



Face the Issue:

This week, we turned our attention to the history of Meadowdale and all that this body of believers has done. But we were also reminded that God is not done with us yet. He “is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us.”

We hear and read that word but sometimes we have a hard time waiting for it. How good are you at waiting? Let’s take a pop quiz.

You are in line at the grocery store. The person in front of you is having an extended conversation with the cashier. How do you respond?

A: You are happy. You observe that they are doing the transaction in community. You think about forming a small group with you and the person and the cashier.

B: You think of things that you’d like to say to the cashier. Invite her to the 605 service perhaps.

C: You attempt to shoulder your way between the person and the cashier so you can pay for your milk.

You’ve been sitting in the waiting room of your doctor’s office for an hour. How do you respond?

A: You’re grateful for the chance to catch up on the 1993 Reader’s Digest.

B: You tell the other patients you have a highly contagious and fatal disease in an attempt to empty the waiting room.

C: You force yourself to hyperventilate to get immediate attention.

Now, these are fairly casual kinds of waiting, but we put up with them. However, there are other, more serious and difficult kinds of waiting. There’s the waiting of a single person to see if God has marriage in store for him or her. There’s the waiting of a childless couple that desperately wants to start a family but day after day, week after week, their prayer goes unanswered. There’s the waiting of someone who longs to have work that’s meaningful and significant and seems to matter, but it doesn’t happen. There’s the waiting of a spouse who’s trapped in a difficult marriage that seems unlikely to change. Lewis Smedes puts it like this:

Waiting is our destiny. As creatures who cannot by themselves bring about what they hope for, we wait in the darkness for a flame we cannot light. We wait in fear for a happy ending that we cannot write. We wait for a “not yet” that feels like a “not ever.”

What are you currently waiting for, or have waited for in the past?

What about that wait is (or was) difficult?

Why do you think God allows us to wait?

Into the Word:

Scripture is full of people that had to wait for the completion of God's promises.

Abraham is 75 years old when God tells him he is going to be a father. "You'll be the ancestor of a great nation." You know how long it was before that promise came true? Twenty-four years.

God told Israel, His people, that they'd be a nation, able to leave the slavery of Egypt and be independent, but they had to wait 400 years. And then God told Moses he would lead the people to the Promised Land, but they had to go to the wilderness and wait 40 years.

Then came the great promise that the Messiah, the Savior, the Redeemer sent by God, would come. God's people waited generation after generation, century after century, while God seemed silent. Then, strangest of all, when the Messiah came, He was only recognized by a few. He wasn't at all what they thought they were waiting for. In fact, only some of those who were waiting for Him recognized Him.

If God has great things for us, why does He make us wait for them?

Biblical waiting is not passively waiting around for something or someone to come along that will allow you to escape from your trouble. People sometimes say "I'm just waiting on the Lord" as an excuse not to face up to reality, take appropriate action, or own up to their responsibility. That is not what waiting on the Lord is.

Waiting on the Lord is a confident, disciplined, expectant, active, sometimes painful clinging to God. Waiting on the Lord is the continual, daily decision to say, "God, I will trust you and obey you, even though the circumstances of my life are not turning out the way I want them to and may never turn out the way I want them to. I'm betting everything on you, God, and there is no Plan B." That's waiting on the Lord.

Read Romans 8:18–25

Why is what's happening in us as important as the thing we are waiting for?

What good things have you seen God do in your life as a result of waiting?

How might waiting on little things help us to be patient about the big things?

How does waiting on the Lord help us draw closer to him?

Action Step

Waiting on the Lord requires inextinguishable hope, for in hope we were saved. Hope that is seen, Paul wrote, is not hope, for who hopes for what is seen? In other words, if I already had it I wouldn't have to hope for it. But if we hope for what we do not see, what we cry out for and hunger and thirst for but don't yet experience, we do so with patience. In the Bible we find a most wonderful promise attached to waiting on the Lord.

What we wait for is not more important than what happens to us while we're waiting. The one we wait for will be worth the wait. In fact, it is "immeasurable".

Take some time for each person to share one thing they are waiting for. Pray as a group for each person to have God's perspective on this thing.