and to turn to another nation – to Egypt – for help.

Isaiah 30:15-16

This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: “Only in returning to Me and resting in Me will you be saved. In quietness and confidence is your strength. But you would have none of it.

You said, ‘No, we will get our help from Egypt. They will give us swift horses for riding into battle.’ But the only swiftness you are going to see is the swiftness of your enemies chasing you!”

30:18

“So, the LORD must wait for you to come to Him so He can show you His love and compassion. For the LORD is a faithful God. Blessed are those who wait for His help.”

But what do we do when we wait?

We pray – we ask for God’s help – for Him to act – but we only hear silence from heaven?

When do we know it’s time to do something – to act?

Waiting does not always mean stillness.

Waiting on God does not always mean we do nothing.

Waiting on God means we do what we’re responsible to do.

We remain faithful in life – at school, at work, at home – with our friends and neighbors.

Waiting on God doesn’t mean we simply pray all the time and wait for God to act.

It means we pray – seek His help – but then we get busy doing what we’re called to do.

But we realize that as we work – as we are busy with our responsibilities – we wait on God to work through us – to use our efforts to do something glorious.

What are you praying for?

What are you waiting for God to do in your life?

Are you waiting for Him to provide a better job?

Pray – seek counsel / wisdom – send out your resumes and wait for God to act!

Are you waiting for the Lord to bring back a child who has walked away from Him?

Pray – seek counsel / wisdom – and communicate your love – and wait for God to work in their heart – and your heart.

Are you waiting for Him to heal you? A friend? A loved one?

Pray – seek counsel / wisdom – Follow Dr.’s orders – care for your body – and wait for God to work.

Are you waiting for Him to reveal His will in a major decision?

Pray – seek counsel / wisdom – apply wisdom and make the decision you think is best – and wait for God’s blessing!

Isaiah 64:4

For since the world began, no ear has heard and no eye has seen a God like You, who works for those who wait for Him!”

We live between the 2 advents of Christ.

He promised He will come back – so, as we wait for Him to return, let’s pray – apply wisdom – and get busy with the work He’s given us.

Let our hands and our minds be filled with the work of His kingdom – and with the activity of life.

And as we’re busy - let’s keep waiting on God to bless our efforts – to enable our labor – for His glory.

Close in prayer