



THE

Fullness OF Time

But in the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son... Galatians 4:4

December 20, 2020

BE PATIENT

Simeon and Anna were old - really old! From all outward appearances, they were completely out of time. They had waited and anticipated God's provision, but as the end was drawing near, there appeared to be no way God could keep His promise. That did not, however, keep Simeon and Anna from hoping and faithfully waiting for God. Join us for week three of The Fullness of Time as we explore how God's timing helps us understand that all of our longings are ultimately fulfilled in Him.

Passage: Luke 2:25-40

Three observations from a lifetime spent waiting on the Lord:

1. _____ is the fulfillment of all of God's promises and the _____
_____ is His deposit while we wait.
2. This world is not our _____ and this life is not the _____, so a lifetime is not too long to wait.
3. God's delay is for our _____ and will not last any longer than _____.

Daily Readings:

This week's daily readings focus on people who spent a lifetime waiting on God. As you read each passage ask yourself: Who is waiting? On what or whom are they waiting? What was the outcome? What is God saying to me through this passage?

Day 1: Luke 2

Day 2: Hebrews 11 and 12

Day 3: Genesis 15

Day 4: Numbers 20

Day 5: Deuteronomy 34

Day 6: Isaiah 40

Day 7: 2 Corinthians 12

Suggested Resources:

Books:

The Music of Christmas, by Gary & Sheri Webber

God Came Near, by Max Lucado

Still Waiting: Hope for When God Doesn't Give You What You Want,
by Ann Swindell

Other sermon series at ssbc.org:

The Music of Christmas (2012)

Arrival (2017)

Pause (2020)

Small Group Questions

December 20, 2020

Use this outline for personal reflection, as a couples or family devotion, or with a small group.

Hangout (warming up to the topic):

1. The word "patience" in the Bible can often literally be translated as "long-suffering". How does that translation help you understand being patient?
2. This week's sermon focuses on Simeon and Anna and how they faithfully waited to see the fulfillment of God's promises. Have you ever experienced (or are you now experiencing) a prolonged period of waiting? What effect has waiting had on your faith?

Hear (listening to God through Scripture):

3. Read Isaiah 40:1-5.
 - These words from God to the prophet Isaiah came 700 years before the birth of Jesus. What did they mean to their original audience? How do these words apply to Jesus?
 - Roads straightened, valleys raised, mountains lowered -- What do these images have in common and how do they relate to verse 5?
 - What obstructs our view of God today? How might these verses apply to us today?
4. Read Isaiah 40:6-20.
 - Read verses 6-8. God wants to remind His people how short life really is. For some, this can lead to a hedonistic approach to life ("eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die"). For others, it can lead to despair and hopelessness. Based on these verses, what is a biblical understanding of the brevity of life? How does this concept affect you?
 - Read verses 9-17. While our individual lives are like grass (verses 6-8), our collective efforts as a society still don't compare to God. Why is this an important perspective for believers today? How should this affect the way we live and interact with the culture around us?
 - Read verses 18-20. After addressing the brevity of our individual lives, the inadequacy of our collective societies, Isaiah turns to our religious efforts as represented through the idols we worship. While we don't often think of our modern possessions and technology as "idols," there are certainly significant comparisons based on these verses. If you were to make a modern paraphrase of these verses, what would they say?
 - These verses move from addressing the fragility of our individual lives to our governments to our religion. What is God saying to you through this passage?

5. Read Isaiah 40:27-31.

- In verse 27, the prophet puts words in the mouth of God's people. Why might God's people have felt hidden from and disregarded by God? Why might His people feel that way today?
- How can understanding and accepting our weaknesses make us stronger? What is the key to exchanging our weakness for God's strength? How does this relate to Isaiah's earlier prophecy about Messiah Jesus?
- The Hebrew word translated as "wait" in verse 31 can also be translated as "hope." What is the connection between these two words? Why should they not be separated? What happens when they are? In what ways are you hopefully waiting on God today?

Huddle (making it personal and praying together - in huddles):

6. What are the biggest obstacles you face in your relationship with Christ? What do these obstacles reveal about you and your current relationship with God? What would it take for those obstacles to be removed? Invite accountability and pray together.