

What Are We Waiting For?

“Wait on the Lord; be of good courage and He shall strengthen your heart” (Psalm 27:14.)

Who hasn't experienced waiting? You may rush to make a doctor's appointment on time, and then hear the receptionist say, “Have a seat. The doctor is running late today.” Exasperating, yes, but other waiting is much worse. A childless wife or lonely single person may know heartbreaking frustration or even hopelessness and despair. Waiting--minus hope--equals agony.

Yet waiting is vital to God's Plan for His people. The heroes of the Bible had to wait, including Abraham, Joseph and David. David wrote, “I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry” (Psalm 40:1). But his path to kingship included a bumpy road. First he spent years tending sheep, living in the shadow of his older brothers; later he fled the murderous rage of King Saul. Nonetheless, his faith held strong.

Although most of us won't wait to become king as David did, we all know about waiting for some want or need. We might face loneliness, financial hardship, a health crisis or someone's anger. Amidst a host of situations outside our control, we keep control of an important choice—whether or not to trust God. Those who trust God “hope in the Lord and will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint” (Isaiah 40:31). When we trust God amidst seemingly hopeless circumstances, we're not oblivious to trials, but see Him as bigger, working behind the scenes. Our faith grows, anchored in hope that God will rescue us somehow, some way.

What happens when we wait? Waiting encourages patience and helps cultivate godly character (Romans 5:3). Amidst patient waiting, our perseverance is not unlike God's forbearance. For He too is waiting—for us to grow up spiritually (1 Timothy 2:4) and trials refine our faith like fire refines gold (1 Peter 1:6-7). So God's intention in making us wait is not to hurt us, but to bless us! (James 5:11). Waiting patiently increases our capacity to experience God's blessings so that we, like David, can say “my cup runs over.” With greater patience comes a bigger “cup” into which God pours more blessings! And the greatest blessings aren't things that can be taken from us; the greatest blessings overflow from godly character and include peace, joy and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). No one can rob us of these priceless treasures.

Life is better when we're patient; God's peace is ours whether waiting for a husband, a job or even in line at the grocery store. Moreover, patience is vital to a new character transformed into Christ's image, cultivated lovingly by God. In times of waiting, His rest is our refuge, unless we interrupt it by succumbing to fear, worry or anxiety. Our relationship with God should be intimate, so close as to permeate every emotion and circumstance in spite of our problems. His fellowship is much like the safety of a mother's womb; as an unborn child is bound to and dependant on its mother's body, we are bound and dependant upon God while resting in Him, wrapped in His love. It's no coincidence that a Hebrew word for God's compassion is the same word for a woman's womb! (Isaiah 14:1, 49:13, Jeremiah 42:12).

God's deliverance from waiting is in His timing, not ours. But if we remember that to God “a thousand years is as a day and a day as a thousand years,” (2 Peter 3:8) the eternal perspective emerges. This life is but a vapor, our afflictions only temporary. Each believer's earthly life is a tapestry of many cycles of waiting and deliverance. Yet interwoven lies a common thread--we continually wait for our final deliverance into God's eternal Kingdom. Only then will afflictions and waiting cease. In heaven we'll stand before Him, perfected to receive the crown of life He has promised for our perseverance. (James 1:12). Not our wealth, or beauty, or popularity but our perseverance. Only then--in His presence--will we clearly behold what was really worth waiting for.

By Mary Nixon