

WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?

An excerpt pages 25-30 (Chapter 2)

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"Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him."

Luke 12:35-36

Sure, waiting is part of living. Waiting for the light to turn green, for the elevator, for the test results. "Please wait, your call will be taken by the first available representative." In the early stages of waiting, we're impatient. Hurry up! Let's get this line moving! But as time wears on, we sink into apathy.

What's the use? There's nothing I can do.

Believers have been waiting for Christ's return for a long, long time, so long that many Christians have given themselves over to apathy. But his command is still unchanged; we are to wait for him with our "loins girded" and our "lamps burning." Instead of sitting around marking time until God opens a door to the future that is still closed, we are instructed to get up and walk through a door he has already opened. Our job is to "wait" for that closed door to open by passing through a door where the Lord Jesus is already present and alive and calling to us.

Jesus came to town and said in effect, "What are you waiting for? It's here! The Kingdom of God is upon you!" While the rest of the world continued on its cynical way, Jesus began to bring people into God's world---right in the middle of this world, right here in Satan's territory! He became the door to another world. People could pass through this door into a place where God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven.

That door is as close to you as it was to the people of Jesus' day. When you pass over the threshold, you are standing on the edge of time, and begin to experience "the end of the world as we know it." You still live in the same house, breathe the same air, walk around in the same body. But it's a different world for you, because God's Spirit has lifted you into a spiritual dimension in which the glory of the end of the age is already part of your life.

***Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.
Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb shout for joy.***

***Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.
Isaiah 35:5-6***

This is a picture of the coming glory, but it is also a description of something that is going on right now all over the earth, including the place where you are as you read these words. People are being delivered from the power of Satan into God's world. Their eyes are being opened, so that they can see the hand of God at work in the midst of the chaos around them. Their ears are being unstopped, so they can hear the voice of the Shepherd, who leads them into a new kind of living. Their stumbling walk is being healed, so they can follow the Master in the paths of righteousness. Tongues are set free to offer praise to the God who not only waits for us at the end of time, but is with us now.

It's like waking up from a bad dream. It's like rising out of a grave and starting to live. It's like stepping out of a prison cell, and walking free. And it begins, not when the world comes to an end, not after you die, but now! We're standing on the edge of time, poised at the threshold of another world. We don't have to wait until the end to see the glory of God, we can see it now---and enter it.

For twenty centuries the world has continued on its way as if there is no "kingdom of God." The sun rises and the sun sets. The seasons come and go. Nations appear, triumph and disappear. But during these two millennia Jesus' followers have lived, not only in this world of earth-time, they have also lived in a dimension known only to faith. They have lived on the edge of time, on the brink of a new world which has not yet fully arrived. But the powers of this new world---God's kingdom in it's fullness---both penetrate and transcend this world of flesh and blood.

Jesus' followers are given the high privilege of tasting the age to come and walking in its light---now!

When Jesus instructed his disciples to ...

"Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding feast, " Luke 12:35-36a

... he was teaching them how to live on the edge of time. He was saying in effect,

"This world of earth-time is not your home. The kingdom of God is your home, even while you wait for its fullness. Don't get too comfortable. Stay on your toes. Otherwise this world of earth-time will swallow you."

"But suppose that servant says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to beat the menservants and women servants and to

eat and drink and get drunk. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers."

Luke

12:45-46

The issue is not, How soon is Jesus coming? Will it be in my lifetime? The issue is, where am I living at this moment in God's universe? Am I imprisoned in earth-time or am I living in the dimension of God's kingdom, out on the edge of time in the Vineyard, where Christ's return is always imminent?

No, the kingdom is not here in its fullness.

But the kingdom is here.

If you sit around waiting for the day of glory to arrive, without entering into the labor of the kingdom as it now exists, you will be caught unprepared when glory dawns.

We wait for the kingdom in its fullness by entering the kingdom which is already here.

Waiting is not sitting. Waiting is acting.

Waiting in Faith

Yes, we're waiting for Jesus to return and bring all suffering to an end. We're waiting for the day when ...

"the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Habakkuk 2:14

But we're waiting with a faith which allows us to taste these things now. You pass through that invisible door, and you're there. You still live in the same place, you look the same, speak with the same tongue. But you're in heaven, even while you walk this earth. You've stepped from this world of grief into a world of glory.

You are walking with God.

You have God's life burning within you, inspiring your thoughts, directing your steps.

Jesus explains that the door to this heavenly kingdom, which you can enter any time you choose, is faith.

"Have faith in God!" he says. Mark 11:22

"Everything is possible for him who believes." Mark 9:23

"Anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing." John 14:12

Most of us have spent too many years in a twilight zone of half-belief where we've been half-aware of what we could be, what we could have in God. We're still on the outside looking in. We talk about it, sing about it, even wish for it, yet something keeps us from entering the kingdom decisively. We've been afraid to leave these shallows of half-belief and launch out into the deep waters of faith. We're in between. In fact we've been in between for so long that many of us seem to think that this is all there is---this twilight zone of half-belief.

"Heaven begins," says Jesus, "when you come out of that bunker of half-belief, and commit yourself to me all the way." **(See Luke 9:62)**

Jesus pioneered this way of faith for us. He cut a path; all we have to do is follow it. "How could Jesus pioneer the way of faith?" you say, "he was God! How can God have faith in God?" Jesus walked the road of faith, not as God, but as a man, as human and needy (yet without sin) as you and I.

Scripture tells us that God the Son laid aside his glory, gave up his divine attributes, emptied himself of all that, so that he could be the Second Adam. So that, where the First Adam failed to walk by faith, and produced a human race that never could walk by faith, the Second Adam---Jesus---did walk by faith and is producing a new race that can follow in his steps. His death and resurrection have made it possible.

We can get up in the morning and present our bodies to God as a living sacrifice. We can walk by faith twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, in our homes, on our jobs, with our possessions, with our money. Our hearts can continuously be singing his praises saying, "Lord, I'm yours, and all that I have is yours. All I want to do is live to your glory!" As we do that, the glory of the world to come sets our hearts on fire, and we know that the kingdom of God is already alive within us.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, guide us to the truth that waiting is acting. Waiting is rising from the grave and living, now. Waiting is walking through the doors you open, now. Waiting is entering your Kingdom, now. And Dear, Living Lord, while we wait, open our eyes so we can see your hand, now; Unstop our ears so we may hear you, now; Guide our feet so we follow your path, now; Open our mouths so we can rejoice in your Kingdom, now. Lord, Jesus what a beautiful gift and honor that we can begin to dwell in your kingdom, now. Help us to keep choosing to live in your Kingdom as we live our lives out on this earth. Help us to leave our doubts behind and step into your world of glory, now. Lord, all we have is yours, now.

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