

**New Life**  
**Waiting Well • Message 2**  
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**A. Introduction**

Everybody waits, but not everyone waits well. This is the big idea of what I want you to see.

But I know Brookwood people never struggle with waiting...

We wait for luggage at the concourse... and you love it

We wait for red lights to turn, and we love it

We wait in grocery lines... and we love it...

We wait for birthdays, holidays, and vacations... and we just love it.

I have never been in a line, and someone just goes, *man, I love waiting...*

When my son was a few years younger... he liked certain plants... so he wanted to try and grow something... so, he planted a seed and just stood out there... and he came back in and said, *this waiting is hard...* Steph and I used to—when he'd go to sleep—plant a flower near where he'd put the seed... and he'd come back amazed... I loved it when he would say *this planting thing is so hard...*

But let's be honest, not all waiting is equal... some waiting can be overwhelming,

What about waiting for the doctor's report to come back to see how treatments are doing?

What about waiting for your spouse to change?

What about waiting for the anxiety and depression to change?

What about waiting for meaningful work in your job?

Or what about a promise you felt like you heard from God that hasn't happened yet?

In the waiting, something is forming, something is shaping. In fact, I would say the waiting, in some ways, forms us more than the experiences...

How do you wait well? How do you really trust God when you don't see any change?

**God's delays have a purpose.**

You can break every Bible story down really into three parts:

1. The Promise
2. The Delay of the Promise
3. The Fulfillment of the Promise

Let's take a look at these parts of every story through the lens of Abraham.

## **B. Waiting Well**

### **1. The PROMISE.**

(Genesis 12:2-3; 15:7, 17-18)

*But Abram replied, "O Sovereign LORD, what good are all Your blessings when I don't even have a son? Since You've given me no children, Eliezer of Damascus, a servant in my household, will inherit all my wealth. You have given me no descendants of my own, so one of my servants will be my heir." Then the LORD said to him, "No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own who will be your heir."*

#### **Genesis 15:2-4 (NLT)**

So, God shows up when Abraham is 70 years old and Sarah is around 60 years old and says, *hey, you're going to have a baby.*

Abraham starts to doubt this promise in Genesis 15, and he thinks his relatives will just end up with his inheritance because he doesn't have children... and God says to him, *no, I will give you a child, and I'm going to give your people a land for themselves...* So, He ups His promises...

*Then the LORD told him, "I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land as your possession."*

#### **Genesis 15:7 (NLT)**

*The LORD told him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon."*

#### **Genesis 15:9 (NLT)**

But Abraham wants to know...how can he trust God... so God does something that seems random... He tells Abraham to get all these animals... and make a sacrifice...

Like, I can assure you that you have never been in a relationship talk and said, *hey, how can I trust you,* and someone goes, *hey, get a 3-year-old Heifer, and I will show you the meaning of commitment...*

And what happens is—this was a very common practice to make a commitment or a covenant—you would take an animal, cut it in half, and both parties would walk through... it was their way of saying, *may this happen to me if I don't follow through.*

How do we show a commitment to something today? We sign our name to it. The ceremony doesn't make you married; it's when you sign your name... and when you go to buy a house, you sign like 200 documents as a reminder you no longer have any freedom.

Or when your kids are born, you fill out paperwork and sign your name so you can get their birth certificate... and once you get that document back, it says in fine print that you will now get no sleep, no peace, no rest, and you won't even be able to use the bathroom by yourself... The other night, I was

sleeping, and one of my children came into our room, and I thought I heard something, and there was a 5-year-old just standing there... saying nothing... just being terrifying...

In that culture, they didn't sign names. It wasn't a written culture; you would do it visually. You would act out consequences.

Yet what's interesting is Abraham doesn't walk through, only God.

*After the sun went down and darkness fell, Abram saw a smoking firepot and a flaming torch pass between the halves of the carcasses. So, the LORD made a covenant with Abram that day and said, "I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from the border of Egypt to the great Euphrates River—"*

### **Genesis 15:17-8 (NLT)**

You go, *what is that about... a torch and oven...* in the Bible, the majority of the time when God shows up, there are always two things ... 1.) smoke and 2.) fire.

So, this is showing the holy, mysterious presence of God coming and walking.

Think about this: It's a picture of Jesus... because Abraham doesn't walk. So, what happens is it's His way of saying, *if I break my commitment to be faithful to you may I be ripped apart, and Abraham, if you break your part, may I be ripped apart.*

So, God makes the promise several times and makes a commitment... but then, what happens is the second thing, which is this...

## **2. The DELAY of the Promise.**

(Genesis 16:2-5)

Discouragement that leads to destruction... and one of the things that leads to discouragement is waiting.

Think about it: discouraged people do destructive things.

No one says *I have the best marriage. I'm going to leave it...* It's when they are discouraged from delays.

No one says *I have the best job. I'm feeling guilty; it's too fun. I'm going to leave it.* It's when people are discouraged from delays.

No one says *I think my church is too perfect* and goes to find a worse church... it's when people are discouraged...

Listen, if God has promised you something... or you're trying to follow Him, this is where you are most at risk.

Because in spaces like this, God seems to be silent. But don't confuse the silence of God with the absence of God. He is always working and always present, even if you can't feel or see it.

I love what C.S. Lewis says!

*I do not know why there is this difference, but I am sure that God keeps no one waiting unless He sees that it is good for him to wait. When you do enter your room, you will find that the long wait has done you some kind of good which you would not have had otherwise. But you must regard it as waiting, not as camping. You must keep on praying for light.*

**C.S. Lewis**

See, it's in the delays we try and take shortcuts... we try and bring life where there seems to be no life...

This is exactly what Abraham and Sarai do.

*So Sarai said to Abram, "The LORD has prevented me from having children. Go and sleep with my servant. Perhaps I can have children through her." And Abram agreed with Sarai's proposal.*

**Genesis 16:2 (NLT)**

- Think about this: Sarah never once heard from God. Abraham heard from God. And ladies, do you usually trust your husband to get all the facts right?
- But she comes up with this terrible idea. She says *God said we will have a child. Let's just help Him out... why don't you, Abraham, go sleep with my servant...* and because Abraham is a guy... He goes OK 😊....
- And one of the reasons I love the Bible and know it's real is because it doesn't sugarcoat things... like, it says it how it is... because Sarah tells him to do this, and of course, he has to take some responsibility...

But listen to what she says.

*Then Sarai said to Abram, "This is all your fault! I put my servant into your arms, but now that she's pregnant she treats me with contempt."*

**Genesis 16:5 (NLT)**

I love this... *Hey, I know I told you to do this... but I just want you to know it's all your fault 😊*

A little while ago, I was with a couple, and he was driving, and she was in the passenger seat... and she was doing the thing, I'm sure none of you do the passenger seat driving... like, he would slow down like 500 yards away... and she's going *Ahhh!* and throw her hands up, which doesn't increase the risk of accidents at all, right? But she told him to get off on an exit, and then there was traffic and it took a lot longer. Keep in mind she told him... and the whole way there, she just said *it's your fault we're late... you should have gotten off on the other exit...*

Now, the reason emotions are high with Sarah is in traditional culture, having kids was everything... your value was assigned by having kids and being a mom...

This is important to know. In culture today, we will assign values for people today. Some of it can be around your career, and if you don't have a career, you don't have value... but in this culture...

If you let culture and not Jesus assign values, it will do one of two things...

**a) Feel SUPERIOR to others.**

Because you're crushing it—meeting your goals—but you tend to look down on others with that mindset...

*So Abram had sexual relations with Hagar, and she became pregnant. But when Hagar knew she was pregnant, she began to treat her mistress, Sarai, with contempt.*

**Genesis 16:4 (NLT)**

Because children were everything, notice what Hagar does. She looks down... she starts comparing herself to Sarah and feels good and accomplished.

I love what C.S. Lewis says here:

*Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. They are proud of being richer, or cleverer, or better-looking than others. If someone else became equally rich, or clever, or good-looking there would be nothing to be proud about. It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest.*

**C.S. Lewis**

**b) Feel INFERIOR to others.**

Sarah yells at Abraham because she feels inferior... and often, when we feel inferior, we begin to take it out on those around us. We feel bad about ourselves, so we want to bring others down with us...

This is how Sarah feels...

but the Gospel makes us humbly confident.... Are you humbly confident this morning?

Humble because you know your sin, you know your rebellion, you know what's in your heart without Jesus... but confident that you are His, confident that you are forgiven and set free.

**Transition phrase: All of these bad decisions are happening because they got discouraged in the delay...**

And let me just say this... Delays are where we find out if we follow God for God... or if we follow God because of what He gives...

Delays help us fall in love with the Blesser instead of the blessings... because it's there we learn what matters most... we learn that if we have Jesus, we really do have it all...

And that's why Paul, in the middle of a jail cell... in the middle of delay... where he can't see the physical blessings of God, would learn to pen this...

*Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ.*

**Philippians 3:8 (NLT)**

### **3. The FULFILLMENT of the promise.**

This is when, in the right time, God shows up...

You must know this... God is far more interested in who you become than what you get done.

He could have gotten the Israelites out of the wilderness in a few days, but it took them 40 years.

He could have given Abraham and Sarah a child in 9 months, but did you know it took them 25 years?

Joseph was told he would be God's vessel and used by God, and for 13 years, he was imprisoned for his faith...

God's delays are not denials.

Here's what I know: every one of these people probably had moments when they wanted to give up... but they held on to the vision. They didn't let the delay cause them to give up.

Listen, don't give up this morning... hold onto what God has placed in your heart...

But let me challenge you as you wait on God to bring new life in some area... this is so important...

You don't need general truths. You need to be equipped with specific promises...

#### **Know the promises of God, not just certain truths.**

I know the lyrics to songs, I know random stats, we know facts about our work, whatever your hobby or job you have, you probably have certain things memorized...

But if the Bible is the very word of life... and it's filled with specific promises... then let me ask this... Do you know them, and more importantly, are you claiming them?

The promises of God do no good if they stay in this Bible and don't get into your heart. The Word of God is living.... But it can't live just in the Bible; it needs to live in your heart...