

I wish someone told me years ago how much of life is waiting and advised me to learn to wait well

In leadership we talk about, leading well, finishing well but what about waiting well.

We all have to wait for something: medical results, relationship repair, ministry issue to be rectified, wayward child to come home, waiting for that positive pregnancy test result , waiting for life and ministry to get back to some semblance of normalcy pre-COVID, waiting for that new ministry assignment, or new job, etc. **We all have seasons of waiting.**

The question is HOW we will wait : Anxious, fearful, fretting, or trusting, hoping, believing?

Posture of waiting: Psalm 37

- Fret not** yourself because of evildoers;
be not envious of wrongdoers!
- 2** For they will soon fade like the grass
and wither like the green herb.
- 3 Trust in the LORD, and do good;**
dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.^[b]
- 4 Delight yourself in the LORD,**
and he will give you the desires of your heart.
- 5 Commit your way to the LORD;**
trust in him, and he will act.
- 6** He will bring forth your righteousness as the light,
and your justice as the noonday.
- 7 Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him;**

God's prescription for waiting. But it quite honestly didn't look like this for me

Picture of my soul - honest anguish

Desperate, Disappointed, Disheartened, Depressed
Dejected at times, Disillusioned Depleted
Fearful, Anxious
Overwhelmed and overcome
Tired
Hopeless
Challenged
Heart broken and Incredibly sad Real emotion - honest anguish

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SUFFERING EXPOSES our SOUL- what's really going on in the very recesses of our heart and soul?

Faith vs confidence in Gods character – my faith wasn't in faith. Did I have enough faith? Did I pray enough? My hope and confidence were in God's character. Quite honestly, none of us knew how this was going to all turn out.

POURING OUT MY HEART

My prayers were mostly groans. Cries of desperation. Honest anguish. Honest with my emotions. I was afraid for my grandson and afraid for my kids

Often I couldn't even pray. I didn't have words. I only had tears

My tears were " liquid prayers "- the scriptures tell us that God collects our tears and that our prayers are like incense.

I often could only cry out his name, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus" or "Kyrie eleison" (**Lord, have mercy**) and "Christe eleison" (Christ, have mercy)

BORROWED FAITH: I counted on the prayers and faith of others, and unashamedly sent out almost daily cries for prayer -texts of desperation. I often couldn't even pray. Others prayers carried me through – many of THE ARROW community carried us through –

Even a United Airlines agent. "*I have faith that God is going to heal your grandson.* I don't know if I have that kind of faith right now. *Oh honey, you can borrow some of my faith*"

POUR OUT MY SOUL- I made a conscious choice that as long as I had breath I was going to pour out my soul to God

Psalm 116:1-2

I love the Lord, for he heard my voice;
he heard my cry for mercy.

Because he turned his ear to me,
I will call on him as long as I live.

He turned his ear to me. As one commentator wrote, *he lays his ear, as it were, to the mouth of prayer, to hear it, though it be but whispered in groanings that cannot be uttered. He is ready and willing to hear our prayers.* Cry out to Him in desperation before Him -knowing He has the compassion, and the ability to do something about this situation.

PRAISE BEFORE THE BREAKTHROUGH

I heard clearly in my soul. Start praising now and invite everyone to praise with you and change the atmosphere. A friend from Singapore sent me this song:

Song Believe For it! Ceci Winans

Bryan and Katie Torwalt's album *Praise before the Breakthrough* became my lifeline.

I'll praise before my breakthrough
 'Til my song becomes my triumph
 I will sing because I trust You
 I will bring my heart, I will lift my song

He who came in power, He will come again
 He who heals the sick, won't He move again
 He who raised the dead, won't He raise again
 And I will sing, I will sing

Chose to speak out/sing out my praises. Praise begets peace! Praise ushers in His Presence. Sometimes it felt like **Defiant praise** like Paul and Silas and jail

PROCLAIM HIS CHARACTER – I reminded God of His character: good good father, the healer, the deliverer, the all powerful omnipotent one, the faithful one- etc,

PROPHECY HIS PROMISES

Song by Bryan & Katie Torwalt and Jesus Culture

*... When I only see in part
 I will prophesy Your promise
 I believe You, God
 'Cause You finish what You start
 I will trust You in the process
 I believe You, God*

I took Him at His Word. I Personalized His WORD – *scriptio divina*

We love the Lord, for he heard our voice;
 he heard our cry for mercy **for Charles.**
 Because he turned his ear to us
 we will call on him as long as we live.
The cords of death entangled Charles,
 the anguish of the grave came over us;
At times over these past 4 1/2 months,
we were overcome by distress and sorrow.
 Then we called on the name of the Lord:
"Lord, save us - save Charles!"
 The Lord is gracious and righteous;
 our God is full of compassion.

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The Lord protects the unwary (**and innocent little Charles**);

when we were brought low, he saved us.

Return to your rest, my soul,

for the Lord has been good to us.

Psalm 116:1-7 (NIV UK)

From God to me:

Ingrid, I know you love me and I love you. I have heard your voice and your pleas for mercy. I have inclined my ear to you, I always will, so keep on calling on me as long as you live. I know you felt like the snares of death were all around Charles, I know you worried about Christian and Sasha, I know you suffered distress and anguish for all of them. YET- you still chose to call on my name for deliverance. I am the gracious and righteous one, full of mercy towards you. I will preserve you. My daughter, may your soul return to rest for I have dealt bountifully with you.

Ps 27:13

13 I remain confident of this:

I will see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living.

14 Wait for the Lord;

be strong and take heart
and wait for the Lord.

Ps 16:8

I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

Lamentations 3:21-26

He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes;

17 my soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happinessfn is;

18 so I say, “My endurance has perished; so has my hope from the LORD.”

19 ¶ Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall!

20 My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me.

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.” The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

John 14:14

You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. *-God you said it, why are you taking so long?*

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Pray to apply the promises. (adapted from sermon by Tyler Staton at Bridgetown Church). I can reflect on and know the promises of God but I have to pray to apply those promises. **Pray the promises not the problem!!**

- **Name the fear or the issue that you're waiting for – this is what your word says**
- **Turn it into Gratitude**
- **Make a Request**

FEAR: I'm afraid of being alone *God thank you that your WORD says that you will never leave me or forsake me THANK YOU that you are that you are my ultimate home and then one day I'll be with you forever entirely satisfied and so today let me know your nearness let me taste of that forever promised future that loneliness might not eat me up but anticipation for you eats me up"*

FEAR: "I'm afraid of losing a loved one" **GRATITUDE:** "*God thank you for giving me someone to love and be loved by thank you for giving me someone that's close enough in my life that I fear my life without them. REQUEST:* so let me cherish every moment that I have left with them however many you choose to give me.

PREACH TO MY SOUL:

*And I will speak to my fear, I will preach to my doubt
That You were faithful then, You'll be faithful now-
Faithful Now, Vertical Worship*

I literally would take my soul out and address it, as the psalmist modeled for us:

Ps 42:12 Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

Ps 116 return to your rest my soul for the Lord has been good to us.

Ps 103

Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
2 Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—
3 who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,
4 who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,
5 who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's

Luke 8:50 Jesus to Jairus **Do not fear, only believe."**

I would preach to my soul “Do not fear only believe, Soul, believe in God , the miracle working God. Oh God help my unbelief !”

Waiting Well

Psalm 37 God's posture of Waiting
 Pouring out my heart
 Presence of Others- gift of giving and receiving presence of others- a sacred trust
 Praise before the Breakthrough
 Proclaim Hs character
 Prophesy His Promises
 Preach to my soul

Back to Psalm 37: POSTURE OF WAITING

Be still and Wait patiently Transliteration: chuwl: khool to twist, whirl, dance, writhe, fear, tremble, travail, be in anguish, be pained to writhe (in travail with), to wait anxiously.

It's ok to wrestle in the waiting, we have permission to struggle, to travail, fear and tremble, and an invitation to bring it all to God- we roll every burden, every fear, every pain, every situation into His everlasting arms of love. And then we hold on to HOPE!

PREPARATION PRACTICE

Times of trouble – times of waiting will come (Jesus pretty much guarantees this – in this world you WILL have trouble) times of waiting will come for you, for those you love, for those you minister to. How will you wait? How will you wait with them? WE NEED to pay attention, to practice soul care and self care.

Barna Study that Sharon mentioned last month: Nearly Two in Five Pastors Have Considered Quitting Full-Time Ministry. Study revealed that Those who have considered quitting their self-care and soul care has slipped. Currently, only 35 percent of America's pastors fall into the healthy category of well-being. (Relational, spiritual, physical, emotional and financial well being). Overall, pastors who are contemplating quitting are less healthy in all the well-being categories compared to pastors who are not considering giving up full-time ministry.

So we prepare- daily- by caring for our souls. By praising, by being in His word, by practicing silence- quieting ourselves, listening for his voice, practicing trust, learning how to really travail for yourself, and others. Confidence in God's character.

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This is what happens when you wait: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isa. 40:31).

PRAYER

O Lord, let me not henceforth desire health or life except to spend them for you, with you, and in you. You alone know what is good for me; do therefore what seems best to you. Give to me or take from me; conform my will to yours; and grant that with humble and perfect submission and in holy confidence, I may receive the orders of your eternal providence, and may equally accept (adore) all that comes to me from you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. Blaise Pascal (1623 - 1662)