

Sermon - In the Midst of Waiting

The title of the sermon today is “In the midst of waiting” - a very creative title if I might say. Sometimes I surprise myself with my creativity

Text: Psalm 27:1-6

1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall.

3 Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.

4 One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.

5 For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock.

6 And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

Context

Note:

- As we go walk through this passage, I want you to **hold in one hand the season of waiting you might currently be** in or one from your past and
- Be listening to what God might say to you today.
- Hold these two things in your hands before God and let him minister grace unto you.

A pretty common doctrine in Christendom is the already but not yet. We are actively partaking of the Kingdom of God, which was inaugurated with the coming of Christ, but the full expression or the full fulfillment of the Kingdom of God is in the future

In essence, we are **already** in the Kingdom but we **do not yet** see the full fulfillment. Below are is a scripture that captures this tension:

Beloved, we are God's children **now**, and what we will be has **not yet** appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. (1 John 3:1)

I bring this up because it presents us with a tension that we feel in our bones.

- We are in Christ, yet we do struggle with sin.
- We are in Christ and yet we face illnesses and death.
- All is not well in the **now** even though our **eternity** is secure in Christ, in the future (the not yet).

One of the clearest marks of this tension is the **waiting** incumbent in **any area of our lives where there is a gap between our present situation and what we hope for** (all within the parameters of God's will).

Between the **already** and the **not yet** is the wait. We wait for an outcome we cannot make bring to pass. In short, **waiting underscores the tension of the already but not yet.**

Some forms of waiting — on expressways and in doctor's offices — are fairly trivial in the overall scheme of things. But there are more serious and difficult kinds of waiting:

- The waiting of a single person who hopes God might have marriage in store but is beginning to despair
- The waiting of a childless couple who desperately want to start a family
- The waiting of someone who longs to have work that is meaningful and significant and yet cannot seem to find it
- The waiting of a deeply depressed person for a morning when she will wake up wanting to live
- The waiting of a child who feels awkward and clumsy and longs for the day when he gets picked first on the playground
- The waiting of persons of color for the day when everyone's children will be judged "not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character"
- The waiting of an elderly senior citizen in a nursing home — alone, seriously ill, just waiting to die

Every one of us, at some junctures of our lives, will have to learn to wait.

- John Ortberg "If You want to walk on water, You've got to get out of the boat."

Basically I would wager that there are situations in your life, right now, that you are dealing with and crying out to God for a way out.

Waiting...it is often a term that makes us cringe if we are being honest.

Lewis Smedes writes,

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 we cannot write.

We wait for a not yet that feels like a not ever.

Waiting is the hardest work of hope.

We do not like waiting, and I suggest the primary reason is that we do not like feeling helpless. It seems as though waiting connotes helplessness which connotes weakness and that just doesn't sit right with us.

Yet what we find in scriptures is that very often the way God works involves waiting. It is almost a constant theme in every work of God.

- Abraham had to wait 25 years before Isaac was born
- Sarah, Rebecca and Rachel all had to struggle with infertility and wait before having kids
- Joseph had to wait at least 11 years before the realization of the dream
- The children of Israel had to wait under the oppression of Egypt for about 400 years before freedom
- Moses had to wait 40 years before being commissioned as God's mouthpiece to Pharaoh

- **You look at the Hall of Faith in Heb 11 and it is like a Hall of Waiting as they all had to wait** - and they didn't even get to see true fulfillment of the promises made to them (cf Heb 11:39)
- Even Jesus had to wait 30 years before officially launching the messianic message
- And this psalm closes with an encouragement to wait...
 - Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

Seeing that it is our destiny to wait, some of the questions that bubble up is

- Why do I have to wait?
- And then if we get past that, the next question is how do I wait aright?

In this sermon, I am going to tackle the question “**how do I wait**” first and then briefly touch on **potential reasons for why we wait**.

I do want to say though that theological answers to these questions isn't what fills the hole in your hearts. It is seeing the Sufficiency of God that truly fills the hole that these questions are pointing to

- Job's Questions
- God's sufficiency

My hope is that **we see God's sufficiency in Psalm 27:1-6 today** and have our hearts rest in his faithfulness.

I have summarized my findings under 5 headings, let's get into it

The Name of the Lord (vs 1-3)

Part of what makes waiting so hard is the **fear of the unknown**. It is the uncertainty and more specifically the **fear of not getting what we want** that makes waiting so perplexing and difficult.

David, being so familiar with this uncertainty given his years of running from Saul, starts off this psalm touching on the lack of fear.

1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall.

3 Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.

While we see a **theme of “lack of fear”** in the first 3 verses, the **term that actually brightens up the page for the original recipient of this work reading this is the name Yahweh** - the covenant name of the Lord that means so much to his people, and to us by way of Jesus

The name Yahweh is the proper name of GOD as revealed in Exodus 3:15. It is a name that expresses the **self sustaining, eternal, self-sufficient, and self determinate nature of God**. It is a name built on another name God gave, the name “I AM”, which means “My Being sustains My Being”

Say this to the people of Israel: 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations." ([Exodus 3:15](#))

The name Yahweh connotes the character of God, which points to his **limitless power, graciousness, goodness, greatness, justice, righteousness, love, faithfulness...and so on.**

For David, you can then imagine that this name connotes safety and ensures victory. **While uncertainty is normal in waiting, this name Yahweh brings a certainty of victory**

Said another way, **it is David seeing the sufficiency of who God is that eliminates fear of man or fear of situation.** The bedrock of a life without fear is the name of the LORD

Against the backdrop of all the issues we are facing and the waiting, **the name Yahweh should become the strong tower we run to over and over again. This name is our hope. This name is our peace. This name is our Joy.**

The psalmist starts off by centering our mind on God because we live at the mercies of what we believe, and more so at the mercies of what we believe about God.

Verses 1-3 exudes a certain confidence...there is almost a sense of absolute disregard to impending danger. You see it in verse "Whom/What shall I fear"...."Of Whom/What shall I be afraid". Verse 1 alone covers the whole gamut of anything that can cause fear.

Light and Salvation connotes victory and blessings, and stronghold points to refuge. In essence, all bases are covered, there is no need to fear. It sounds like hyperbole but it isn't,

and it is so simply because of Yahweh - not David's righteousness or morality or performance, simply because of Yahweh

Verses 2-3 give flesh to verse 1. **While verse 2 speaks of assault from specific individual enemies, verse 3 ups the ante to the national enemies and wars.** This is the psalmist using language to paint this picture of **absolute confidence in the Sovereignty of God**, and you see it right there in verse 3

Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident

This is not saying you won't face issues or there won't be challenges. This is saying even in the midst of that, **there is a sufficiency in which you can rest and hand it all to Yahweh.**

It is saying you can be truly satisfied and sustained, no matter what happens...no matter what happens, and this is not you merely gritting your teeth and toughing it out.

What I want you to note is that **a life of that exudes this confidence** (this life without lack that the psalmist is describing) **depends first and foremost upon the presence of God** in our lives, because the **source of that confidence is God**

"The ultimate freedom we have as human beings is the power to select what we will allow or require our minds to dwell upon and think about. By think I mean all the ways in which we are aware of things including memories, perceptions and beliefs."

- Dallas Willard

The point of all of this is to **bring our minds to dwell on God, to be fixated on God.**

To know the name of the Lord (insert the character of God), **God cannot merely be on the fringes of our lives.**

For us today, the bridge to the name Yahweh is Christ Jesus.

He is the **express image of God and the pathway to God. In seeing him (and I using see figuratively), we see Yahweh.**

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

When **we meditate on Jesus, we meditate on Yahweh.**

His life, death and resurrection shows us the nature and character of God and while the OT calls for focus on remembering how God brought them out of Egypt and leading them through Canaan, **we have the astounding benefit of meditating on the person of Christ.**

This is why the accurate teaching and preaching of the gospel of Jesus is absolutely fundamental. Teaching and preaching the gospel lets us know the good news about God and allows us to think rightly of God. This is also why accurate doctrine and theology is important

In the midst of the waiting, **one of the most satisfying and empowering thing we can do is to feast on God.** Leverage the power of choice and choose to feast on God. The power to choose is an incredible gift from God and here we are called to set our minds on God as much as possible.

One of the questions I want you to seriously consider is **what comes to mind when you think of God?** Think about this and let it show you where you are with God?

You could even do word/image associations.

Is God this boring cosmic existence that is spying on you? Think carefully and long about this. Don't come up with the right answers, let what you really think bubble up

What sort of God creates this beautiful universe? What God creates such diverse human beings with such vastly different gifts and abilities? What God creates the cosmos and the stars?

Does that sound like a boring God to you or an incredibly joyous God?

Please do not hear me say there won't be struggles or sadness or anxieties, what I am saying is that even in those situations, the sufficiency of God is available to you.

You can rest in him even with the uncertainties and still be joyful in the midst of sorrow. After all, this is what the prophet Habakkuk was doing in Hab 3:16-19 even as he foretells of impending doom.

Immerse yourself into God in the midst of your waiting. Carve out time to be with God.

Carve out time to meditate on His word.

Buy the right books, get into communities, **weave the practice of beholding the face of God into your life.** Don't wait till you are in such a season, start now

Recap:

What gives us confidence in the days of trouble is resting in the sufficiency of God, which comes via meditating on his name, his person.

Knowing who God is though naturally leads to desire for God, and we will see that in verse 4.

Desire for God: One Thing (vs 4)

In the midst of imminent danger, and against a backdrop of confidence in God, what you would expect is for the psalmist to cry out to God for deliverance. This is simply what makes sense but our text takes an interesting turn

One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.

Rather than cry out for help the **psalmist expresses a deep longing and desire for God.**

The posture of his heart is to **dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life.**

This is his One Thing. It is not financial security, it is not a job, it is not health, it is not safety, it is not marriage, his one thing is GOD.

Rather than come up with strategies to tackle the individual and national enemies, the psalmist turns to the presence of God. The house of the Lord there signifies the presence of God

He disregards the threat of enemies breathing down his neck and seeks God - not for safety - but in order “to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple”

Again we see the **confidence from knowing God in verse 1-3 flow right into verse 4, and this fuels his desire for God as he is simply unbothered by the gathering chaos around him.**

It's as if the psalmist has a blank check to ask God for anything and he doesn't ask for his enemies to be destroyed, he doesn't ask for wealth and status, he doesn't ask for life, he **asks to dwell in the presence of God**

He doesn't ask to dwell in the presence of God for safety but so that he can gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His temple.

He asks to dwell in the presence of God for the purpose of deepening his intimacy with God.

- For homework, study 1 Kings 3:3-14, 2 Sam 7, and Psalm 84 and you see parallels to this One Thing

So I have to ask you and myself these questions:

- What is my One Thing, esp when I am stuck between a rock and a hard place?
- What do I overwhelmingly desire when all is well around?

If you are like me, you know that this desire for God is not the normal note of my life. This attitude is not reflective of my life. **I don't quite have this je ne se quoi quality of thirsting this deeply after God.**

I am the type of person that **sees danger and begins to calculate my options.**

The idea to simply wait when **I do not have a job and gaze upon the beauty of God rather than gaze upon applications doesn't make sense to me...normally.**

But this is **emblematic of my lack of faith** in the sufficiency of God.

Again, how you see God (your theology or value systems or beliefs) dictate how you live.

If you want to know the extent of your trust in God, look objectively and lovingly at your actions. I stress **lovingly** for we will likely not like what we see.

However the truth is **my lack of faith is as a result of inaccurate sighting of God.** When I do not see God as I should, which I often don't, then my trust in God is absent or at best shaky

Recap: So far we have talked about how confidence in God comes from knowing his name (which stands for his character), and how the psalmist had God as his one thing, even in the midst of danger

The question then becomes:

- How do I become like the person whose one thing is God regardless of circumstances?
 - Really this is the heart of the question how do I wait?

- How do I become the person who longs to spend all the days of my life in the presence of God?

Gazing upon the Beauty of the Lord (vs 4)

In verses 1-3, the active personality is God. The reality that undergirds lack of fear is God. He is the centering force of verses 1-3.

However the active personality in verse 4 is the psalmist...and this is where we come to our part in this story.

One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD **all the days** of my life, **to gaze** upon the beauty of the LORD and **to inquire** in his temple.

To be clear, our salvation and eternity has been secured by the blood of the Lamb and the Holy Spirit is a deposit guaranteeing our destination. (cf Eph 1:13-14)

We are never working for Salvation. We are not earning our salvation

While it is God who works in you, both to will and work for his good pleasure, **you are called to work out your salvation.**

Have you noticed that in the bible, there are several passages that put the onus of action on you such as “**Fear Not....Deny yourself and take up your cross....Be Strong in the Lord....Wait on the Lord...**”

What you will see is there seems to be this **dimension of ownership that God, in his love, has appointed to us.**

As a mother, there comes a time you want your daughter to be able to eat her food and brush her teeth. While you have taught and assisted her in the past, a time comes where she must grow and be able to start doing certain things on her own.

And so like every loving mother and parent, God in his love will not do what we should do by ourselves. It is part of his way of training us.

God **will simply not come down and force you to sit with him.** He will lead and nudge but he simply will not force you, and this he does in love.

This doesn't mean we are doing this by ourselves or we summon up our will and do it. This however means we take responsibility of our own journey into deeper intimacy with God

Going back to verse 4, there are a couple of active verbs - **seek after, dwell, gaze, inquire** - and all of these connote a growing intimacy with God. I want to highlight a couple things from this verse

- There **has to be a consistency to our beholding and dwelling with God**
 - This is not simply carving out one portion of my day to give God some attention and then I go about the rest of my day like a functional atheist
 - This isn't a todo item that I check off my list...rather this is a way of life
- There has to be **an active thirsting after God.**

- What this means to me is that we must plan to thirst for God. We must carve out time and treat this with utmost importance for when we search for God with all our hearts, we will find him

One of my favourite authors asks this question “**Are you planning for growth in God?**”

Predictably, though unfortunate, most of us are stunned by that question and then in his professorial manner, this author presses on to say “**so you are planning not to grow**”...and I am like can you please give me a break... But it is an important question though

What is the cadence of your life and is there woven into that the consistency of beholding the face of God?

Do you get to engage God the way you talk to your intimate friend or your spouse? Do you even attempt to do this?

I am not trying to guilt trip you or make you feel bad but I do want to **call your attention to the importance of gazing upon the beauty of the Lord**. This is how **we wait aright**.

If you are like me, you might be thinking of what to do and how to **add 3 more things to your daily agenda**. Let me encourage you to stop.

Do one thing that brings you closer to God and do it consistently.

And for that one thing you decide on, **do not start stressing** about how to do it properly. **Just show up**. You are **NOT the one running the show**; God is running the show.

- Pick a time, maybe a venue and just show up to behold the face of God.

As you do this, you will be surprised by how much **God will invade your space**, in a good way :)

Do one thing, do it often and don't worry about how the time with God will go. Just show up. God who is **big enough to create the cosmos can handle 10-15 minutes with you even if you have no agenda**. Simply show up

There are a multitude of **practices** you can engage in from

- Solitude and silence
- Scripture memorization for the purpose of meditation
- Reading scriptures
 - Contemplation
 - Lectio Divina
- Fasting
- Craft out a day with Jesus
- Retreat
- Walks in nature
- Serving
- Listening to scripture and music
- Actively studying of scriptures
- Basically anything that opens you up to God, to do business with God

The answer to the question, how do I wait is found in this simple yet powerful truth:

- **You wait by beholding/gazing upon the beauty of the Lord.** And as we, with unveiled faces, behold the glory of the Lord, we are transformed into his likeness from one degree to the other, and this comes by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We cannot hurry the waiting season but what we can do is to continuously gaze upon the his face...and this is how **we survive the tension of the already but not yet...the tension of waiting in my affliction and suffering**

This is how we wait.

So in the agony of my affliction and suffering, without denying the the reality of what I am facing, the way I get through that is **beholding the face of God** - practicing spiritual disciplines

What then is the end result of my waiting on God?

The Sovereignty of God (vs 5-6)

God will get you through whatever you are facing. **What I mean by that is if you allow Him, you will experience the Sufficiency of God.**

I am not saying relief will **come immediately or soon or even in the way you expect it**

What I am guaranteeing though, based on scriptures, is that **you will experience the goodness and greatness of God**, and the **full fulfillment of that is when we are united with Him**

Verse 5-6 sounds either like a victory lap or the anticipation of victory. It speaks of the deliverance of God and the corresponding worship by the psalmist

5 For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock.

6 And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

At the very least **this is a description of our end, of complete victory not only over the circumstances we face now but over the real enemy of our souls**, the adversary who prowls around like a lion seeking whom to devour

In Verse 5-6a, the active personality is God.

- **He** will hide me in **His** shelter in the day of trouble
- **He** will conceal me under the cover of **His** tent
- **He** will lift me high upon a **rock**
- And now shall my head **be lifted up** above my enemies all around me

God is the one acting to save you. **God is never caught unawares by what you are facing or going through.**

When things happen to us, of the blue, it **does not surprise God** or make him start fidgeting, thinking of what's next

He is the One who **foreknew you before the foundation of this world and has also guaranteed your eternal salvation and destiny.**

If you can trust God to save you from eternal damnation, please trust him in the here and now, even as you wrestle with what you see in front of you

In the article “**How involved is God in the details of your Life,**” author Jon Bloom gives a closeup on the life of Joseph and titled it “**Sightings of the Sovereignty of God.**”

His goal is to show us “**unnerving level of God’s providential involvement in the details of Joseph’s life.**”

Before I read this, I am not saying God made these things happen but I am saying he allowed it and used it. Here are a few things he notes

- **Joseph’s place in the Patriarchal birth order was part of God’s plan (Genesis 30:22-24).**
- **This means Rachel’s agonizing struggle with infertility was part of God’s plan (Genesis 30:1-2).**
- **Jacob’s romantic preference of Rachel and therefore his (probably paternally insensitive) favoritism shown to Joseph was part of God’s plan (Genesis 29:30, 37:3).**
- **Joseph’s prophetic dreams were (obviously) part of God’s plan (Genesis 37:5-11).**

- His brothers' jealousy (note: sibling rivalry and family conflict) was part of God's plan (Genesis 37:8).
- **His brothers' evil, murderous, greedy betrayal of him, and Judah's part in it, was part of God's plan (Genesis 37:18-28, 50:20).**
- **His brothers' 20-plus year deception of Jacob regarding Joseph was part of God's plan.**
- The existence of an evil slave trade at the time was part of God's plan (Genesis 37:26-27).
- Potiphar's complicity with the slave trade and his position in Egypt was part of God's plan (Genesis 37:36).
- **Joseph's extraordinary administrative gifting was part of God's plan (Genesis 39:2-4).**
- Joseph's favor with Potiphar was part of God's plan (Genesis 39:4-6).
- **Potiphar's wife's being given over to sexual immorality was part of God's plan (Genesis 39:7-12, Romans 1:24).**
- **Potiphar's wife's dishonesty was part of God's plan (Genesis 39:13-18).**
- Potiphar's unjust judgment of Joseph was part of God's plan (Genesis 39:19-20).

- The particular prison Joseph was sent to – the one that would receive the cupbearer and the baker – was part of God’s plan (Genesis 39:20).
- Joseph’s favor with the prison warden was part of God’s plan (Genesis 39:21-23).
- The high-level conspiracy and its exposure resulting in the imprisonment of Pharaoh’s cupbearer and baker were part of God’s plan (Genesis 40:1-3).
- Joseph’s appointment to care for them was part of God’s plan (Genesis 40:4).
- The dreams the cupbearer and baker had were (obviously) part of God’s plan (Genesis 40:5).
- Joseph’s compassionate care for their troubled hearts was part of God’s plan (Genesis 40:6-7).
- Their trusting Joseph’s integrity enough to confide their dreams in him was part of God’s plan (Genesis 40:8-20).
- Joseph discerning the meaning of their dreams was part of God’s plan (Genesis 40:12-13, 18-19).
- The Egyptian judicial processes that exonerated the cupbearer and condemned the baker were part of God’s plan (Genesis 40:20-22).

- The cupbearer failing to remember Joseph for two years was part of God's plan (Genesis 40:23–41:1).
- The timing of Pharaoh's dreams was part of God's plan (Genesis 41:1–7).
- The inability of Pharaoh's counselors to discern his dreams was part of God's plan (Genesis 41:8).
- The cupbearer remembering Joseph and having the courage to remind Pharaoh of a potentially suspicious event was part of God's plan (Genesis 41:9–13).
- Pharaoh's being desperate enough to listen to a Hebrew prisoner was part of God's plan (Genesis 41:14–15).
- Joseph having discernment of Pharaoh's dreams was part of God's plan (Genesis 41:16–36).
- The miraculous amount of immediate trust that Pharaoh placed in Joseph's interpretation and counsel was part of God's plan (Genesis 41:37–40).
- Pharaoh's gift of Asenath (an Egyptian) to Joseph as her wife was part of God's plan (Genesis 41:45).
- Joseph's two sons by Asenath, Manasseh and Ephraim, were part of God's plan (Genesis 41:50–52, 48:5).

- **The complex confluence of natural phenomena that caused the extraordinarily fruitful years followed by the extraordinarily desolate years, with all the resulting human prosperity and suffering, and the consolidation of Egyptian wealth and power in Pharaoh's hands were part of God's plan (Genesis 41:53-57; 47:13-26).**
- **The threat of starvation that caused terrible fear and moved Jacob to send his sons to Egypt for grain was part of God's plan (Genesis 42:1-2).**
- The brothers' safe journey to Egypt and Benjamin's non-participation was part of God's plan (Genesis 42:3-4).
- The brothers' bowing to Joseph in unwitting fulfillment of the dreams they hated was part of God's plan (Genesis 42:6).
- Joseph's whole scheme to test his brothers was part of God's plan (Genesis 42:7-44:34).
- Simeon's being chosen to remain in Egypt was part of God's plan (Genesis 42:24). Jacob's refusal to release Benjamin to return to Egypt causing the delay of the brothers' return and Simeon's bewildering experience in custody was part of God's plan (Genesis 42:38).
- The relentless threat of starvation that prompted Judah to make his personal guarantee of Benjamin's safe return and that forced Jacob to finally allow Benjamin go to Egypt was part of God's plan (Genesis 43:8-14).

- The success with which Joseph was able to continue to conceal his identity and pull off the framing of Benjamin for thievery and all the anguish the brothers experienced as a result was part of God's plan (Genesis 43:15–44:17).
- Judah's willingness to exchange his life for Benjamin's out of love for his father, and thus initiating his own sale into slavery like he initiated Joseph's sale into slavery, was part of God's plan (Genesis 44:18–34).
- Joseph's timing in revealing himself to his brothers was part of God's plan (Genesis 45:1–15).
- Jacob's finding out from his sons of Joseph's survival and position in Egypt (and the exposure of his sons' 20-plus-year deceit with all the accompanying pain) was part of God's plan (Genesis 45:25–28).
- God's directing Jacob to move to Egypt was (obviously) part of God's plan (Genesis 46:2–4).
- The relocation of the entire clan of Israel to Egypt, where they would reside and grow for 430 years and eventually become horribly enslaved, thus fulfilling God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 15:13–14, was part of God's plan (Genesis 46:5–47:12).

Jon Bloom, goes on to say

... **God's intricate involvement in Joseph's life is not unique to him (Joseph)**. One of the many reasons God gives us a close-up of Joseph's life is to show us how active

he is, how **he never leaves us or forsakes us all along the way, in both the good and the evil things we experience** ([Hebrews 13:5](#)).

Again and again, we see the sovereign hand of God acting in the life of Joseph, much to his ignorance.

Please note that there is nothing that Joseph does to earn this. There is no prerequisite that Joseph fulfilled.

God is simply acting out of the loving kindness of his heart. And his faithfulness to Joseph guarantees his faithfulness to you. Why?

God's past faithfulness ensures his current and future faithfulness. This is one of the major themes that arises out of scripture.

Knowing the surety of God's faithfulness leads the psalmist to spontaneous worship

And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

God's faithfulness guarantees victory. **The end is already written, you are victorious in Christ Jesus, seated with God in heavenly places** (Eph 2:6).

We know how it ends, go to **Revelations 21-22** and read the end of all things.

The Sovereign hand of your God is with you. God is with You, Be at ease.

Verse 6 is an image of us tasting the goodness of God and thereby glorifying God. This is what we are made for - to see his glory and respond with adoration, regardless of outcomes.

Listen to what JI Packer has to say here

God's goal is his glory, but this needs careful explanation, for it is easily misunderstood. It points to a purpose not of divine egoism, as is sometimes imagined, but of divine love.

Certainly, God wants to be praised for his praiseworthiness and exalted for his greatness and goodness; he wants to be appreciated for what he is.

But the glory that is his goal is in fact a two-sided, two-stage relationship: it is, precisely, a conjunction of

(a) revelatory acts on his part whereby he shows his glory to men and angels in free generosity, with

(b) responsive adoration on their part whereby they give him glory out of gratitude for what they have seen and received.

In this conjunction is realized the fellowship of love for which God's rational creatures were and are made, and for which fallen human beings have now been redeemed.

The to-and-fro of seeing glory in God and giving glory to God is the true fulfillment of human nature at its heart, and it brings supreme joy to man just as it does to God (cf. Zeph. 3:14-17).

So the practices we spoke of previously are not a way for you to earn cool brownie points with God. There are not a way to earn salvation or anything to boost your morality, NOT at all.

We are saved by grace through faith - both the grace and the faith are a gift from God - cf Eph 2:1-10

Recap:

- So far we have talked about how confidence in God comes from knowing his name (which stands for his character), and how the psalmist had God as his one thing, even in the midst of danger
- The pathway to desiring God is in consistently gazing upon the beauty of The Lord - beholding his face. We do this through spiritual disciplines
- This is how we wait properly between the now and the not yet

Why Does God makes us Wait

There are a couple ways we can tackle this issue but I want to speak primarily about 2 main themes around why God makes us wait

1. Waiting or the testing of our faith actually **shows us our dependence on God**. It helps us to see where we are in God.

- It brings to light our level of trust or lack thereof in God. And this is for our own good. God already knows where we are
 - It **strips away all the things we depend on and shows us that God is the only reliable one.** It strips away the things we rely on both **from a secular and spiritual point of view.**
2. **Waiting or the Testing of our faith brings about a necessary dying to self** that is so important when it comes to deepening our intimacy with God. This is where I want to spend the rest of our time

In the first section we established that **knowledge of God leads to desire for God.**

As you desire God, and long after him, you get to behold his face and through your interactions with him, that confidence (faith/trust) in him grows.

Funny enough your **trust in God leads to more desire in God, so trust in God and desire for God reinforce each other**

I am saying this because I want to highlight the interplay of desire and faith and abandonment to God.

You would notice that by nature our desire have **this insatiable dimension to them.**

It was St Augustine that said *“You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”*

So if we are made for God i.e. we are made to long after a being that is eternal, and only this Supreme Being can fill us up, do you see why our desires have an insatiable element to them?

It is almost like they have an eternal-like hunger to our desires and only The King Eternal can satisfy us

So even after you

- Get married to the man or woman of your dreams
- Have kids and a beautiful family
- Exceed your career goals
- Healed of Cancer
- Etc...

The restlessness is still there. You still desire something more, you are not satisfied...for **there is no true satisfaction outside of God**

However to be truly satisfied in God, **we must learn the path of dying to self.**

“Death to self is abandonment to God in Faith. It is the laying down the satisfaction of my desires with confidence in the greatness and plentitude of God.”

“Death to self is submitting all your desires to God. This abandonment of self to God is the way to experience the abundance of God

I am not saying your flesh or self is bad - not at all. God created you and gave you desires and desires are largely good...unless when they are out of bounds

Why must we walk this path? Simply because our desires by nature is captured in the expression - **I want what I want when I want it.**

Desires, by nature, do not consider what is good, it is simply after what its own goal.

Whereas God by nature is after what is good for you.

Often, **your desires and God's goal will be diametrically opposed to one another.**

If **we do not learn the way of dying to self, we cannot be fully aligned to God.** We will rebel and push back against God because He is after what is good for you, while we are mostly after what we desire

And this is where we must learn the path of dying to self - of abandoning those desires in His hands, with confidence in the greatness and goodness of God.

We learn the path of abandoning our desires to God by gazing upon the beauty of the Lord. For as we do that, we find our true satisfaction in Him and we learn to give up that which we cannot keep to gain Him, who we can never lose.

So in conclusion,

- We all wait, whether we like it or not. It is a reality of the “already but not yet” quality of our lives here
- The way to wait is to behold the face of God consistently - to have a consistent way of life whereby we are deepening our intimacy with God
- As we do this desire for God blooms in us and with that comes faith/trust in God, and that reinforces our desire for God, and God becomes our One Thing...even in the midst of the pain and the longings

- Make God your one thing by having a way of life where you consistently behold God. Do one thing that draws you closer to God and do it consistently. Simply show up and let God meet you there.
- As we behold his face, be rest assured that God is not caught unawares and he is working it all out for your good, which the full expression of that is your transformation into Christlikeness

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We spoke of spiritual disciplines or practices that draw us closer to God, I want us to actually practice on here and now instead of me closing in prayer

Let us maintain the posture of worship and reverence. As you listen to these words fo Psalm 27 being read, perhaps God will speak into your heart prophetically - this is at least my prayer