

Rhythms: Waiting

Waiting shapes us—for better or worse—depending on our communion with the LORD.

Text – 1 Kings 19:1-14

1 Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.” 3 Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

4 But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, “It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers.” 5 And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, “Arise and eat.” 6 And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again. 7 And the angel of the LORD came again a second time and touched him and said, “Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you.” 8 And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God. 9 There he came to a cave and lodged in it.

And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” 10 He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.”

11 And he said, “Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. 12 And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. 13 And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

And behold, there came a voice to him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” 14 He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.”

Teaching

Waiting comes from our _____ desires or needs.

Waiting exposes our _____.

Definition: Waiting is the _____ in the _____ space between an unmet desire or need and its fulfillment or resolution.

Waiting _____ us – for better or worse – depending on our _____ with the Lord.

1. Waiting allows for _____.
2. Waiting reveals _____.
3. Waiting provides _____.

What can we do in times of waiting?

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
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Deeper Dive

There are a few different words translated as “wait” throughout Scripture. In the Old Testament, there is an account of Noah waiting to go out of the ark as the waters from the flood were receding. Two different words are used in Genesis 8:6-12 to describe Noah’s posture as he waits to reinhabit dry ground.

Genesis 8:10 – He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark.

The word used here is חול (chul), which communicates the idea of waiting anxiously. Besides “wait,” some other ways this word is rendered are:

- anguish (Deut. 2:25; Ps. 55:4)
- dance (Judg. 21:21)
- wounded (1 Sam 31:3)
- distressed (Esther 4:4)
- writhe in pain (Job 15:20; Isa. 26:17-18)

Genesis 8:12 – Then he waited another seven days and sent for the dove, and she did not return to him anymore.

The word used here is יחל (ya.chal), which communicates the idea of waiting hopefully. Besides “wait,” some other ways this word is rendered are:

- hope (Job 13:15; Ps. 33:22, 43:5)
- expect (Eze. 13:6)

Noah’s circumstances had not changed, yet somehow he moved from a twisted, anguished waiting to a hopeful, expectant waiting. It is notable, then, that the first thing Noah does after coming off the ark is build an altar and give an offering in worship of the Lord (Gen. 8:18-20). Noah’s posture went from distress → hopeful expectation before his circumstances changed, and that produced a heart ready to remember and worship the Lord, and not immediately move to the next thing, as his circumstances changed.

Reflection & Discussion

- What do you notice the most from how Elijah, Job, Jesus, or Noah responded during times of waiting in their lives?
- What unmet desire or need do you feel the most right now? What other desires or needs do you have that have been or are being met?
- How has the Lord worked in and through you, or in and through others, in times of waiting?
- What are some practices you have or that you can build in your life to cultivate ground in your heart for the Lord to work in times of waiting?
- Which of the three suggested responses (request, repent, renew) do you most resonate with right now? Why?