

Illustration: 60 Seconds of Silence (uncomfortable, tense)

Discussion: What are you going to do with your rocks?

In the seasons of waiting I have found so many couples struggling with the “*Why are we having to wait or why is this happening to us?*” question. Perhaps you can relate ...

Video: Why? – Part 1

At the cross Jesus legitimized the question, *Why?* ...

“About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice,
‘My God, my God, **why** have you forsaken me?’”
Matthew 27:46 (NIV)

Two other **Questions** we ask when we’re waiting ...

1. When will the waiting end?
2. When will I get what I’m waiting on?

Until we answer “when” and “what” we feel like we’re wasting time. But if we become focused too much on “when” and “what” ... it’s a dangerous, slippery slope. Here’s the danger ...

When what you’re “waiting for” becomes what you’re “hoping in”. This is a very dangerous place to be in. Why is this so dangerous? Because we don’t always get what we want. (**Pause**)

When what we’re waiting for becomes what we’re hoping in, two outlooks result ...

You begin to look at life from the perspective of **Eeyore** (cup ½ empty). He needs either a good counselor or a kick in the pants.

Prop: Eeyore Stuffed Animal

The other extreme is found by **living in denial**. You convince yourself that you’ll get everything in life that you want. This is seen in the **American Idol contestants from the first three weeks**. They live in their own world, don’t they?!

Reflection: How do you deal with this reality that you don’t get everything you want?

On the other hand, if what you’re waiting on is what you’re hoping in, you might just get what you’re waiting on. If that happens in your life ... you may discover that this is a very confusing and perplexing place to be! It will be disheartening in the long run. It’s a place that leads to disillusionment (destination disease).

What the Bible is going to teach us in this session is that we're actually not waiting on the "what" or the "when" ... we're not waiting on the job, relationship, child, health issue, etc. **The reason you can't say wait on "that" is because you can't put your hope there.** And in the next few moments your circumstances won't change, but your perspective can change. **Let's Pray!**

The Old Testament prophet Isaiah came to the people of Israel in a season of waiting ...

"Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel,
'My way is hidden from the LORD; my cause is disregarded by my God?'"
Isaiah 40:27 (NIV)

They're asking "what" and "when". On a personal and a national level, they were in a difficult season of frustration and feeling abandoned.

Take a moment and look at this word ...

NOWHERE

What word do you see? How many of you saw "**no where**"? How many saw "**now here**"? How do we get to the point inwardly where we see God as "**now here**" rather than as "**no where**"?

That was Isaiah's assignment as a prophet to the people of Israel ...

"Do you not know? Have you not heard?"

Isaiah reminds them that it's not "what" or "when" but on something else entirely. He then continues by pointing them to something other than their circumstances. **When we narrow our focus solely on the situations we're in we tend to forget what we've known and what we've heard.** So Isaiah wakes them up to a new reality and this was a game changing perspective ...

"The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom."
Isaiah 40:28 (NIV)

When we come to the realization that it's not "what" or "when" but **WHO** ... something mysterious (deeply spiritual) happens. Let me try and describe ... when we begin to wait on Him, rather than on our circumstances or the "what" or "when" (these drain us!) ... He comes alongside us and gives us the **strength** to take a step of faith from today to tomorrow. And if we'll stay focused on the "Who", He'll give us what we need to do it again the next day and the next and the next.

And as you do that day after day after day, His will for your life begins to soar. You begin to develop a bit of a step, into a run and end up soaring into your heavenly Father's will. There's no greater feeling! When you're focused on "what" and "when", you become exhausted. But **when you focus on "Who", you have strength for the journey.**

Trust God

Waiting For God Knows What

The strength doesn't come from a motivational speech or from a life coach. It's not from chemical aids or positive self-talk. Your strength comes from the Lord! Here's how Isaiah put it ...

“He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.

³⁰ Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall;

³¹ but those who hope (wait) in the LORD 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 40:29-31 (NIV)

Props: Eagles (from my office)

In essence ... it's not “what” or “when”, but Who! God gives you peace. But we must surrender/submit to Him. So, where is your hope? Who is your trust in?

Illustration: John McEnroe & Bjorn Borg

Me & Amie

John McEnroe's autobiography illustrates perfectly what happens when what we want is what we're hoping in/for. McEnroe had one aim in life – to be the #1 player in the world. In 1981 he finally beat Bjorn Borg at both Wimbledon & the U.S. Open. He was in an airport after reaching his goal/dream/destination and was struck by “destination disease.” He was overcome with emptiness and loneliness.

What: Be the #1 player in the world

Associate Pastor

When: Now!

Now!

Result: Emptiness and Loneliness

Fulfillment & Effectiveness

Just because we get what we're waiting for doesn't mean that we'll be satisfied. We tend to suffer from emotional letdowns when we finally get the job, arrive at the ideal weight, have the child, reach the level of education, have the perfect house, etc.

But when our hope is in our heavenly Father, He will never let us down! If you'll put your hope in Him ... He won't disappoint. As you take a step toward Him, He will give you the strength to take another step, and another, and another – one day at a time.

As we wrap up this session and the seminar I want to share a story in closing that depicts for us an intense season of waiting. Take a look at this and then we'll continue ...

Video: Logan Knupp's Miracle Story

75% of the couples on the 8th floor end up in divorce.

All their friends kids have since passed away.

8 yrs. old, 10/1997 – 11/1997; 1/2000; now 13 yrs. old

Interview: Alan & Lisa Knupp (Tyler, Logan & Alia)

This is hard for us to imagine. Bring us up to speed with where things are today.

What did you learn about God and yourselves while you were waiting?

What did you learn about waiting? How long until you realized what growth had occurred?

What words of encouragement or acts of kindness meant the most? The least?

What counsel would you give to those who are currently waiting on the Lord?

Illustration: Walk with a couple, hand in hand, across the front of the SLC.

When We Don't Know What To Do, Our Hope Is Not What Or When But Who.

Illustration: Mike Morris and/or Paul Kirk (these guys were wise)

To remind us to put our hope in the everlasting God who will give strength to the weary ...

Exercise: Hope In You Card

Video: Why? – Part 2

Song: Everlasting God (Brenton Brown)

Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord
We will wait upon the Lord
We will wait upon the Lord

Our God, You reign forever
Our hope, our Strong Deliverer
You are the everlasting God
The everlasting God
You do not faint
You won't grow weary

Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord
We will wait upon the Lord
We will wait upon the Lord

Our God, You reign forever
Our hope, our Strong Deliverer
You are the everlasting God
The everlasting God
You do not faint
You won't grow weary

You're the defender of the weak
You comfort those in need
You lift us up on wings like eagles

Let's pray!

- Adoration, Thanksgiving, Confession & Supplication
- Trusting – What & When vs. Who
- Shift focus from circumstances to the Lord (strength & power)