

Two Seasons that Bring us into Agreement with God

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: The Power of Agreement

Text: Philippians 3:7-11

Seasons of suffering and waiting on God happen in every life. Sharing in the suffering of Christ allows us to experience His resurrection power in our lives. When tragedy and difficulty strike, we find ourselves relying on the Lord more than ever. It is in these moments that we discover, in a new way, what really matters in life and what does not. It is not a coincidence that, as Christians, some of our most significant times in the presence of God come during some of the darkest, hardest and most trying times in our life.

Tears have a way of driving us away from ourselves and into the arms of God. It is in our brokenness and sadness that we come to a place of agreement with God that we might not ever have arrived at without that experience. We discover that these times become more valuable to us than we could ever have imagined. One thing we come to realize is that this value is only able to be discovered in our times of vulnerability. It is in our weakness that we truly discover His strength.

One of the great examples of this truth is the prophet Isaiah. He was a prophet, cousin to King Uzziah and he thought he had it all. His cousin, although a leper, brought the kingdom peace, hope and prosperity. Isaiah was bold and declared the ways of God faithfully and sternly. He angered the people by comparing them to rotting fruit. Isaiah 5:1-7 In all of his faithfulness there was still something missing from Isaiah's life.

Isaiah chapter 6 gives us a glimpse of the turning point in his life. When King Uzziah died, Isaiah felt his life collapsing. He knew that God was going to judge Israel for their wickedness. It was in this moment that Isaiah had a vision, an encounter with God that transformed his life.

Isaiah 6:1-5 It was in this moment that Isaiah dies to himself. "Woe is me" is an expression that means "I am doomed". He understood that even as a man of God, his mouth was unclean. This became a moment of total self-abandonment. He realized the reality of who he is without the help of God. In great mercy, God sent an angel to touch him and take away his sin.

Isaiah 6:6-7 It was in this moment that God changed the trajectory of his life. God was looking for someone who would go and speak for Him. This prophet of God was given a fresh touch from God so that he could continue the work God had for him. Isaiah 6:8-10

No one can see the Lord and continue living as if nothing happened. Our old life is burned away, and a new life begins. Isaiah came into the presence of God in the middle of both his personal loss and the pain of the state of God's people. It is in the presence of God that we find comfort, answers and help. Galatians 2:20-21, Galatians 6:14, Luke 9:23-24 It is in our times of discomfort and trials that we tend to run to the secret place because we have come to the end of ourselves. This is when we learn to take up our cross and die daily. It is when we stop struggling to live and allow Christ to live in us fully. This is where our life truly comes into agreement with God's type of living.

After this life transforming experience Isaiah had renewed hope and received revelation knowledge that was past his lifetime. He prophesied about the coming **Messiah**.

Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 53:5-7

The Bible is filled with God's presence during disaster. The children of Israel discovered that life isn't easy. Because of their failure to obey and serve God they wound up in captivity to their enemy. In the middle of this disappointment God spoke to them a word of **hope**.

Jeremiah 29:10-14

The plan that God had for their life was not destroyed, just **delayed**. Jerusalem was destroyed and the people relocated but God's plan for Israel had not changed. Their disobedience caused them to deal with loss, grief, pain, and failure. It shook their faith. There are times that our faith needs shook.

Disaster does not **define** you. It re-fines you. God's delays are not His denials. God promises that He will correct His children, but He will never forget His **covenant**. God made a promise to Israel that He intended to keep. Israel was not living in agreement with God and His ways, and He brought them to a place where they were willing to come back into agreement. He will do the same with us. He knows the plans that He has towards us. He has a hope and a future that is good planned for us. It is we who need to come into agreement with that plan.

It is important that our **thoughts** come into agreement with the way that God thinks about us. **Jeremiah 29:11** God's plan is to give us two things: a **hope** and a **future**. God's plan for our future is filled with hope. The word hope can be translated from the Hebrew to mean... "an **expected** end." No matter what we experience in life our purpose is tied to God's eternal will. This means that we can call upon the Lord and He will help us, heal us, and restore us.

Jeremiah 29:12-13 Sometimes our suffering is tied to His **discipline**. **Hebrews 12:9-11** The pain of discipline is meant to mold and shape us so that we can thrive in the expected hope that God has for us. An undisciplined life leads to chaos and aimless wondering. A disciplined life leads to a good and desirous outcome.

Waiting is a season that can seem very difficult and painful, but it is in this season that we learn to **trust** God and His sovereignty. (His ways, purposes and timing.)

It is in our season of waiting that we get to learn and know the **character** of God. It is in our season of waiting that we press in, seek the face of God, pour over His Word and become desperate for any revelation that God may have for us. Waiting creates an environment where we **position** ourselves at the feet of God and learn that we don't have to beg.

Waiting can be hard, we like things **now** and often RIGHT now. Much of what God has for us does not manifest immediately. Much of the time we must wait on the Lord, or we will not be ready for what God has for us. It would be like the ambitious preacher who wrote a book on parenting years before he ever had any children.

It is not the wait that is so important but what God is doing in us **during** the wait that matters. **Isaiah 40:31**

Things we can learn from Paul about waiting.

While Paul had a powerful impact on the world as he spread the Gospel. There are lessons that he learned from life and ministry that only come from waiting on God. Paul had an **intimate** relationship with Jesus. Much of his waiting was spent in times of suffering. What came out of those times were priceless.

- 1) We learn to be thankful for our **spiritual** family. **Philippians 1:3-7** To often we take our spiritual family for granted. The church is a family, like a body. Church is a place of genuine community. It is not a social club. It is a place to serve, heal, worship and connect.
- 2) While waiting we learn that prayer works. **Philippians 1:9-11, 19** Waiting causes us to press in and to pray **through**. It is in waiting that we learn that God hears our prayer and how much the prayers of others have an effect on us.
- 3) It is in waiting that we learn to **think** like Jesus. **Philippians 2:1-5** Paul learned to love people. To have the same attitude as Jesus. It was in the waiting and in the suffering that he learned how important it is to be likeminded with the people of God and united in purpose.
- 4) We learn that trouble can lead us to **victory**. **Philippians 1:12-14** While Paul was waiting in chains, he was still advancing the Gospel. Waiting always has a purpose beyond the waiting. Our right response to what is happening in our lives does not limit our effectiveness. People are watching. “It became **clear** and obvious to the entire palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.” If we lose our temper, we could lose our testimony. When we allow the Holy Spirit to control and guide our responses we gain an audience instead of an adversary.
- 5) It is in the trials and in the waiting that we no longer fear **death**. **Philippians 1:20-21** There is something significant when we know that to live is Christ and that death is gain. This is a powerful perspective that only Christians can gain with peace.
- 6) It is through suffering and waiting that we learn that it is Christ who does the **work** in us. **Philippians 2:13** This is a truth that will set you free. Many Christians are living defeated, inferior and frustrated because they just aren’t getting things done according to their plans and time frame. We are to do the work, but it is God who brings the increase.
1 Corinthians 3:6-8
- 7) It is in the waiting that we learn that life is at it’s best when we know Christ intimately. **Philippians 3:7-10** It is powerful when we understand that knowing Christ and the power of His resurrection comes through the difficult times. Things that we consider bad actually bring about the deeper works of growth, wisdom and a greater **dependency** on God.

- 8) Waiting teaches us not to quit or give up. **Philippians 3:14-15** Someone said it is ok to think about quitting if you know that you will never do it. Today people give up easily. It is a go to default. Life is hard. Things get hard. People are difficult. You will never go the distance if you decide not to go the distance. You must press on. You can't move forward if you don't learn to forget. Paul said, "forgetting what is behind me." We must have short memory when it comes to bitterness and trouble and a long memory when it comes to thankfulness and good experiences.
- 9) It is in the waiting that we learn not to worry. **Philippians 4:6-7** We have to let go of the things that we can't fix, change or control. We learn not to be anxious about anything.
- 10) It is in the waiting that we learn to reason and to think about things in a Godly way. **Philippians 4:8** It is in the waiting that we realize that how much of the battle is in our minds. Negative thoughts result in negative actions and reactions. Waiting helps us to think about what we are thinking and how it affects everything.
- 11) It is in the waiting that we learn to be content. **Philippians 4:11-12** Paul knew both the highs and lows of life. It takes time and experience to learn contentedness. Life is complex and varied and we can learn to be ok in every circumstance. Circumstances change. Contentment is our faith founded in the love of Jesus and the peace that we can trust His plan for us.
- 12) It is in the waiting that we learn that we can do everything that Jesus asks us to do. **Philippians 4:13** Notice the progression. No worry, correct thinking and contentedness leads to understanding that there are no limits for God. All things are possible with God, everything He calls us to do, because He Strengthens us to do it.
- 13) In the waiting we learn that God is our source of supply. **Philippians 4:19** Waiting allows us to realize that He is the supplier.
- 14) It is in the waiting that we learn suffering is not always the result of sin. **Philippians 1:29** Rain falls on the just and the unjust. The just lives by faith.