

Prestonwood Connection

Living In The Shadow Of The Almighty #11

Waiting

Psalm 13

Wednesday, November 5, 2003 • Dr. David McKinley
(Service held in Commons)

[Dr. McKinley, message *Waiting In The Shadow Of The Almighty*] <17>

Well, as you've already heard in the music, our theme tonight is on the subject of waiting and I do not know of anything in the world that most of us share as a common hate, more than the fact that we hate to wait. A..., if there's anything that is, as though it were, a torture that can be afflicted upon us in this modern day society, the greatest torture is the aggravation and the complication that comes in life when you or when I are faced with the reality that we're in a position where we can do nothing but wait.

It may be at the checkout line. You go to the grocery store, you're in a hurry, you've only got 2 little items and all you wanna do is get in and get out and for some reason every single lane has got a cart with 450 items in it. [slight congregation laughter] And even now they've got those new little automated self checkout things and for some reason the day that you decide that you just need 2 things, run in, scan em over, run out, somebody in front of you is checking it out for the first time and they've taken their 45 items to that line and they're a novice and they're scanning everything 15 times and trying to make it happen.

If it's not at the checkout counter then maybe it's out on the North Dallas Toll Road. [slight congregation laughter] Have you ever been zipping along with your toll tag and somehow you got shut out of that fast breezing lane and you had to go through one of the more standard old fashioned lanes and it just so happened that the person in front of you is up there and you can tell they're countin the money and throwin it over in there? [slight congregation laughter] And then invariably they throw one, it hits and it falls and then they pull the car forward and then learning out the door, [pause for congregation laughter] don't laugh, some of you did that in front of me, I've seen you do it before. [pause for more laughter]

Then there's the security line at the airport and you go and you're tryin to get to a flight and you're working so hard at the effort of trying to get there and schedule and get on time and yet you get there and, and somewhere, somehow there's a backup either in the parking lot on the outside or there's a backup at the security check-in line on the inside

and you're waiting and you're struggling and you're, of course, takin your belt off and your shoes off and taking everything else off and you're trying to wait your turn to go through.

And then there's waiting in the doctor's office and the worse waiting at a dental office, because all you can hear is... vezzzzzzzz, vezzzzzzzz, [pause for congregation laughter] and that only makes you hate to wait worse.

Waiting for a return phone call. Waiting for a repairman. Yeah, you know that one don't you? We'll be there sometime between 8 AM and 5 PM. [pause for more laughter] Don't go anywhere, [more slight laughter] and you know what it's like, it's like torture. We hate to wait. But of all the different kinds of waiting that we can do in life I don't know of any type of waiting that is harder for the people in this room tonight than, waiting on God. When you are in a hurry and God isn't, when you are caught in what I call, a spiritual standoff, you're wanting God to do something and it seems that heaven is silent and nothing is happening and all of your life seems to be cratering around you and you're thinking, God what's going on here? Why don't You do something? And being in a standoff with God is one of the most challenging and one of the most trying and one of the most frustrating of all of life's experiences.

I love the idea of a standoff. Several years ago I saw a little comic strip, Wizard of Id. Any of you have ever seen the Wizard of Id? They had a little thing in there about a Mexican standoff. Do you know what a Mexican standoff is? 12 jalapeno peppers and 12 Alka-Seltzer tablets, that's a Mexican standoff. [pause for slight congregation laughter] Well, sometimes you're involved in that standoff and it's a standoff with God and when you are, waiting is no fun. Well, if you've ever been there or if you're there tonight you're gonna enjoy the Psalm that we're gonna study. Psalm 13, 6 short verses, but we're gonna take this Psalm and we're gonna look at this Psalm and we're going to engage this Psalm together tonight. Because I think that you're gonna find that there are some common life experiences to be shared and to be understood from the psalmist here in Psalm 13, because we meet a man who is involved in a spiritual standoff. We meet a brother who is waiting on God. And I want you to hear what he has to say. Psalm 13 in verse 1:

¹How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? ²How long shall I take my counsel in my soul, Having sorrow in my heart daily? How long will my enemy be exalted over me?

Have you ever had one of those how long experiences? Have you ever prayed that how long prayer? Have you ever had a time where you thought, God has put me on hold and He's forgotten about me? Well, if you've ever been there, you know exactly where this psalmist is tonight. Now, we know nothing about the life circumstance or the life background of this Psalm. All that we know is that there was a man who was earnestly and intensely speaking from his heart and crying out to God and what we see here at the outset in verses 1 and 2, is the voice of protest.

Now, if you're takin notes tonight, there's a note page there for you in your worship guide and if you're taking notes, point number 1, the statement that is there is the **VOICE OF PROTEST**. So often when I'm caught in this trap of waiting on God, the thing that is going on inside of me, is that inwardly there's a protest, inwardly there's a demonstration, inwardly there is an outcry saying, God, how long? Have You forgotten me? God what are You doing in my life? And you find that you are impatient with God and you wonder why God isn't coming to the rescue. Well, if that's where you've been or that's where you are then you know as is true here with this psalmist, that there is that intensity of frustration and of emotion that is very difficult for you to try to endure and to walk through and so what many of us do is what we see in the lives of brothers and sisters who's life testimony is recorded in the Scripture, things that we are prone to do. And what we are prone to do is that sometimes when we begin to protest, when we have to wait on God, we find that waiting causes us, causes many of us to **WORRY** and to fret. We just ~~gin~~...begin to get wound up, we get tense, we get agitated and because God doesn't seem to be coming through and life doesn't seem to be moving on, we find ourselves at a place where we are just allowing worry and anxiety and intensity to build up inside of us. That's why over in the book of Philippians, chapter 4, the Bible says that we are to: [verse 6]

...worry about nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving,...

We are to:

...let our requests to be made known to God.

But it says:

Be anxious for... (worry about) ...nothing,...

And yet there's so many things that I find that I can very quickly begin to worry about. And then for some of us if it's not only to worry and fret for others waiting causes us to, to **PANIC** and to bolt. We decide I just gotta do something. I'm gonna do something. And of course the Bible has many incredible records of men and women who decided to do something when God had not given them permission to go on.

In fact if you'll look over in the book of Isaiah, if you have your Bible there, look over in the book of Isaiah chapter 50. There's an incredible portion of Scripture that I would like for you to see tonight on this subject of waiting. Because it may be that tonight you need someone to help you to put the brakes on because you're right at the point where you're ready to accelerate. You're thinking in your mind tonight, I am here, I have been waiting, I don't think God's comin through. All right, I'm gonna close my eyes and I'm just gonna hit the ~~ex~~...accelerator. I'm gonna just go for it. I'm gonna do something. Well, listen to what the Bible says, Isaiah 50, verse 10:

"Who among you fears the LORD? Who obeys the voice of His Servant? Who walks in darkness and has no light?..."

Is that you?

"...then let him trust in the name of the LORD and rely upon his God. ¹¹Let all you who kindle a fire, who incircle yourselves with sparks: Walk in the light of your fire and in the sparks that you have kindled—Thus you shall have from My hand: You shall lie down in torment."

God says, don't start tryin to make your own fire. God says, don't start trying to go your own way. God says, you are to trust in Me. So sometimes, for many of us, there's the tendency to worry. Other times there's a tendency to, to panic and therefore to bold and to just do something and then waiting causes most of us to start **COMPARING** ourselves with others. Sayin, well God, why didn't you make Sally wait? God why didn't you make Bill wait, like you made me wait? God you answered their prayer but you didn't answer my prayer. God you answered her prayer but you didn't answer my prayer. Every time I think of John chapter 20 or excuse me John chapter 21, I always am amused at that portion of Scripture where Jesus is restoring Peter after he has denied him and 3 times He's saying to him:

"...Peter, follow Me...feed My sheep...feed My sheep...feed My sheep..."

And finally after looking and feeling the pressure of the, of the Holy Spirit working in his life and the eyes of Jesus looking at him, Peter finally says, well Lord, what about John, what do you want him to do? And Jesus said: [verse 21]

..."What does it matter to you if He remains until I come again? You follow Me."

And you so many time a tendency when I'm waiting and it seems like other people are progressing there's a tendency in my life to want to compare with others and so waiting creates a protest, a protest sometimes that results and that demonstrates itself in anxiety, a protest that sometimes is just out and out rebellion. I'm just gonna go do something and a protest that many times is, is covered in the, in the outward a..., wrapping. God, look what You did there and look what You did here and why aren't You doing this for me? The voice of protest.

But not only tonight do I want you to see the voice of protest, I want you to look at the **VISION OF PRAYER**. We've listened to the voice of protest, but let's look at the vision of prayer. He says here back in Psalm 13 and verse 3:

³Consider and hear me, O LORD my God; Enlighten my eyes, Lest I sleep the sleep of death; ⁴Lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed against him"; Lest those who trouble me rejoice when I am moved.

He began to pray and to call out to the Lord, and he said oh God, God,

enlighten me. I need to see, God I'm not seeing right now, and that's the second step in waiting. It's not only protesting from the inner most part of your being, but it's seeking through prayer, to get a fresh vision that will allow you to trust God and to go one. It's the vision thing. You know in big business everything is about vision, the vision thing. Every time you talk about leadership you have to talk about the vision thing, because vision is vital to direction in life. When you get ready to leave tonight, you have to have a vision for where you're going. If you don't know where you're going tonight then you can just take any road, any path, any direction. Now you may end up down on 45 headed to Houston, you won't get home, but you're just out goin somewhere. You see you have to have a vision for where you're going. You need an address. You need a place and in much the same way in my relationship with God, while I don't always have the specifics of the direction and while I may not always know the address, what I do know is that I need a fresh vision of God and of His work and of His grace in my life. And sometimes waiting is a part of the process of God working a vision in me.

Several years ago I read an incredible story about a man by the name of Charlie Boswell. I don't know if any of you in this room have ever heard the name Charlie Boswell, but Charlie Boswell was a man who was a great athlete and who served the United States of America during World War II. But a tragic thing happened to this young athlete, strong and in the prime of his life. He was caught in the midst, one day, of a conflict and there was an attack on a tank and Charlie Bos...Boswell went to try to rescue one of his friends from this attack and he managed to get in to help and to save the life of another man, but in the process in getting in to the fire that was going on, Charlie Boswell was injured and his vision was lost. He was blind and here a young man who was strong in mind and strong in body had lost one of the most precious of all of his facilities. It was his eyesight. Well, he returned home and when he did he decided that he wanted to give himself, once again, to some sports and some a..., challenges in life and though he was blind he determined he'd make the best of it and Charlie Boswell determined that he was going to learn to play golf. That's right! A blind man who would play golf, in fact he was a part of the development of a blind golf league and ultimately he went on to win the blind golf championship 13 times over 13 years he was the blind golf champion and as a result of his wins and of his accomplishments he one day had a life dream fulfilled. He was given the opportunity of meeting his hero, Ben Hogan. He was so excited about the opportunity. In fact when the day came he had the opportunity to stand with and to speak with and to share with Ben Hogan and, and they talked together about a number of things and about golf and ultimately in the course of that conversation Charlie Boswell said to Ben Hogan, he said, "Mr. Hogan, you know, there's one thing that I would really love." He said, "I would love to play a round of golf with you." And Ben Hogan said, "Well, that would be great Charlie, I'd be glad to play golf with you." And then with a smile on his face Charlie Boswell said, "Mr. Hogan, would you play me for money?" [pause for slight congregation laughter] Well, Hogan said, "I can't play you for money Charlie." He said, "I'll be glad to play golf with you." He said, "But I can't play for money." He said a..., "Mr. Hogan, how bout we

play a thousand dollars a hole?" Ben Hogan, the pro, did not know what to do. He thought, I cannot begin to play golf with this man and take advantage of him and just about the time that thought was formulating in his mind, Boswell said, "What's the matter Hogan are you a chicken?" [pause for more laughter] Mr. Hogan said, "Well, Charlie, I'm not a chicken but I want you to know I just don't think this is fair." Charlie Boswell said, "Come on Hogan, let's play." He said, "All right, Charlie, I'll play you but," he said, "I'm gonna tell you I've made a commitment, I never play gold unless I play my best and I'm not gonna go out there and not play my best." Charlie Boswell said, "I wouldn't have it any other way." Hogan said, "Okay, then we'll play." He said, "You're on, Boswell." He said, "You name the time and the place." Boswell said, "Okay, we'll play at 10 PM [pause for more laughter] tonight." [pause for more laughter] Well, Mr. Hogan needed a new vision in his life, [more laughter] because suddenly what he thought was completely redirected. And sometimes in my life God takes me to a place where I have to wait so that I learn to wager on God instead of walking in my own light. You see I love to walk in my own light. I love to think that I have it all together, that I know what I'm supposed to do, that I know where I'm going, that I can simply pull out my calendar and, and I can pull out all the little measurements of life and tell you here's where I'm gonna be and that's what I'm gonna do and this is the goal I'm going to accomplish. But in life God has a way of harnessing all of those things and sometimes letting waiting be a part of a fresh vision in my life. What are some of the reasons that I am brought to a place where I am to wait upon God? What are some reasons for waiting upon God? Well, let me suggest several to you that I have a..., there in your note page tonight.

The first is that waiting on God **ALLOWS GOD TO SCHEDULE ME INTO HIS PLAN.** I so often seem to think that I'm running my schedule as I just mentioned. But God often uses waiting to schedule me into His plan, to help me to understand that He has plans and purposes and something that I'm learning in my journey with God in life is that timing is important to God, but time is not important to God. God's not living on a clock. God's not living on a calendar and though I use those 2 instruments daily in my life and I'm constantly concerned about time and time management, God is interested in timing and I've found in my life that He never fails in His timing, but oh how He frustrates me in my time. God schedules me into His plan. Now, just in case you're wondering, Psalm 25 in verse 3 tells us something very important. It says:

Let none be ashamed that wait upon the Lord..

When God has you waiting, God's purpose in waiting is not to shame you. He's not going to embarrass you. He's not going to disappoint you. He may not be doing what you want Him to do, how you want Him to do it, when you want Him to do it. But what He is doing is that He is timing things in life to accomplish His purpose for you. And Isaiah 30:18 simply says that:

As we wait upon Him, He is working in us. He is good to those who wait upon Him.

So when I'm waiting on God, one of the reasons that I wait on God, is so that God can schedule me into His plan. I like to schedule God into mine. But He wants to schedule me into His.

Secondly **GOD STEERS ME TO HIMSELF**. Not only does He schedule me into His plan, but He steers me to Himself. Psalm 62 and verse 5 says this:

⁵My soul, wait silently for God alone, For my expectation is from Him. ⁶He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; and I shall not be moved. ⁷In God is my salvation and my glory; The rock of my strength, And my refuge, is in God.

Why does God make me wait? Because sometimes He wants to steer me away from things that I would trust and to steer my focus to Him and Him alone. I like to have God and a lot of other things. But God wants me to trust Him and Him alone. And so sometimes in my life God takes me through the process of waiting so that He can steer me to Himself. Isn't it amazing how easy it is to come to church and to sing all these songs and choruses that we sing? We stand up on a Sunday and we lift our hearts and maybe even our hands and our voices and we sing:

*I want to know You,
I want to feel Your voice,
I want to know You Lord.*

But if knowing God means being stripped of some other things that we might be steered to Him I'm not so sure how much I wanna know Him. And yet God uses waiting to steer me to Himself.

There's a third thing that God does in waiting and that is that not only to schedule me into His plan and to steer me to Himself, but God uses waiting **TO SHAPE ME FOR HIS WILL**, to shape me for His will. God is working in time and for eternity and He is working in time through the circumstances, the people, the issues of my life to shape me for His will. Lamentations chapter 3, is one of my favorite passages of Scripture, in fact it's the heart a..., of the text, if you will, that gave essence to that song that the a..., _____ family sang for us a few minutes ago, *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*. And in Lamentations chapter 3 and verse 21, the Bible says:

²¹This I recall to mind, and therefore I have hope, ²²Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. ²³They are new every morning...

Say it with me.

...Great is Thy faithfulness. ²⁴"The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!" ²⁵The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the soul who seeks Him. ²⁶It is good that one should hope and wait quietly For the salvation of the LORD. ²⁷It is good for a man to bear the yoke in

his youth.

The Bible says that God is faithful and when I wait upon Him and when I put my hope in Him, what He is doing in my life is that He is shaping me for His will. So He's scheduling me in His plan, He's steering me to Himself, He is shaping me in His will...

And then, when I wait upon the Lord, He **STRENGTHS ME BY HIS GRACE**. I can't explain it. I can't fully a..., teach it. I can only give proclamation to the truth of it, that when you wait upon God, God strengthens you by His grace. Read again in the book of Isaiah chapter 40. Isaiah chapter 40 in verse 28:

²⁸Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. There is no searching in His understanding. ²⁹He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He ~~instren...~~increases strength. ³⁰Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, ³¹But those who wait upon the LORD Shall renew their strength; and they shall mount up with wings as eagles, and they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.

The Bible says when you wait upon the Lord, God strengthens you and it is by His grace that He gives you soaring power and enduring power and continuing power. Like the eagle, like the runner, like the walker. You see, God strengthens me by His grace and I only learn that when I wait upon the Lord. So we begin by listening to the voice of protest. God why, how long, do You remember? But then we look for the vision of prayer, a vision that helps me to see God at work and active in my life. Even if I feel like I'm at a standstill, God's word is clear, He's working in the lives of those who wait upon Him.

So I come to the last 2 verse of Psalm 13 and this I like to call the **LIVING IN THE VICTORY OF PRAISE**. Living in the victory of praise, because I find it fascinating that while this is only a brief Psalm with 6 verses, we don't know the background of the protest, but we know that within 6 short verses the psalmist moves from protest through prayer to praise. And he ends the Psalm in a completely different posture then he started it. Well, that shouldn't surprise us because you know what? Our emotions can change just like that, can't they? You see we're always wantin God to work in our emotions. God doesn't work in your emotions. The emotions are the most shallow part of your life and God doesn't do a deep work in shallow water. My emotions can change up and down, back and forth so many times in the course of a day, it all depends on my thoughts, it all depends on my focus, it depends on my vision, my sense of well being. But you see something changes in the psalmist, because listen to verse 5 and 6:

⁵But I have trusted in Your mercy; My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation. ⁶I will sing to the LORD, Because He has dealt bountifully with me.

What happened here? Nothing, nothing in the sense that there's been a change in the moment. But there has been an ~~in~~change...incredible change in the heart and the attitude of the psalmist. And now instead of protesting God he is praising God. Now instead of complaining he's proclaiming. And now instead of living with a sense of blaming God he's blessing God because protest when brought to prayer and a fresh vision of what God is at work doing brings me to the place that I can praise the Lord.

Now tonight, your sitting around tables, most of you, many of you. Some of you are tired of doing that. I know you're wondering if I'm gonna finish and it'll only take me about another 35 minutes [laughter] so just relax. [more laughter] But you're sitting around saying yeah I know, how he feels, yeah, [pause for more laughter] protest when you preach. [more laughter] You're sitting around tables tonight and obviously if this were a different setting this could be a restaurant. When you're in a restaurant and you're sitting at a table, especially when it's a crowded restaurant, there's one thing you wanna know is, is anybody gonna wait on me. Right? Is anybody gonna wait on me. Now, have you ever though that it's a bit humorous that we call them waiters? Because we do all the waiting. [more laughter] I mean, isn't that a fact? We go into a restaurant and we say I need a waiter. But you're the one who waits. So why do we call them the waiters? Because to wait in the restaurant sense of the word is to attend, to serve, to give attention. Is there a thought in that for us tonight? Could it be tonight that what we need to understand is that waiting on God is not this, it's focusing on Him, it's attending to Him, its serving Him. Well, the Bible says, wait on the Lord and be of good courage, wait, I say on the Lord. It doesn't say just sit back, put your feet up and say, all right God I'm waitin on You. No, it means that I am to give the very best of the energies of my life to the Lord and what happened in the heart of this psalmist is that while at one point he was protesting, through prayer he got a fresh vision that God was at work, whether he could understand it, whether he could perceive it, ~~whether he could con...~~whether he could explain it and so ultimately he decided I'm gonna go on and praise the Lord. I'm gonna go on and serve the Lord. I'm gonna go forward and believe the Lord and that's what it means to praise God even when you wait. One more time in the book of Isaiah, chapter 64 in verse 4. Listen very carefully to these words:

For since the beginning of the world Men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, Nor has the eye seen any God besides You, who acts for the one who waits for Him.

There are a lot of people who are waiting, waiting for some kind of a spiritual eminence or a spiritual force, waiting for the development of some kind of a spiritual discipline and a spiritual effort in their lives, waiting to find some kind of a pleasure, ~~some kind of a rich...~~rich, some form of riches, some kind of a provision. But all of those are the false gods that will leave us waiting without hope. But our God, ladies and gentlemen, is a God who from the beginning of time has always met the needs of those who wait upon Him. And so tonight, though you may have come into this room with a protest, I wanna encourage you and admonish you

tonight to wait on the Lord, to be of good courage, for He will strengthen your heart. Listen to the words of this song:

*Have faith in God.
When your pathway seems lonely,
He sees and knows all the way you have trod.
Never alone are the least of His children.
Have faith in God.
Have faith in God.*

*Have faith in God.
When your prayers are unanswered,
Your earnest plea He will never forget.
Wait on the Lord, trust His word and be patient.
Have faith in God.
He'll answer yet.*

*Have faith in God.
He's on His throne.
Have faith in God.
He watches or' His own.
He cannot fail.
He must prevail
Have faith in God.
Have faith in God.*

Wait on the Lord!