

Zechariah

Reflections to Share,
Journal and Ponder

Elizabeth

Chapter 3: Waiting

An early theme in Luke is one of waiting with “unfulfilled longings.” The nation of Israel is waiting for Messiah to come to the “Promised Land” and overthrow Roman rule, bringing a new spirit to Temple leadership. Zechariah and Elizabeth continue to wait for a child. Later in Luke’s second chapter, we encounter Simeon and Anna, both of whom have been waiting on the Lord for decades in the Temple courts.

In Luke’s narrative, waiting is both a foundational motif of Advent as well as an essential thread in the fabric of faith. Like Zechariah and Elizabeth, we have all had significant periods of waiting in our lives. With our culture evermore focused on instant gratification, fostered in part by our microwave technology and fast-track expectations, we seem to have become a people who find it more and more difficult to wait.

- Do you have predetermined views of how and when God is supposed to do things for you? Do you have your own notions of how God’s blessing system should work?
- Have you ever had experiences of “waiting on the Lord?” Waiting for Him to do something that seemed so right? How about waiting for so long that it seemed you were waiting in vain? What are or were you waiting for? How did that waiting affect you?
- Have you ever had to wait on the Lord during periods of illness, unemployment, singleness, wayward children, infertility, or spiritual dryness? For how long? What challenges, encouragements, affirmations, discouragements, did you experience during those times of prolonged waiting?
- What is the hardest thing for you when it comes to waiting on the Lord?
- Have you had any waiting disappointments that caused you to feel that somehow God short-changed you in life? When? Why?
- Like Zechariah, have you ever felt like you were standing alone in some collegial circle? Or maybe that you were an odd duck in a family setting? What was it like for you? What did it do to you?
- What happens to us when something comes along that doesn’t fit our timetable expectations? Like Zechariah and Elizabeth’s religious culture, do we compound the situation by the way we may inappropriately respond to it, or reinterpret the facts to fit our preconceived ideas?
- In what ways do our views of how God should bless us shape or change the nature of our contentment? Do they erode our ability to confidently rest in His all-sufficiency for all aspects of our lives?

Ponder

Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord. *Psalm 27:14*

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope. My soul waits for the Lord, more than watchmen wait for the morning. *Psalm 130:5&6a*

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. *Proverbs 3:5&6*