



*Sandy Wild*

I came to faith in Christ in the early 70's through the ministry of a Friends church in Hayden Lake, Idaho. Over the last twenty-eight years, I have served on staff at three Friends churches, and I'm currently serving as an associate pastor at Anthem, a non-denominational church.

Married for forty-five years, my husband, Dick, and I have two grown sons, five grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. I enjoy reading and writing and teaching Bible studies.

This week we will look into the Scripture through the lens of waiting.

I believe the real mystery in waiting is learning how to celebrate well and draw out joy while feeling like your life is simply on hold. It's about making room for purpose and passion even when we don't have clarity. It's about designing a life around our faith and intimacy with God, instead of simply reacting to whatever comes our way.

*BIBLE READING: Psalm 5:1–3*

Though it's a necessary part of our faith journey, I don't always understand God's purpose in waiting; surely his sense of timing is different from mine.

This truth was revealed to me once again when our home group recently worked through 1 and 2 Peter. Toward the end of the study, I was reminded that God's economy of time is different: "But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness" (2 Peter 3:8–9). When considering this passage within its context, Peter is referring to the culmination of time at the end of this present age; he speaks of waiting for the day when we begin life in God's new kingdom.

David understood the agony of waiting for a promised kingdom. Whether faced with triumph or trials, prosperity or persecution, times of rejoicing or times of regret, David understood waiting for the One who could meet his need. David waited, expecting God's intervention. In Psalm 5, we are given an opportunity to peek into David's prayer life. During this time of waiting, the shepherd/king prayed.

Each morning, David laid his requests before God: "Listen to my words, Lord, consider my lament. Hear my cry for help." And then he waited—anticipating God's response. Are you waiting for the Lord's movement in your present circumstances? Do you believe God has a timely, sovereign plan, in spite of your sense of urgency?

*SONG: Leaning on the Everlasting Arms*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: God of creation, teach me to wait expectantly.*

—Sandy Wild

*BIBLE READING: Psalm 25:4–7 (NASB)*

In Ecclesiastes 1:9, Solomon writes, “What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.” Everyone has experienced a season of waiting; it’s nothing new. Abraham waited twenty-five years for his son; Moses waited forty years to bring God’s children into the land of promise; and David waited over twenty years to reign as king over Judah and Israel. In this Advent season, we remember the Jews who waited so long for the Messiah.

We find examples in Scripture of believers who were unwilling to wait on God, like Sarah with Hagar, and Saul offering sacrifices instead of waiting for Samuel. Both were impatient with God’s timing. Everyone waits at some point in their life. It’s what we do with our time that makes us unique.

This passage in Psalms finds David active as he waits. He understands that periods of waiting can be transformative in one’s life. He knows it is God who determines the length of the wait, so it is to God he directs his prayer. He requests two things of the Lord: “Make me know Your ways,” and “Teach me Your paths.” He then repeats, “Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation.”

Waiting has the potential to bring out the best and the worst in people. At a time when nothing makes sense, David exposes his dependency upon God as he expresses his desire to know and understand God better.

What will you do with your time as you wait upon the Lord?

*SONG: Teach Me Your Way, O Lord*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Make me know your ways during this time of waiting, O God, and lead me in your everlasting way.*

—Sandy Wild

*BIBLE READING: Psalm 27:13–14*

Faith and hope. These words encircle periods of waiting as we long for God’s redemptive plan in our lives. The writer to the Hebrews tells us, “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1).

Israel longed to be redeemed—ransomed from the tyranny of Roman oppression. Endowed with a handful of promises, Israel waited confidently for the hope of God’s promised Messiah.

As they waited, were there days of despair? You bet. Were there years when hardships seemed insurmountable? Absolutely. But there came a day—a glorious day—when a young woman from Nazareth gave birth. From the Creator’s own mouth, a cry would ring. Israel’s Messiah had come.

I can’t imagine how difficult it must have been as Mary waited for the angel’s words to be fully realized. “You will bear a son,” she was told. “the Son of the Most High, his kingdom will have no end, he will be a holy child, the Son of God.”

In spite of the impossible nature of this promise, Mary did not give way to despair. Her heart was joined with David’s as he proclaimed, “I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.”

For what are you waiting this Christmas season? Is your need relational? Financial? A health issue? Will you wait confidently with me as we journey through the land of the living together?

*SONG: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Thank you, God, for coming to ransom my life. Strengthen me with your courage as I wait for your deliverance.*

—Sandy Wild

*BIBLE READING: Psalm 33:18–22 (NASB)*

A sense of anticipation forms as you look forward to receiving the fulfillment of a promise. Yet that anticipation can fade as years pass and there's seemingly no movement from God. For me, it was waiting for the salvation of one of my children. God had given me promises regarding this one, but from my perspective, nothing was happening. In fact, fifteen years passed without seeing any movement. How do we retain our hope in the face of long-term periods of waiting?

A couple of heroes of faith helped me hang on during that season in my life. We encounter them in Luke 2:25–38—the day Mary and Joseph came to the temple to present their baby boy to the Lord. Here we find an older man and woman who were expectantly waiting for the redemption of Israel. The Lord had promised Simeon that he wouldn't see death before the arrival of the Messiah. The prophetess Anna never left the temple, serving God day and night as she waited.

You might wonder what it was about these two that gave me the hope I needed to remain fervent in prayer. It was *where* they were waiting. You see, the last promise God had given Israel regarding their Messiah's coming was recorded in Malachi 3:1. "Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple." The promise was written nearly four hundred years before they were born, yet Simeon and Anna waited in the temple for the fulfillment.

From these two we discover a secret to long-term waiting: go back to the last promise you received and park your faith there.

*SONG: They that Wait upon the Lord*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Teach me, Lord, to place my hope in you.*

—Sandy Wild

*BIBLE READING: Psalm 37:3–7*

When I was a young girl, I remember being captivated by a weekly television program where one lucky woman would be crowned Queen for a Day. The program began with its host, Jack Bailey, asking the audience, “Do *you* want to be Queen for a Day?” The audience would erupt in wild applause. From the group, four women were selected to participate in this quirky game show.

The task for each contestant was to convince the studio audience that her hardship was more severe than what the other three players were experiencing. The group would judge each of the four sad stories with an applause-o-meter, and the winner was awarded three wishes, a dozen roses, and a crown.

I must confess that I always wished I could grow up and be crowned Queen for a Day. In fact, there are days when I still find myself waiting for Mr. Bailey to bring me my crown and dozen roses—because there have been hard times throughout this journey of faith.

But that isn’t the way it works, is it? Before his arrest, Jesus warned his disciples, both then and now, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). While in this world, we are not promised three wishes, a crown, and roses. Instead, we are offered the peace of God, in times of *trouble*. It is because of God’s promised peace that we can face our tomorrows, whatever they may hold.

*SONG: Because He Lives*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Almighty King, teach me to rest in you, waiting patiently for your comfort, deliverance, and restoration.*

—Sandy Wild

*BIBLE READING: Psalm 62:1–8 (NASB)*

In 2004, our twenty-seven-year-old son suffered a massive stroke. Due to considerable swelling in his brain, we didn't know if he would survive. So we waited. Friends and family waited. Finally, on the fourth day, David woke up, but it became painfully obvious that he would have a long road to recover from the damage done in his brain. Along with the inability to move the right side of his body, this once-gregarious young man was left speechless, completely without sound. I remember feeling that everything would be OK if only I could hear his voice. I would replay his messages saved on my phone just to hear that voice again.

A speech therapist started visiting him in the hospital to begin the arduous task of teaching David to speak, something which seemed impossible to her highly-frustrated, young patient. One morning the therapist explained how the stroke had damaged the speech center in the left side of his brain, but in the right side was David's ability to sing. So she started a song, inviting him to join her whenever he felt like it. She began, "Happy birthday to you..." and this soundless man hummed the next line perfectly. As I looked around the room, I saw three of his burly friends—a contractor, a carpenter, and an electrician—crying! At that moment, I realized we all needed to hear that voice for assurance.

So it is in my relationship with the Lord. I replay old messages as I wait to hear him speak into my condition. Are you waiting to hear the voice of God?

*SONG: Wonderful Words of Life*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Dear Lord, please quiet my heart. Help me listen, to be in tune to the nuances of your voice today.*

—Sandy Wild

*BIBLE READING: Psalm 147:1–11*

Psalm 147 holds a special place in my heart. If you could see this page in my Bible, you would find all the verbs describing the actions of God are underlined. The Lord builds up, gathers, and heals. God binds up wounds, gives out special names, and supports the afflicted. Surely God is merciful to those who wait.

Last spring, I was reminded of God's mercy while attending a track meet for one of our grandsons. Justin, now a senior in high school, was born with hemophilia, a genetic birth defect; his blood doesn't clot. As a severe hemophiliac, Justin can have a spontaneous bleed in his joints, deep muscle, even his brain without provocation. To protect him from a life-threatening event, Justin has been infused with a synthetic clotting factor every other day, since he was three years old.

We appealed to God's mercy, asking that this little guy might grow up healthy like other children. Well, Justin did grow; in fact, he's currently around 6'3"!

As he grew into that big body, Justin wanted desperately to play sports; he had a drive to compete athletically alongside his friends. However, any type of contact sport was forbidden. His inability to join team sports left Justin feeling like an outsider. Papa and I asked that he be given a special gift, something that might help Justin fit in.

In his great mercy, God enabled this boy to use his strength to *throw things*—and it's a team sport! He is able to send the shot put and discus sailing while his teammates cheer him on. Thank you God for your mercy.

*SONG: At Calvary*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Merciful God, you long to be gracious, and we praise you.*

—Sandy Wild