



DATE December 13, 2015

SPEAKER David Smith

TITLE How Do You Wait?

SERIES Ask anyone what Christmas is about and they'll tell you it's about the coming of Jesus! That is true, but it's only part of the story. Would it surprise you to know that Christmas is really about waiting? It's about living in the "not yet" and waiting for the now. What are you waiting for?

These days, it seems like no one can wait for Christmastime. It keeps arriving earlier and earlier each year, filling stores with holiday merchandise and the radio with carols way before December! Yet, Christmas is supposed to be about waiting. This month's sermon series challenges us to grow in patience and strengthen our trust in God.

1. If you could learn any piece of information about your future, what would it be? What reasons could there be why God isn't revealing this information to you yet? What could be some dangers of knowing the answer now?
2. Over the previous weeks, you've probably discussed situations in which you've waited on God for something and He's proven His faithfulness by coming through—in His own time. Revisit these examples by remembering your feelings while you were waiting. Were you excited while waiting or discouraged? Were there times you were overcome by worry? What did this situation reveal about your trust in God?
3. Read Galatians 6:9, Romans 5:1-5, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. What can we learn about ourselves and about God by waiting? How does it challenge us spiritually and cause us to grow?
4. The Bible has many stories about people who did and did not wait on God. Discuss the actions of Sarah/Abraham (Genesis 16, 21:1-21) versus the actions of Noah (Genesis 6:9-8:1-22). What can we learn from these examples about waiting on God?
5. As we learned in the lesson, actively waiting on God involves staying alert, responsive, and following His commandments. But, sometimes doing God's will versus taking matters into our own hands (like Abraham did) can be a tricky distinction to identify. How should we act if we don't know what God wants us to do? How can we carry out His plan through our actions when we aren't sure what His plan is? Think of ways to actively wait without taking matters into your own hands.
6. If God loves us, why does He make us wait? Does thinking of our relationship with God like a parent/child dynamic give us insight into why waiting can be a good thing? Can God be our loving father while also making us wait in order for us to recognize His power, or do those ideas conflict?
7. Today's lesson taught the importance of honoring God while we wait for His answer. While honoring Him publically through our actions can be easy by following His commands, our private thoughts while we wait can often dishonor Him. How can we honor God in our heart and mind while we wait on Him? How can keep waiting from becoming worrying, questioning, or distrusting?

As you finish your discussion, spend time in prayer renewing your trust in God and resolving to listen for His voice in our circumstances.