

Do you like waiting?

Waiting can often be painful, in fact, some of the greatest pain we face in life is because we are waiting. Waiting for dreams to be fulfilled, waiting for God to break through and answer our prayers.

But God is never in a rush, He is always on time, and we struggle with that.

Maybe you are in a season of waiting, and it seems that God is not hearing your cry.

Before the birth of Jesus, Israel was waiting. They had been promised a messiah, who would redeem them and set them free. There had been so many prophecies about a messiah who would establish a new kingdom, and they were waiting.

But as hopeless as the situation was, God was at work. God was orchestrating all human history to this one pivotal moment in time (see Galatians 4:4).

Zechariah and Elizabeth were also waiting, waiting for God to bless them with a child, a hope that they had given up on. There is so much in the account of Zechariah and Elizabeth that reminds us of Abraham and Sarah, almost 1800 years earlier. They were both old and beyond childbearing age, they both had angelic visitations and they were both promised a son who would fulfill the promises of God.

Zechariah and Elizabeth righteous and devout people, blameless before God (see Luke 1:6), and yet they had no children. They had an unfulfilled dream; they were carrying pain. The Bible makes it clear that their pain was not because of some sin they had committed.

Many of us can identify with that kind of pain. Dreams of childless parents, yearning for a child. Dreams of being married when the years seem to be rushing by. Dreams of health when the chronic illness seems to linger on. The temptation is to think that maybe you did something wrong, maybe you disappointed God, maybe you missed what God had planned for you.

Sometimes our pain can be as a result of sin, but often it is not. So, we stand before God, waiting, sometimes with feelings of bitterness (*God, what have you done?*), guilt (*God, what have I done?*), or both. Waiting on God's presence, we find it hard to hope for good news.

Mostly, our struggle is because we have an expectation in mind, a timeline that we expect God to move in. But God works for His glory, and the greater the miracle, the more God gets the praise.

Zechariah and Elizabeth were waiting, the nation was waiting. While they were waiting, they continued to be faithful (see Luke 1:10). Even a multitude of people outside the temple were waiting, expectant for God to move in power for them. Zachariah was faithful and even after all the years of silence from God, he was still burning the incense and obeying the law.

As we know, God heard their prayers and at the appointed time, the Savior, the light of the world was revealed, and their hope was fulfilled.

God sent the angel Gabriel, to announce the birth of John the Baptist, the one who would prepare the way for Jesus the Messiah. Finally, the four hundred years of silence was over, God has spoken!

But even with the incredible visitation of Gabriel, Zechariah didn't believe (see Luke 1:19). In spite of this declaration and display of heavenly presence, Zechariah doubts. He explains to Gabriel that he is simply too old to be a father.

We must remember that Zechariah was a priest, and he would have taught the scriptures telling the account of Abraham and Sarah who were blessed with Isaac, even when Sarah was ninety years old. He knew the history, he believed God could do it, but he didn't believe it for himself.

This is something we all struggle with. When we hear an amazing testimony of God answering prayer for someone, we doubt that God could do that for me.

There is a difference between knowing God's promise intellectually and waiting on God's promise personally.

God delivered on His promise and Elizabeth conceived. Her shame and decades of reproach were removed (See Luke 1:25).

But this was no ordinary child. This was to be John the Baptist, the one prophesied in Isaiah 40:3. And later Jesus would say that John was the greatest man ever born (See Matthew 11:11).

Not only was the promise fulfilled, but it was also way more significant that Zechariah or Elizabeth could have imagined. The waiting was over, the promise was about to be fulfilled.

What are you waiting for from God today?

Does it seem that God is taking too long? Maybe you feel that He is not hearing your cry?

"Be assured that if God waits longer than you could wish. It is only to make the blessing doubly precious. God waited four thousand years, till the fullness of time, ere he sent His son. Our times are in His hands; He will make haste for our help speedily; He will make haste for our help, and not delay one hour too long". Andrew Murray

God is never late in fulfilling His promises.

Is there an area in your life where you feel "barren," failing to live up to your own (or someone else's) expectations?

Why don't you take that pain to the Lord today, wait on His perfect timing and trust Him for the outcome.