

Joseph The Waiting Room – part 1

Gen. 40:20-23—41:1

Have you ever noticed that some rooms speak for themselves? Cozy den, nursery, dining room; not all rooms are so inviting...waiting rooms.

--Waiting rooms can be distinctly lonely even when they are full of people

--I've been in a lot of them as a pastor—they are a place where the whole gamut of human emotions can be seen in any given day.

--You don't have to be in a hospital or doctor's office to be in waiting room—you don't have to be in a room to be in a waiting room...life is full of waiting rooms of different sorts.

--Waiting for all kinds of things; driver's licence; a mate; a career; a call; health issue; plane bus mail train phone

--Regardless, waiting is tough to deal with because we don't like it.

--Like it or not, we need to be good at the waiting room:

Here are a few phrases from the Psalms that have been catching my eye lately. "Wait for the Lord." "Wait patiently for Him." "I wait for you, Oh Lord." "For you I will wait all day." "I wait for the Lord more than the watchmen wait for the morning." "I wait patiently for the Lord." "I wait in silence for God." "Those who wait for the Lord will inherit the land."

(Psalms 27, 37, 25, 130, 40, 62, 37 respectively.) And from Isaiah: "Those who wait on the Lord will find new strength"Is.40:31).

1. So how do we stay patient in the waiting room? How do we wait successfully?

1. Don't be surprised by waits and delays – I Peter 4:12

Abraham waits for decades for a son—let's his wife talk him into a way around the waiting room they were in by marrying Hagar and having a son through her, and that son turned out to be a regret and trouble for Abraham's descendants to this day.

Moses waits for 40 years in Median to deliver Israel from the bondage in Egypt. He gets his B. D. while there (backside of the desert degree). Israel waiting over 400 years while God worked in the background to rescue them.

2. While in the Waiting room we need to ask the right questions.

Examples of wrong questions: "what did I do to deserve this?", "Why is it that I have to wait and everybody else gets what they want?", "Why is it that everybody else gets it easy but I don't?"

--Right question: "Is there something God is trying to teach during this waiting period?"

--The children of Israel waited 40 years to enter the promised land because they had a lot to learn.

--Right question: "Is there something God wants to change in my life during this time?"

--We can waste a lot of time in the waiting rooms not asking the right questions.

2. Sometimes, the hardest part of waiting for our ship to come in is when we think it's arrived only to find out it docked at another port.

--That's what happened to Joseph here in Genesis 40 --years as a slave and prisoner and he thought he could see the light at the end of the tunnel when he interpreted the dreams of cupbearer and the baker and his interpretations came true.

--Gen. 40:20-23; 41:1 – I submit to you that the hardest part of his trial was those last two years!

Before we fully address the implications of that let's back up and consider a situational issue that comes up from this story.

--Some may think that we shouldn't try to change our circumstances or make any plans since God controls the plans and circumstances?

--I don't actually believe that because I know that God has given us brains and know-how; what we need to stay away from is faith in our brains, know-how, plans, efforts to manipulate our circumstances.

--Try stuff, make plans, apply your brain, but trust only God, or you will not be disappointed.

--Joseph gets his hopes up here, it would have been hard not to but we need to put our hope in God.

--**I Corinthians 7:20-22** – try, but be ready to stay in your current situation if God wills.

--What you don't want to do is find yourself fighting God over your circumstances.

I always think of the story of Elijah and him being sent the brook Cherith where he could drink water and the ravens would feed him during a drought. He could have balked and said that there were better places to hide. He could have gotten up and left for a better place that was more comfortable. But if he had done that the ravens would have, instead of feeding him, they would have been feeding on him!

--To many times because we are impatient in the waiting rooms of life we force a change and wind up with something that God did not want for us and “the ravens” stay pretty fat off of us!

3. While in the waiting room, we need to learn to trust in God alone. —**Jeremiah 17:5**

--The abiding constant in Joseph's life was the presence and help of God.

--In every situation he gave priority and trust to God alone: does his best, doesn't sin; finds a way to serve others even in prison.

--Give God priority and do the same thing!

4. While in the waiting room we need to wait for God's timing.

--God had perfect timing for Joseph and it would have never worked any other way: Pharaoh had to have a disturbing dream and Joseph had to interpret it and only then would he be convinced to set this young man in charge of Egypt.

--Wasn't only about Joseph was it? No! saving all his people was God's goal.

--Joseph had no way of seeing this, he had to trust that God was up to something bigger.

When we are in the waiting room we have a hard time seeing past our **immediate needs and circumstances**.

--We forget that God has a global agenda not just our personal agendas to consider.

--**Rom. 1:13** – Paul makes a plan, fails, accepts the failure and waits knowing that God is working something good.

--Might it be possible that you are waiting as you are for something more than just yourself...could it be that God has more than just you in mind during this waiting and refining period you are under?

--We need to trust His timing...we pull the plug early and it may more than just us that the ravens are feeding on!!

"The intensive care waiting room is different from any other place in the world. And the people who wait are different. They can't do enough for each other. No one is rude. The distinctions of race and class melt away. A person is a father first, a black man second. The garbage man loves his wife as much as the university professor loves his, and everyone understands this. Each person pulls for everyone else.. **Vanity and pretense vanish. The universe is focused on the doctor's next report. If only it will show improvement. Everyone knows that loving someone else is what life is all about.**" Long before we're in the intensive care waiting room maybe we can learn to live like that.