

2 Peter 3:8-15  
"The Waiting Game"

The longest night of the year for every little boy and girl anxiously awaiting Christmas morn is Dec. 24. The *waiting game* played on Christmas Eve is almost too much to bear. It seems as if it takes *forever* for the dawn to appear, giving indication that it is time to get up and experience Christmas joy. But as promised by parents alike, morning arrives and joy ensues, or maybe disappointment. But nonetheless, morning comes. Much like our text this morning. There is a promise we disciples are anxiously awaiting. Like those disciples who have gone on before us, we wait not knowing if its fulfillment will be in our lifetime, but nonetheless we wait. For we know, regardless of how long it may take it will come. We are not waiting for the coming of our Messiah. No, pundits have it wrong, for he, Jesus, has already come. We await the time of his appearing by which all things will be made right. Evil will be judged, and righteousness will prevail. And though the waiting game at times is almost too much to bear (war and rumors of war, chaos, and division all around us, murder, loneliness, disappointment, and such) like children vigilantly trying to sleep on Christmas Eve to get to Christmas morn, we too head the call to vigilance in the face of waiting. Peter, like Paul and others reminds us that the promises of God are true, no matter the lapse in time, no matter how long the wait. No doubt, waiting is hard, but there is purpose in the waiting. So, with that said I want to speak to you today about patience, preparation, and practice.

**First, the lapse in time is the patience of God. V8-9, 15** <sup>8</sup>But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord isn't

really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent....<sup>15</sup> And remember, our Lord's patience gives people time to be saved.? Church, perspective is everything. There always two sides of seeing every situation, I believe. We can choose to only see the bad, to only see the evil in the world that has persisted, or we can choose to see the goodness of God in light of all the evil. Goodness in that God has allowed the world to go on and in going on we are here. In going on so many have become recipients of his mercy and grace. In going on so many more will. If we could only see this thing we call life from God's perspective oh! how different life would be. Peter does his best to help us do so in communicating that little time has gone by from God's perspective, but nonetheless the lapse, the wait is the patience of God. Aren't you glad God waited for you? Should we not endure the wait for the benefit of others.

**1 Tim 1:16** "<sup>16</sup> But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life."

**Rom 2:1-5** "You may think you can condemn such people, but you are just as bad, and you have no excuse! When you say they are wicked and should be punished, you are condemning yourself, for you who judge others do these very same things. <sup>2</sup> And we know that God, in his justice, will punish anyone who does such things. <sup>3</sup> Since you judge others for doing these things, why do you think you can avoid God's judgment when you do the same things? <sup>4</sup> Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin? <sup>5</sup> But because you are stubborn and refuse to

turn from your sin, you are storing up terrible punishment for yourself. For a day of anger is coming, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

**Second, the lapse in time is for our preparation. V11-13** <sup>11</sup> Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live, <sup>12</sup> looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along. On that day, he will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames. <sup>13</sup> But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God's righteousness." It is clear to me, scripturally, that no one comes to God with clean hands. When we are found by God we are found completely soiled. That is, dirty. It is also clear to me that God, Jesus, does not intend to leave us in the state that he found us. Let me be clear, the moment we profess faith in God's Son, Jesus the Christ, we are made right with God. That is, we are justified. But becoming his full-blown disciple is a process, better known as sanctification. The motivation for our commitment to sanctification is we know what's coming. Not simply judgement but more so, life with God. Life with Jesus. The wait serves to prepare for life eternal.

**Romans 6:1-2** "Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? <sup>2</sup> Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it?"

**2 Corinthians 5:4-5** "While we live in these earthly bodies, we groan and sigh, but it's not that we want to die and get rid of these bodies that clothe us. Rather, we want to put on our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by life. God himself has prepared us for this, and as a guarantee he has given us his Holy Spirit. <sup>6</sup> So we are always confident, even though we know that as long as we live in these bodies we are not at home with the Lord.<sup>7</sup> For we live by

believing and not by seeing. <sup>8</sup>Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord. <sup>9</sup>So whether we are here in this body or away from this body, our goal is to please him.”

**Finally, the lapse in time is for our practice. V14** “<sup>14</sup> And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight.” No one becomes great at anything without practice. And make no mistake about it there is expectation and responsibility that comes with being a follower of Christ. Jesus’ death and resurrection doesn’t take us off the hook, but rather places us on it. It does not keep us in bondage to sin but releases from sin’s captivity. The point in this, we are not free to do as we please. We have been freed to follow our Master. If we make it a habit of denying ourselves and picking up our cross and following Jesus, we will find that we grow more resilient and faith as time passes. And thus, we can expect to hear on that great day when Jesus the Christ appears well done good and faithful servant. The lapse in time is for our practice. Are you a practitioner of the gospel?

**James 1:22-25** “<sup>22</sup> But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. <sup>23</sup> For if you listen to the word and don’t obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. <sup>24</sup> You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. <sup>25</sup> But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don’t forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.”

**Luke 9:23** “<sup>23</sup> Then he said to the crowd, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me.”

The waiting game is hard, but the waiting serves a purpose. Patience, preparation, and practice. In the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.