
How to Wait for the Lord

*In the name of our Savior who **is** coming, dear fellow redeemed:*

IT'S HARD TO WAIT.

'Tis the season for waiting. How many cruel parents are here, who already put presents under the tree? I'm thinking of the kids who have to look at those presents for weeks before it's time to open them. 'Tis the season for kids (and dads) to wait.

Waiting is hard. When I'm waiting for Christmas, but I want to open presents, I want to have a day off of work; I want to see my family; it's like my heart is itchy. I've got to do it. I want to celebrate. I can't wait!

ADVENT IS THE SEASON OF WAITING.

But Advent is the season of waiting. Today we're not reading about baby Jesus born in the manger. We're waiting for that story. Do you know how long God's people had to wait for the first Christmas? God promised to send a Savior on page 3 of the Bible. And Jesus, our Savior, came 4000 years later. Can you imagine if you had to wait 4000 years to open presents? If you know some Bible history, think of Adam and Eve, Abraham, and King David. They spent their life waiting for Jesus to be born.

And now, of course, they're in heaven, and they're still waiting for Jesus. Did you catch that in Revelation? A group of Christians in heaven who suffered when they were on earth want to know when Jesus will come back and end all this suffering. **"They called out in a loud voice, 'How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?'" (Revelation 6:10)**

Waiting is hard. Whether you're waiting for Jesus to come as a baby, or you're waiting for Jesus to take us to heaven, waiting is hard. It's not that we don't think Jesus will come. It's just that while you're waiting, your heart gets itchy, and you wanna, and you gotta—it's hard.

WHAT IS GOD MAKING YOU WAIT FOR?

So what is God making you wait for? It's not that you don't think God can help, it's just hard to wait. Some of you have been praying and praying and praying that God would heal your body, and God's answer is, "Wait." Some of you have

been praying that you wouldn't be lonely anymore, that you'd meet somebody you love, or you'd see them again, and God's answer is, "Wait." Some of you haven't been praying at all, but your heart still feels itchy because you want to be financially stable, you want peace in your family, and God's making you wait.

If God has you waiting right now, then I have to teach you this prayer shows you how to wait. The Holy Spirit came up with this prayer, and King David wrote it down; it's Psalm 13. This is what I love about the Psalms. They meet you in the middle of an everyday situation, and they teach you how to pray from right there where you are. Psalm 13 teaches you how to pray when you're waiting. That's our theme for this sermon:

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King David did a lot of waiting. God anointed him king when he was just a boy, but he had to wait years until he took the throne, and while he waited, the current king tried to kill him. Later on, David's son started a rebellion, and David had to wait to get control of his kingdom again and wait to reunite with his son. The Bible doesn't say when in David's life he wrote Psalm 13, but when he prays about waiting, he knows what he's talking about.

1- TELL YOUR FRUSTRATIONS TO GOD.

The first thing David does is get his frustrations out. He's mad because it feels like God has forgotten about him. He doesn't throw things around the room or yell at people. He yells at God—and that's the key, going to God. David took his frustrations about God to God.

¹ How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

² How long must I wrestle with my thoughts

and day after day have sorrow in my heart?

How long will my enemy triumph over me? (Psalm 13:1-2)

What makes you feel like God forgot about you? What thoughts do you wrestle with day after day? What sorrow is in your heart? I'm kind of glad that I don't know exactly when David felt like this because it means that no matter what is bothering me, I can take it to God. So we're going to pause for ten seconds, and in your brain, you tell God what's frustrating you. I'll watch the clock.

2- ASK GOD TO HELP.

After David told God his frustrations, he asked God *again* to help.

**³ Look on me and answer, LORD my God.
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,
⁴ and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"
and my foes will rejoice when I fall. (Psalm 13:3-4)**

David says, "God, answer my prayer! And if you don't, I'm a dead man." And he's right. Without God's help, your eyes would go dark. People who want to hurt you, both spiritually and people who want to hurt you in this world, they would win if it weren't for God. And that's exactly what we deserve. Why should God answer our prayers when so often we don't even remember him? Why should God want to save you when you consistently doubt if he can help you. Often our frustrations are a result of our own sin. Why should God help us out?

Why should God help? Not because of anything we have done! But here's the thing: He loves us. Entirely apart from anything we could do, he loves us. So when right after Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating the fruit they were supposed to avoid, right then, God stepped in and promised to send a Savior. When King David committed murder and adultery and lied about it, God stepped in and forgave his sin. When the whole world could find no peace with God, no happiness, then God stepped in; he was born into our world as a baby. The angels sang, "Peace on earth! A Savior is born!" There is nothing you could do to make God love you more, and there is nothing you could do to make God love you less. So that thing, that's making you anxious, he's going to take care of it. God's love is what allows you to wait in peace.

3- TRUST GOD'S UNFAILING LOVE.

So here's how David's prayer ends.

**⁵ But (nevertheless, despite my waiting) I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation.
⁶ I will sing the Lord's praise,
for he has been good to me. (Psalm 13:5-6)**

When David was waiting, what helped him was when he stopped and thought about all the ways that God had been good to him. God's love never failed him in the past, and it's never failed you. He promised a Savior, and after his people waited, he kept his promise. He promised to forgive you, and he kept his

promise. He promised to take care of you, and even if you're waiting, he'll keep his promise. How do you wait? You wait by saying what David said, "I trust in your unfailing love."

DURING ADVENT, WE MEDITATE ON GOD'S UNFAILING LOVE.

In the chapel at Fox Valley Lutheran High School, a passage in gold letters spans the stage. "**Within your temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love.**" (**Psalm 48:9**) What a thing to read day after day. That is why we come to church during this season of waiting. Because here, in God's house, we remember how God's love never fails. Here we confess our sins, and every time God forgives us. Here we see the cross where Jesus gave his all for us. Here we meditate on God's unfailing love.

Remembering God's unfailing love, that's how you wait. And that's why we are going to sing each week of Advent that haunting melody. "In you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits." Not in anxiety, not in fear, in stillness. "In you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits. Truly my hope is in you."

Will you do one more thing with me before we pray? Bring into your mind that thing the Lord is making you wait for—whether it's Christmas presents, or something much more serious. Whatever's making you anxious or frustrated, let's pray about it using the words of **Psalm 13**.

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**² How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?
How long will my enemy triumph over me?**

³ Look on me and answer, Lord my God.

Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,

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my heart rejoices in your salvation.**

**⁶ I will sing the Lord's praise,
for he has been good to me.**

Amen.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.