

WAIT ON THE LORD

(Lamentations 3:22-33)

Intro: (30 seconds of silence)

We're not very good at waiting, are we?

-I waited about 30 seconds before I started to speak.

-I was going to wait a minute.

#But I couldn't wait that long.

When I stand up here.

-Without doing anything.

-Without saying anything.

#You start to get anxious.

*I could feel it.

#You wonder:

*"What's wrong with Pastor Norm?"

*"Didn't he prepare a sermon this week?"

*"Did he forget what he wanted to say?"

*"Is he having a 'senior moment'?"

*"Is this a sign of some kind of dementia?"

*"Why doesn't he say something?"

#Silence is not always golden.

We don't like to wait.

-Why don't we like to visit?

#Doctor.

#Dentist.

-Besides the procedures that these health professionals do.

-We don't like to sit in the waiting room.

#Reading six-month-old copies of:

*Time magazine.

*Sports Illustrated.

+It's never the swimsuit edition.

#Waiting.

-We live in a microwave world.

#We're used to having:

*Instant coffee.

*Instant popcorn.

*Instant pudding.

*Instant.

*Instant.

*Instant.

#We want what we want.

#We want it now.

We don't like waiting.

We don't like waiting on the Lord.

I. Sometimes We Have A Short Wait.

A. Psalm 30.

1. "Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes in the morning."
 - a. Psalm 30:5.
2. Most of us can endure a bad night.
 - a. If we know it's not going to last very long.
3. All of us have probably had a sleepless night.
 - a. If I have a lot on my mind.
 - b. If I'm worried about something.
 - c. If I get woken up shortly after I've fallen asleep.
 - I toss and turn.
 - It's hard to rest.
4. Even if we're tired, morning can provide us with relief.
 - a. Reason to get up.
 - b. Reason to focus on something else.
 - c. Joy comes in the morning.

B. But Even A Short Wait Can Seem Like An Eternity.

1. That sleepless night.
 - a. Can seem like it goes on.
 - And on.
 - And on.
 - And on.
 - And on.
 - b. But if you get a good night's rest.
 - Alarm goes off.
 - You think:
 - # "Wow, it's time to get up already?"
 - # "I just laid down."
 - *That's especially true for me.
 - +On Sunday morning.
2. When I was a hospital chaplain.
 - a. I often had patients complain to me:
 - "I asked that nurse for my pain medicine hours ago."
 - "She still hasn't brought it."
 - b. There were no clocks in the patient rooms.
 - c. We encouraged patients to send their valuables home.
 - Including their watches.
 - #Those things had a way of disappearing.
 - *From their bedside tables.

- d. Most patients had no way of telling time.
 - If they had a watch.
 - #Maybe it had been a while.
 - *Since they asked for their pain medication.
 - But, I dare say, in most cases.
 - #Those patients hadn't been waiting for hours.
 - #They had probably only been waiting for a few minutes.
 - *But those few minutes seemed like hours.
 - +Because time goes so s-l-o-w-l-y.
 - =When you're hurting.
- e. An hour with a kidney stone.
 - Can seem like forever.
 - #We want relief.
 - #We want it now.

C. We Don't Like To Wait For God, Either.

- 1. We want our prayers answered.
 - a. We want them answered now.
- 2. But God is in God's own time zone.
 - a. God doesn't:
 - Wear a watch.
 - Cross days off a calendar.
 - b. Scriptures say:
 - “In God's eyes:”
 - “A day is like a thousand years.”
 - “A thousand years is like a day.”
 - #2 Peter 3:8.
 - c. What is time to One who is time-less?
 - d. In the Greek language.
 - There are two words for time.
 - #Chronos.
 - *We get the word chronology from it.
 - *It's:
 - +Watch time.
 - +Calendar time.
 - #Kairos.
 - *God's time.
 - *Opportune moment.
- 3. We don't always want to wait for God.
 - a. We want God in our time zone.
 - b. We want God on our time schedule.

II. Sometime We Wait For More Than A Night.

A. Woman In Our Gospel Lesson Waited For Twelve Years.

1. Twelve years is a long time:
 - a. To wait.
 - b. To be hemorrhaging.
 - c. To be bleeding.
 - d. To be suffering.
 - She had been to doctor after doctor.
 - She had spent all of her savings.
 - Her condition got worse and worse.
2. When I was in China.
 - a. In 1997.
 - b. We visited the Guilin Chinese and Western Hospital.
 - One afternoon.
 - c. We learned that many Chinese.
 - Use western medicine.
 - #Including antibiotics.
 - *For acute ailments.
 - But they use Chinese medicine.
 - #Including:
 - *Herbs.
 - *Acupuncture.
 - #For more chronic ailments.
 - d. After our mini-lecture.
 - I went outside.
 - #To shoot baskets on a playground.
 - *With some neighborhood children.
 - #There isn't too much that ails me.
 - Many in our tour group stayed behind.
 - #They were the ones with chronic ailments.
 - *Arthritis.
 - *Other conditions.
 - +They had been dealing with for years.
 - =With little or no relief.
 - #They bought:
 - *Hundreds.
 - *Hundreds.
 - *Hundreds.
 - +Of dollars.
 - =Worth of Chinese medicine.
 - *Hoping.
 - +Somewhere.
 - +Somehow.
 - =They might get some relief.

3. This woman in our gospel had been suffering for 12 years
 - a. Was Jesus just another doctor?
 - In her never-ending quest.
 - #To find a cure.
 - Why not try him?
 - #She'd tried everything else.
 - b. She had heard about Jesus.
 - He had a good reputation.
 - c. She thought:
 - “If only I could touch his shirt sleeve.”
 - “That’s all I need.”
 - “Just a touch.”
 - d. Jesus was surrounded by a great crowd of people.
 - Pressed in on him.
 - From every side.
 - e. She probably had to push her way through the crowd.
 - Maybe like after an OU football game.
 - There she was in this great crowd.
 - #Reaching.
 - #Stretching.
 - #Touching.
 - f. Her wait was over.
 - In an instant.
 - In a moment.
 - #Moment of healing.
 - #Moment of faith.

B. Sometimes The Wait Is Too Long.

1. Story of Jairus and his daughter.
 - a. Sandwiched around the story of the nameless woman.
 - Who waited 12 years for healing.
 - b. Daughter.
 - Also nameless.
 - 12 years old.
 - #That seems to be a popular number.
 - At the point of death.
2. Jairus was an important man.
 - a. He was president of the synagogue.
 - President of the congregation.
 - #For crying out loud.
 - b. This was an emergency.
 - He shouldn't have to wait.
 - c. But wait he did.
 - Waited for Jesus to deal with the woman.
 - Waited until it was too late.
 - Waited until his little daughter was dead.
 - d. It was too late for healing.

3. But it was not too late:
 - a. For faith.
 - b. For resurrection.
 - Even three days is not too long.
 - #To wait for resurrection.

C. It Was Not Too Late For The People Of Israel.

1. Book of Lamentations.
 - a. Funeral dirge.
 - b. Series of laments.
 - Personal.
 - National.
2. What were they lamenting?
 - a. Destruction of the Temple.
 - In 587 B.C.
 - At the hands of the Babylonians.
 - #Under King Nebuchadnezzar.
 - b. Just as we have appointed readings.
 - For different occasions in the church year.
 - #Story of the birth of Jesus.
 - *At Christmas.
 - #Story of Jesus' resurrection.
 - *At Easter.
 - Lamentations was read every year.
 - #On the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple.
 - *9th of Av.
 - c. Can you imagine?
 - If on 9/11.
 - #It wasn't:
 - *World Trade Center.
 - *Pentagon.
 - +That was hit.
 - #But the U.S. Capitol.
 - *As was apparently part of the plot.
 - #I'm not trying to minimize the loss of life.
 - *In New York.
 - *At the Pentagon.
 - *Or in that field in Pennsylvania.
 - Isn't the U.S. Capitol?
 - #More than any other:
 - *Place.
 - *Building.
 - #Symbol of our democracy.
 - d. That's what Israel lost.
 - Center of their life.
 - Symbol of their country.

3. But it wasn't just a building that was lost.
 - a. Religious.
 - b. Political.
 - c. Business.
 - Leaders.
 - #Deported.
 - #Exiled.
 - #Enslaved in a foreign country.
4. There they waited for God to deliver them.
 - a. Not for:
 - Night.
 - 12 years.
 - b. But for 50 years.
5. When I was reading through these lessons.
 - a. Last week.
 - b. Trying to decide how best to preach this week.
 - Mary, our secretary, was reading Lamentations 3.
 - #In the office.
 - She said:
 - #"I particularly like verse 26."
 - When Mary speaks.
 - #I listen.
 - Mary knows what's going on.
 - #I offered her a chance to preach this morning.
 - *She didn't take me up on that.
 - #But looked what she focused on.
 - c. "It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord."
6. People of Israel waited on the Lord.
 - a. For 50 years.
 - b. But they weren't simply waiting.
 - Twiddling their thumbs.
 - Sitting on their hands.
7. They were waiting in faith.
 - a. Trusting in God's:
 - Steadfast love.
 - Mercies.
 - Faithfulness.
 - b. Trusting that God's:
 - Steadfast love.
 - Loving kindness.
 - Amazing grace.
 - #Never ceases.
 - c. Trusting that God's mercies.
 - Word that never occurs in the singular.
 - #In Hebrew.
 - Never run out.

- d. Trusting that God's faithfulness.
 - Even in the face of Israel's unfaithfulness.
 - #New every morning.

Concl: It's another dawn.

- For God's:
 - #Steadfast love.
 - #Mercies.
 - #Faithfulness.

It's morning.

- In the Temple.
- At the table.

What are you waiting for?