

# Why We Hate to Wait

*Luke, Pt. 1*

*Luke 1:1-25*

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# I. INTRODUCTION

a. **Last Tuesday, my wife and I along with Nick, Julie and two missionaries that we know who were in town went out for dinner.**

i. And this missionary couple had specifically requested that we go out for Maryland Blue Crabs.

- So, we went to this place, ordered blue crabs, and got all messy as we cracked them open and enjoyed the meat inside.

ii. And it had been several years since I done had this and it reminded me of the last time that I had a crab feast like this.

- A bunch of friends got together, bought a bushel of crabs from the SE Waterfront, and we sat around the deck cracking them open for an afternoon.
  1. Now, if you've done this, you know it's a lot of work to extract the meat from those things and you don't get a lot of meat per crab.
- Well, while we were having this crab feast, one of my friends Ryan had a unique strategy.
  1. See, Ryan is a very technical, analytical, methodical type of guy.
  2. And he sat there for the afternoon cracking open the crabs and not eating the meat but rather saving the meat in a pile.



3. So that when everyone was finished eating, he actually sat down with a whole plate full of fresh crab meat to enjoy.
  4. And we all looked at him with envy because he was enjoying the fruits of his labor.
- And I remember thinking: I wish I had the patience and the resilience of Ryan to put in the work, wait, and enjoy the reward.
    1. Instead, we all ate the meat in small bits and pieces as we cracked open the crabs.

**b. This is a parable for our culture.**

**i. As a culture, we hate to wait!**

- We don't have the patience to delay gratification, even if it was for our own good and pleasure.
- We don't have the patience to endure any time of waiting, because we are culturally brain washed into believing that any wait time is actually a waste of time.

**ii. Think about it, how much of our economy is built upon developing technology and systems that reduce our waiting time?**

- Just think of the infrastructure that Amazon has had to build in order to get any product of your choice to your doorstep within 24 hours!
  1. And they're even working on infrastructure using drones to get that product to you within an hour!



- Or, I remember last June my wife and I had flown out to California to celebrate our 10-year wedding anniversary.
  1. And I had reserved a rental car at LAX. Now, I normally rent through National but this time I rented through Hertz because they were cheaper.
  2. And I got so frustrated, because when we got to the rental counter, there was long line that we had to wait in.
  3. And when we finally got to the rental counter, we had to talk about insurance, and payments, and we had to sign paperwork.
  4. And it took us over an hour from landing to get into our rental car!
- Now, I got frustrated because I normally rent from National.
  1. And when you rent from National, you don't stand in a line...you don't talk to somebody.
  2. All your paperwork is signed in the app, they know what insurance you want, they got your credit card # on file.
  3. You literally go to the lot, pick out the care you want, get in and drive away.
  4. It takes 5 minutes or less.
- And because this is my normal rental car experience, I was so annoyed when I had to wait this time.
  1. But, it was actually all redeemed because my wife sweet talked the agent at the counter and got us a free upgrade into a nicer car.



iii. **But, what is it about having to wait that frustrates us so much?**

- Waiting at stoplights, waiting in traffic, waiting at the doctor's office, waiting in line...

iv. **But, I'm not just talking about waiting as an inconvenience.**

- What about when we're waiting on something much deeper than that?
  1. Like waiting to meet someone and get married...
  2. Or waiting for someone to apologize.
  3. Or waiting for the depression or the anxiety to lift...
  4. Or waiting on a job offer to come, the raise or promotion to come...for the business to take off...
  5. Waiting for the month where, finally, you're pregnant...
- See, waiting as an inconvenience is one thing but I remember when my wife and I tried to get pregnant for two years with no success...wondering, due to some health challenges that my wife had had in the past, if we'd ever get pregnant...feeling this skeptical hope every month that this would be the month...to only be disappointed.
  1. That kind of waiting...when you want something so deeply...can be demoralizing and depressing.
  2. Especially if you believe that God is completely sovereign (in control of everything) and all-powerful.
  3. Because all of a sudden the waiting and the suffering seems to be an intentional act of God.



**c. Well, this morning, I am excited because we are going to begin studying the Gospel of Luke together.**

- i. And as we study this opening passage of the Gospel of Luke, we are going to read about a people who have been waiting on God.
  - And as we read their story...I believe that we will learn why we hate to wait and also how to wait with joy.
    1. Whether we're talking about being inconvenienced at a slow stop light (like all the stop lights on Elden Street).
    2. Or we're waiting on God for something much deeper.

## **II. INTRODUCTION TO LUKE.**

**a. So, go ahead and get your Bibles out and turn to the Gospel of Luke.**

- i. You heard me right, this morning, we are going to begin a verse by verse sermon series on Luke!
  - There are 24 chapters in the book of Luke!
    1. Meaning we'll be in this book for a LONG TIME.
  - But I am excited for us to do a deep dive into one of the Gospels studying the life and the ministry of Jesus Christ.
- ii. **And this morning is the first Sunday in Advent.**
  - Traditionally, the church takes the four Sundays before Christmas to think about the first Advent...the first coming of Jesus Christ that we obviously celebrate on Christmas Day.



- So, over the Sundays of Advent and also at our Christmas Eve Service, we'll be working through Luke 1-2 studying and thinking about the birth of Jesus.

**b. And so, before we study our text together this morning, allow me to make a few introductory remarks about the Gospel of Luke.**

- i. In our Bible, we have four Gospels...or four separate accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.
  - And one of those Gospels is written by a man named Luke.
  - And Luke tells us in the opening four verses why he wrote this Gospel.
    1. **Read Luke 1:1-4.**
- ii. Now, Luke was not an eyewitness to the life of Jesus.
  - What we know about Luke was that he was a physician and he was a companion of the Apostle Paul.
  - And this man named Theophilus commissions Luke to gather information and evidence and record an orderly account about the life of Jesus, which is the Gospel of Luke, and the spread of the Early Church, which is the book of Acts.
    1. Luke and Acts are two volumes of the same work.
- iii. But Luke's desire when it comes to his writing is to give us an account of Jesus so that we may have certainty about Him and the things that we have been taught.



- And that is my prayer for us as we study this Gospel over the next year...that we will all have more certainty about who Jesus is, what Jesus did, and what it means to follow Him.

### **III. WAITING ON A MESSIAH AND A CHILD.**

#### **a. Now, Luke's Gospel begins about 15 months before Jesus is born.**

- i. According to v.5, the story picks up during the days of Herod, King of Judea.
  - This means that we are around the year 4 BC.
    1. And this is a significant historical fact because that means the time between the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament...is around 400 years.

#### **b. Which is a big deal. Let me get us all historically oriented so we can understand why it is really significant that there is 400 years between the OT and the NT.**

- i. Here is OT history in about 60 seconds.
  - The book of Genesis tells us about the rise of the people of Israel.
  - In Exodus, they are enslaved by Egypt but are rescued by God and begin their journey to the Promised Land.
  - In Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy God gives them His law.



- Joshua records them entering the Promised Land and occupying the land and then we get into the history books that records Israel's time in the promised land where they have many judges and many kings.
  - For the most part, Israel fails at faithfully following the law and worshiping God.
  - During that time, God sent many prophets to warn Israel about their sin and to call them to repentance.
  - But they didn't repent, so eventually God punishes Israel by allowing an enemy nation, the Babylonians, to invade and carry them off into exile away from the Promised Land.
  - After many years in exile, God graciously let's Israel back into the Promised Land where they begin to rebuild the Temple.
  - During this time after exile, 400-500 BC, God sent more prophets to not only call Israel to faithfulness but also to tell them, that one day, God would send Israel a true king who would defeat all of their enemies and establish the Kingdom of God.
  - In fact, the last book of the Old Testament is the book of Malachi, who was a prophet.
  - And the last thing that Malachi writes is that one day, a prophet will come to Israel in the Spirit of the prophet Elijah, and he will announce the arrival (the advent) of that Messiah, that true King of Israel.
- ii. So, you could imagine, that the people of Israel were very anxious for God to send them this Messiah, who would be their true King and would rescue them from all their enemies.



- But then, God goes silent.
    1. For 400 years.
    2. No prophets. No word. Nothing from God, for four centuries.
  - And this was disheartening to God's people because a lot happened in those 400 years.
    1. Think about our own country.
    2. The first ships were arriving in Jamestown 400 years ago. A lot has happened!
  - I don't have time to go over the history of what happened in those 400 years, but by the time the Gospel of Luke begins, the Roman Empire had taken control of the region, and King Herod was named a vassal King over the area to rule on behalf of Rome.
    1. In other words, God's people were invaded and conquered again.
    2. What about God's promise for a Messiah who would bring the Kingdom of God?
    3. How could God allow Israel to be occupied again?
    4. Did He forget His promise?
    5. Why did God's people need to wait so long....several life times...for God to act?
- iii. **See, the Gospel of Luke opens in a context where God's people are losing steam...they're wondering if they've been abandoned...they're tired...they're faith is struggling.**
- They're wondering if it's worth it to still follow this God who doesn't answer them.
    1. The last people to hear from God was their great, great grandparents. 12-14 generations.



2. That's a long time to wait.

**c. And as Luke opens his Gospel, he tells the story of one of Israel's priests, Zechariah, and his wife Elizabeth.**

- i. Now, Zechariah was no special or high priest.
- In Israel, they had a lot of priests in order to operate the Temple.
    1. V.5 tells us Zechariah was a part of the division of Abijah.
    2. There were 24 divisions of priests and each division was divided into orders.
    3. Each division of priests served in the temple for one-week twice per year.
    4. And each order within that division served a daily rotation during that week.
    5. So, when this story picks up, Zechariah is in the midst of one of his one-week assignments at the Temple.
    6. He's one of many priests.
  - But the text tells us that he and his wife were righteous people who loved God but there was something heavy upon their hearts.
    1. They had no children and they are now advanced in years beyond childbearing age.
    2. They had been praying to God for a long time to have a child...and waited...and waited...and waited...no answer. Nothing.



- ii. So, Luke opens his Gospel with an entire people who are weary from waiting for God to answer them and also with an elderly couple, who are disheartened after waiting years for a child to no avail.
  - So, let's re-read the rest of our passage this morning together with this context in mind.
    1. **Read Luke 1:8-25.**

**d. And so, an angel appears to Zechariah as he is performing his service in the temple and all of the sudden two deep longings within his heart come crashing together.**

- i. On one hand, God sent an angel to deliver a message from God to Zechariah.
  - This hadn't happened in 400 years. God was still there. He had not forgotten His people and finally they were hearing from Him!
    1. And the message to Zechariah is that the prophet, the one that Malachi said 400 years ago would come in the Spirit of Elijah to announce the arrival of the Messiah...he's finally coming!
    2. It's happening! The Messiah is coming. God is moving!
- ii. But at the same time, this angel tells Zechariah that his wife, Elizabeth, will be the one to conceive and carry this child...this prophet who would be John the Baptist...the one Malachi said who would come to announce the advent of Jesus.



- I almost imagine Zechariah as stunned and ecstatic because finally God's plan of salvation to send the Messiah was happening.
  1. And all of the implications of this was racing through his mind.
  2. And then it dawned on him.
  3. Wait...I'm going to be a Dad...Elizabeth is going to be a mom...she's gonna have a child?
- iii. It's almost as if all of this news was too much for Zechariah to wrap his mind around.
  - He had been waiting so long for both the Messiah to come and also to have a child.
  - It was all too good to be true.
- iv. And so, as we study the rest of this passage...Zechariah's response to the angel and then the angel's response back...
  - What I am going to do is give you two reasons why we hate to wait.
  - And then give you two ways we can begin to wait with joy in our lives.

## **IV. WHY WE HATE TO WAIT**

### **a. Here is the first reason we hate to wait:**

- i. If I don't understand what is going on or if I can't control what is going on, I assume something is wrong.
  - So, after receiving all this good news from the angel, Zechariah says: **Read v.18.**
  - He is immediately skeptical and he needs information in order for his mind to make sense of all this so that he can approve of it.



ii. See, when we have to wait on anything, and we don't understand the reason for the wait or if we can't do anything to reduce the wait, we get frustrated...because our assumption is something has gone wrong or someone has messed up.

- And so, our reflex is to insert ourselves and try to gain control of the situation.
  1. This is what Zechariah was doing.
  2. He had already waited so long...he thought maybe God had forgotten them...there was going to be a little more waiting to come...and he needed assurances that this was the real thing.
  3. Can he trust God's Word? Will God forget again?

iii. **Why do we get frustrated when we're the only one in an intersection yet we're sitting at a red light?**

- Why do we get frustrated when the doctor is running behind?
- Why do we get frustrated when our internet is slow?
- Why do we get frustrated in traffic?
- Because we assume that someone has messed up and it is directly impacting me.

iv. **Why do we struggle to pray when we've been waiting to get pregnant like Zechariah and Elizabeth?**

- Why do we struggle to pray when we've been waiting to meet someone, or waiting for our financial situation to turn around, or waiting for someone we loved to be healed or to come to faith in Christ?



- Because we are told God is sovereign and yet He doesn't seem interested in doing something about my situation.
  - I don't understand what all the waiting is about...therefore someone has dropped the ball...and if God is sovereign...then he certainly doesn't care!
- v. And this instinct that we have is deeply rooted in a belief that all of us have inside of us that got its start in the garden all the way back in Genesis 3.

## **b. It's the second reason we hate to wait...**

- i. I believe that I know what is best for me right now.
- If anyone should be able to control my situation...it's me...because I know what is best for me.
    1. It's the lie that the serpent fed to Eve in Garden.
    2. Eve knows what is best for Eve. How could God know what is best for Eve?
    3. You control your own life. Be the king of your own life.
    4. Do not allow God or anyone have that sort of control or influence over you.
    5. It is the anthem of our current culture.
- ii. And this explains the angel's response to Zechariah...**read Luke 1:19.**
- The angel had to put Zechariah into his proper place.
  - Because I am sure that if we could see what was in Zechariah's head...there were probably be two thoughts running through his mind...



1. First, God, where have you been the last 400 years?!? It would have been better...
  2. Secondly, God, Elizabeth and I are too old to have a child! Where were you 20 years ago when this would have been possible...you're too late!
- God, I know what is best for me...and you obviously don't...because you're too late.
    1. I am sure everyone of us have things in our life we long for...and we just don't quite understand why God isn't doing anything about it.
    2. From our commute time to work to the timing and makeup of our family to our finances...we believe that we know what is best for us...more so than God...and that God should listen to us when it comes to our plans for our lives.

## **V. HOW TO WAIT WITH JOY**

**a. And the first way that way learn to wait with joy...is by admitting to ourselves...that we have no clue what is best for us right now and in the future.**

- No clue at all.
- i. In the Old Testament, we read the story of a man named Job.
    - Job lost everything he had...his family, his money, his property...and the Bible says that God allowed this happen...implying that God could have stopped it.
      1. And this book in the Bible is the story of Job struggling through these circumstances and trying to make sense of it.



2. And throughout the book, Job wrestles with the question: Why? How could a good God allow this to happen to me?
- And there is this moment between God and Job where God appears to Job to answer his questions.
    1. Job 38:1-3 says - *"Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? <sup>3</sup> Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me."*
  - And for four chapters, God questions Job with things like...
    1. Where were you when I laid the foundations of the world...can you measure it?
    2. Where were you when I put the sun in its place and commanded morning and evening to come?
    3. Can you, with your voice, command the whole earth to be flooded?
    4. Was it you that created the horse and its mane, the locust and its wings, or the eagle and how it builds its nest in the heavens?
  - God unravels the majesty of His creation before Job and humbles Job at how big God is and how small Job is.
  - And then God asks Job...
    1. And the LORD said to Job: *"Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty? He who argues with God, let him answer it." Then Job answered the LORD and said: "Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth. I have spoken once, and I*



*will not answer; twice, but I will proceed no further.” Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: “Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me.*

2. And God keeps going for two chapters more!
  - God unraveled his glory, his power, his wisdom, his plans, his will, his goodness to Job and it silenced Job.
    1. Not in shame, but in worship.
- ii. **And just think of what Zechariah’s response would have been if God would have given Him a glimpse of His plans not only for giving Zechariah and Elizabeth a child, but the part that child would play in His grand plan to redeem Israel and the rest of the world.**
  - Zechariah, I have heard your prayers for a child. I cherish your prayers! I have not ignored you. But my plans for your life are wrapped up in a plan that is so much bigger than you.
    1. My plans for your child are wrapped up in my plans to send the Messiah.
    2. Jesus. The one you’ve been waiting for.
    3. The one who would come and defeat sin
    4. The one who would establish the Kingdom of God.
    5. And if I could unravel that plan for you and show you your part in it...your mind would be blown!
  - If Zechariah could see what God was really up to...he would be silenced in worship.



- iii. And so the first way that we learn to wait with joy is we must admit that we don't know what is best, but God does...from the tiniest detail of waiting at a stop light...to the bigger things in life.

**b. And the second way that we learn to wait with joy is we must release control.**

- i. I love the angel's response to Zechariah in **1:20**.
- Zechariah, I am not going to allow you to insert yourself into this.
    1. You are just going to sit back and watch me do my thing in my own timing.
  - It's kind of like...if you're one of those people who when you go to the restaurant and the host tells you that the wait is going to be 10 minutes...you wait exactly 10 minutes and then you're the guy back up there asking what is going on and how much longer its going to be...
    1. It's kind of like making you wait for a table at a restaurant but we're going to tie you to a chair and put duct tape over your mouth...you can't do anything...you're just going to wait.
- ii. And for many of us, when we have to wait on something, we can't help but try and manipulate the situation or take control of it.
- Instead of praying to God, trusting Him, releasing control and living faithfully according to His Word, we push boundaries to try and rush something in our lives.
    1. Maybe our standards for the person we want to date begins to go down.



2. Maybe we start entertaining some fertility options that are unethical.
  3. Maybe we start conducting ourselves more like the world at work to speed up the process of our success.
- But the idea of just waiting, with no control, and just being faithful to God...doesn't seem like an option.
- iii. **When Kim and I were struggling ourselves to get pregnant...and feeling discouraged that we may never be able to...**
- We decided to start the process of becoming foster parents for Fairfax County.
    1. And while we were in the middle of that process we ended up getting pregnant with our Son, Leland.
    2. Shortly after Leland was born, we decided to go ahead and finish the process of getting certified with the county because we had already completed all the training.
  - And so, after that process was complete, 13 months after our Son was born, we got a call from the county.
    1. There was a little girl who was born the day before and she needed a home.
    2. Her name was Christy.
    3. They were wondering if we could go to the hospital in the morning to pick her up.
    4. And so, that next morning, we picked up this little girl and brought her into our home.
    5. She never left. We fostered her for two years and then finally were able to adopt her.



- And the reality is, when I saw my wife cry every single month when we failed to get pregnant again and again.
    1. I would pray to God convinced that what was best for us was to have a child...now.
    2. But what God knew that we did not, was that His plan for our lives also involved His plan for Christy's...and we needed to wait.
    3. And if we had gotten pregnant when we wanted to get pregnant, we probably would have waited much longer to consider becoming foster parents.
    4. And Christy would not be my daughter.
    5. I praise God that he didn't give me an immediate yes...and that he doesn't act according to my will...but only his good and perfect will.
- iv. **What does God know that you don't about your situation, about your future?**
- How might God's plans for your life be wrapped up in His plans for someone else's life?
    1. What would it look like for you to release control, live faithfully to God's Word, and watch Him unravel His plans for your life?
- v. **Because if you are a follower of Jesus.**
- If you have trusted Him to be your savior, to forgive you of your sin, and you now follow Him.
  - Romans 8:28 says – ***“<sup>28</sup>And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”***



1. That's not a promise of no suffering...or no heartache...or no waiting.
2. But it is a promise that what God is up to in your life...if you could see it...it would blow your mind...and you would be silenced in worship.

## **VI. PRAY**

