

Faith = Trusting the Timing of God

Welcome To Harvest Community Church

Series: Epic Faith

Text: 2 Peter 3:9 (AMP)

Many of our struggles with faith deal with **timing**. We believe, in theory, that God will keep His promises. The big question for many of us is **when**. For many Christians, when is a bigger issue than how. If the answer we need does not come as soon as we expect then fear and frustration begin to assault us and we are tempted to throw out our **confidence** in God.

Hebrews 10:35 It is amazing how easily shaken many of us become when things do not happen in a certain desired time frame. Timing deals with things like arrival, need, pacing, spacing and arranging. One of the key things that people feel when dealing with the timing of God is **disappointment**. This means that we believed that we had an appointment or even a divine appointment and that God missed it or is running late.

When dealing with the timing of God it is important to understand the following saying- “God is rarely early and He is never late but He is always right on time.” The thing to remember is that God always operates on His **schedule** and not on ours. One of the great examples in the Bible is when Abraham was offering His son Isaac on an altar. God showed up just as Abraham was ready to plunge the knife into his son. **Genesis 22:9-18**

When it comes to the timing of God we must understand that He often makes, what can seem to us, some very **odd** choices. This is seen clearly in the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth. These two would become the parents of John the Baptist. **Luke 1:11-19**

Lessons learned from Zachariah and Elizabeth

- Sometimes God waits to do a work in our lives after we have already given up all **hope** of something we desire ever coming to pass. (Zachariah and Elizabeth were old now and had grown use to the idea of not being able to have children. Elizabeth now identified more with her **barrenness** and inability than with God’s ability.)
- Sometimes God chooses to do something after we feel we are **past** our prime. Our thinking is that Zachariah and Elizabeth would have been better equipped with strength and youthfulness if they would have had John in their 20’s or 30’s.
- Many times God lets a situation go from bad to worse in the natural so that when others see the work of God in our life they will understand that nothing is **impossible** in their own life. **Luke 1:26-38** Many times God’s timing has implications for our life and for others. Mary was able to believe in an immaculate conception because at an age well past child birth Elizabeth gave birth naturally. The omnipotent God loves to intervene in our hopelessness.
- We need to realize that our let downs are often really a **set-up**. One thing to remember about set ups, is that they take time to set up. Our impossibilities are really an opportunity for God to show out His glory and power.

One of the important aspects of God's timing is to understand how much of what He does revolves around **prayer**. **Luke 1:10-11** As Zechariah was burning incense which is an act of worship and as people were praying then Gabriel came to visit.

It is important to remember that God's timing and our giving Him our time is often where miracles **intersect**. Consistently throughout the Bible God reveals Himself as people pray.

- God gave Peter a vision to take the Gospel to the gentiles as he prayed.
- The Disciples received the promise of the Holy Spirit during a prayer meeting.

Although all of our prayers are not answered immediately as we spend time in prayer there will be a time that He **answers** us. It is important to know that our prayers don't just evaporate they rise into God's presence and stay there.

~ Jim Cymbala – *When we seek God for answers we must persevere in prayer (pray through), letting them build up day after day until the force of it becomes a mighty tide pushing against all obstacles.* **James 4:2**

One clear lesson that we must learn is that God does not appreciate when we **second** guess Him. **Luke 1:18-22** We must guard against doubting God's word. Zechariah had waited so long for his and his wife's prayers to be answered that even when an angel showed up to let them know the good news he was unable to believe. Zachariah had, even as a priest, allowed himself to get to the point where he doubted God's ability in His own life. This happened even as he represented God to others as a priest. There are times God will have a strong reaction to our questioning His ability. The great **battle** of our spiritual lives will be answering the question "**will you believe**?". It is not, "will you try harder?" or "can you make yourself worthy?" - but will you trust God when your schedule does not match His timing. **Ecclesiastes 3:11**

The hardest part of faith is often the **wait**. If we refuse to wait, we will either walk away from God's plan thinking it was never there for us in the first place or we will begin to try to solve or fix the problem ourselves and that will only make matters worse. The timing of God is often a **mystery** to us and sometimes a frustration. We must not give up, lose heart or try to arrange our own solutions. **Psalm 40:1-2** Remember life is a journey and our theme song should be "Don't stop believing". Refuse to give into the voices of unbelief and impatience.