

Saul Can't Wait

David the Fugitive Pt.11
1 Samuel 28:3-10 5-25-2009

Summary: Saul faces the Philistine army deep inside Israelite territory and is terrified, because God has turned away from him and will not answer his prayers for guidance. So Saul turns to necromancy. That failure to wait for the Lord was characteristic of Saul's entire career (just like in ch.10 when he didn't wait for Samuel). David is the opposite – he refuses to bend God's law in any way, even if it means waiting 10 years to get the crown.

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In our study through the book of 1 Samuel we come this morning to ch.28. And if you want to know the main point of this chapter just look at vv.6,15,16.

6 He inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets.
15 ... "I am in great distress," Saul said. "The Philistines are fighting against me, and God has turned away from me. He no longer answers me, either by prophets or by dreams."
16 Samuel said, "Why do you consult me, now that the LORD has turned away from you and become your enemy?"

God turned away from Saul and became his enemy. That is the worst thing that can possibly happen to a human being.

Jump ahead in time (geography lesson) v.4

Last week's sermon ended with a cliffhanger with David being recruited by the Philistines. That was ch.27 and the first 2 verses of ch.28. And the writer will get back to that, but not until ch.29. For now he leaves David there in Gath and jumps back over to Israel to Saul. And in doing so he jumps ahead in time to the night before the big war with the Philistines.

To understand what is happening here you have to understand the locations and geography of these chapters. When the writer finally gets back to David and that whole scene where the Philistines are gathering together and telling him he had to join them, we find that all happened at Aphek.

29:1 The Philistines gathered all their forces at Aphek, and Israel camped by the spring in Jezreel.

Aphek is in Philistine territory and Jezreel is in Israelite territory. This map shows you the Philistine approach in this war. The battle ultimately ends up taking place in the Jezreel valley. That is about 50 miles north of Saul's headquarters in Gibeah. So if Saul's palace was right here where we are at 104th & I-25, and Gath is at Blackhawk, then Jezreel is right at the Fort Collins exit on I-25. What about Aphek? Where's that? It is just north of Nederland.

If you want to get a handle on what was Philistine territory and what was Israelite territory, just think of it this way: The Israelites' territory is along the I-25 corridor and the Philistines' territory is up in the foothills – from Morrison all the way up to Estes Park. So up in the mountains – that's the Philistines, and the flat land from the foothills to I-25 (and east of I-25) – that is Israelite territory. That gives you an idea about distance. The only problem with that is the location of the mountains in Israel is reversed. It was Israel that lived in the hill country for the most part and the Philistine territory was the coastal plane.

OK, so the Philistines want to attack Israel. They are mustering all their forces together at Aphek – near Nederland. Meanwhile Saul’s army is camped up at the Fort Collins exit on I-25. And the reason he is so far north is because that is such a key location. That area was where the international trade route went through. Control that area and you control international trade. Not only that, but if the Philistines take that area, they effectively cut Israel right in half. They would cut Saul off from all the Israelites in the north. So that Jezreel valley is a very strategic area, and that is where Saul is setting up.

Now take a look at 28:4.

28:4 The Philistines assembled and came and set up camp at Shunem, while Saul gathered all the Israelites and set up camp at Gilboa.

Shunem and Gilboa are on the north and south sides of the Jezreel valley. They are about six miles apart. Gilboah is mountainous, and Shunem is just at the foot of the hills, and in between is a flat valley – you can see all the farmland in between.

So can you see what the writer is doing in ch.28? He has jumped ahead in time to the night before the battle, and he shows us that the Philistines have pushed deep into Israelite territory. Saul is in the same place he was, but the Philistines have moved all the way from Aphek to the Jezreel area. So at this point they are face to face. Both armies are squaring off up there at the Fort Collins exit of I-25.

Saul’s Crisis: Guidance Denied

3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in his own town of Ramah. Saul had expelled the mediums and spiritists from the land. 4 The Philistines assembled and came and set up camp at Shunem, while Saul gathered all the Israelites and set up camp at Gilboa. 5 When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid; terror filled his heart. 6 He inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets.

Those were God’s methods of speaking back then, and none of them worked. God would not answer Saul. What was Saul asking? We find that out in v.15 when Saul is talking to the spirit in Endor:

"The Philistines are fighting against me, and God has turned away from me. He no longer answers me, either by prophets or by dreams. So I have called on you to tell me what to do."

What Saul wanted to know was what he should do. He had no idea what to do. Should he retreat? Try a treaty? Stall? Surprise attack? He did not know what to do, and doing the wrong thing would have such horrible consequences. When God speaks, the right path becomes clear and you can take it with confidence. But when God is silent and you find yourself having to run full speed in the pitch dark, it’s terrifying.

Saul’s Solution: Find it Another Way

So Saul inquires of the Lord and gets no response. So then what does he do?

6 He inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets. 7 Saul then said to his attendants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, so I may go and inquire of her."

Necromancy forbidden

Saul immediately reverts to a sinful alternative. A medium is a person who tries to communicate with the dead. And doing that is forbidden many times in the Law.

Deuteronomy 18:10 Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, 11 or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead.

All those things are what we mean when we speak of the Occult. (That is not the same thing as a cult. A cult is a specific religious splinter group that claims to be Christian but that departs from the gospel.) The Occult is any of the things mentioned in that verse.

Divination – attempting to gain information from the spirit world

Sorcery – attempting to cause a departed spirit to appear

Interpreting omens – figuring out what is going to happen or what you should do through certain objects or circumstances. This would include astrology (horoscope), palm reading, crystal ball, tarot cards, casting shells, fortune cookies – any of that.

The term translated “**witchcraft**” refers to the practice of performing supernatural signs. People who tried to tap into the spiritual forces of nature, pagan gods or goddesses, or the forces of the earth, and harness them to perform supernatural acts – that’s witchcraft. It’s like the force in Star Wars.

Casting spells means just what it sounds like. That was the practice of putting curses on people.

Medium, spiritist, and consulting the dead all seem to refer to people who perform séances, to communicate with the dead. And that last category is what the woman in this story is – a medium. The story is commonly referred to as “The Witch of Endor” story, but she is really more of a medium than a witch.

Every kind of occultism is strictly forbidden in Scripture. And according to Lv.20:27 the penalty for doing this was to be death. It was a capital crime. And less than 24 hours after doing this Saul was dead. Practicing any kind of occultism was considered the most severe kind of wickedness at that time. When someone needed an example of the worst, most depraved bottom of evil and vile wickedness they would refer to being a medium or spiritist or some other form of divination. In fact, there is an example of that in 1 Samuel 15. When the prophet Samuel is trying to explain to Saul how sinful his disobedience and rebellion was he said this:

1 Samuel 15:23 rebellion is like the sin of divinationHe said that because he was trying to get Saul’s attention.

“Saul you need to realize how evil this is. This is not a small thing. It’s like divination – that is how wicked it is.”

We do not have a good appreciation for how detestable and vile Occultism was in that time because in our day we have made kind of a joke out of the Occult. We think of casting spells or conducting séances or using magic as harmless superstition. And books like Harry Potter make it seem like a morally neutral thing – evil if you use the power for evil purposes and good if you use it for good purposes. But that is not how it is. It is like murder or rape – it is evil no matter what reason you are doing it. And we know that Saul was not ignorant of this, because he had expelled all the mediums from Israel. Saul knew very well that what he was doing was wrong, and yet he does not hesitate to do it.

No fear of God

He is not one bit afraid of God’s wrath. Back in ch.15 we found that a great deal of Saul’s failure stemmed from one particular sin in his heart – fear of man. That is a sin that causes countless other sins, because it displaces fear of God. You cannot fear both man and God – if you fear one you will not fear the other. You will fear whichever one your heart believes has the most power to hurt or help you. And you can see that very clearly in this chapter. Saul sees the Philistines and is scared out of his mind. But he is fearless when it comes to breaking the law of God. He does not bat an eye when it comes to committing a capital offense against God. But he is petrified over those Philistines. Fear of man has a lot of terrible results, but the worst of all of them is the fact that it takes the place of fear of God, so that you are not afraid of what you should be afraid of, and you are afraid of things you shouldn’t fear.

Saul’s non-prayer

Saul’s problem all along – no waiting

So it is obvious enough that what Saul did was evil because of the occultism. But there is another reason why it was especially sinful.

There is a real interesting commentary on this event in 1 Chr.10:13. That verse tells us why Saul died.

1 Chr.10:13 Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD; he did not keep the word of the LORD and even consulted a medium for guidance, 14 and did not inquire of the LORD. So the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse.

Saul did not inquire of Yahweh. The reason I say that's so interesting is because of verse six.

5 When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid; terror filled his heart. 6 He inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him... 7 Saul then said to his attendants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, so I may go and inquire of her."

Verse 6 says that Saul inquired of the Lord. 1 Chr.10 comments on this passage and says the reason Saul died is because he *did not* inquire of the Lord. There was something about Saul's inquiring that made it a non-inquiry. There was something about his prayer that made it a non-prayer. How do you pray in such a way that God will judge you for not having prayed?

Here's the formula: Praying without waiting on the Lord = not praying. What made Saul's sin so sinful, beyond the occultism, was the fact that he was not willing to wait for the Lord to answer. As soon as God did not respond Saul reverted to another source for guidance.

And that sin - unwillingness to wait on God has been at the core of Saul's apostasy right from the beginning. Remember back in ch.10 – right after Samuel first anointed Saul as king, he told him, "The Spirit of the LORD is going to come upon you. Now go down to Gilgal and wait for me to come offer the sacrifice." So Saul went to Gilgal, but Samuel did not seem like he was going to come, Saul got anxious, took matters into his own hands and offered the sacrifice himself. That was the sin that was behind God's first rejection of Saul in ch.13. From the beginning of his reign right to the very end Saul was marked by an unwillingness to wait for the Lord.

The meaning of waiting

Before I say anything else about that I need to make sure we all understand what Scripture means by waiting for God. Waiting for the Lord has two parts.

1) Eager expectation

Waiting is not just sitting around until something happens. It's being eager for that thing to happen.

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

So the first part of waiting is looking forward to the thing you are waiting for.

2) Refusal to turn to any substitute

Proverbs 20:22 Do not say, "I'll pay you back for this wrong!" Wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you.

See how the opposite of waiting for God to give you justice is to step in and get revenge yourself? If you chose an alternative, like taking revenge yourself, then you have not waited for the Lord to do it. So any time you are willing to step outside the bounds of God's law in order to get what you want, that is the opposite of waiting for the Lord.

So when do you wait and when do you charge ahead?

That is important to understand because sometimes people get confused about what it means to wait. They think waiting means sitting around doing nothing – waiting for God to act apart from your efforts. Sometimes waiting might involve that, but other times waiting requires plenty of effort on your part. So how do you know which it is? How do you know when should you move ahead and be proactive, and when should you just be still and wait? The answer to that is very simple. Take all the action you can take without violating God’s Word. If you can charge ahead without stepping off the path of God’s way and violating His Word – charge ahead. But if charging ahead would mean breaking God’s law, just wait for God to act.

Let wisdom determine how fast or slow you move. But waiting for God is not a matter of moving fast or slow. Waiting for God is a matter of working as hard as you can within the bounds of God’s Word, but then stopping dead in your tracks when you get to the point of stepping over the boundary of God’s way.

Failure to wait = failure to inquire (James 4 prayers)

So waiting for the Lord is looking forward to what He is going to do, and trusting Him to do it – trusting Him so much that you do not resort to any substitute or alternative. So with that understanding of waiting on God, you can see that Saul’s sin was a dual sin. It was sin because it was occultism, which was forbidden. But it was also sin because it was a failure to wait on God. Saul wanted guidance, didn’t get it from God when he asked, so he reverted to a sinful alternative.

That is why as far as the writer of 1 Chronicles is concerned Saul did not even pray to God. If you are not willing to wait – if you are going to revert to some sinful alternative to get what you want if God does not come through in time; that means your prayer is really a non-prayer. It is not a real prayer. It is a James 4 prayer, and God does not answer James 4 prayers.

James 4:3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

When we pray for something, and in our hearts is a willingness to sin to get that thing if God does not deliver, then we show that our motive for praying is something other than advancing the Kingdom of God. And when your motive is something other than advancing the Kingdom of God, your prayer is a non-prayer and God will not listen to it.

Whenever you ask God for anything there is only one acceptable motive. There is only one category of things we are allowed to ask for – things that will enable us to advance the Kingdom of God. If you pray for money, it had better be for the sake of the Kingdom. If you pray for healing, it had better be for the sake of His glory. If you pray for strength or wisdom or guidance or protection or sleep or a new car or a relationship or anything else, if your motive is not the glory of God and the furthering of His Kingdom, your prayer is adulterous.

James 4:4 You adulteresses! Don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God?

“But how do I know if my motive is wrong?” One way you can know for sure is if you are willing to sin in order to get what you are asking for. Saul thought he was inquiring of the LORD. He said, “Dear LORD, give me guidance. Show me what I should do.” But that was not a true prayer. It was not a true inquiry of the Lord because Saul’s motive was something other than God’s glory. He just wanted to know what to do for his own preservation, which was a higher priority in his heart than the glory of God. And we know that because when he did not get an answer from God he was willing to seek the answer through an alternative means that was forbidden by God. If he cared more about the glory of God than his own physical safety he would not do that. And so his prayer is a James 4 prayer which means it’s a non-prayer. The James 4 prayers of the selfish heart are not a real inquiring of the Lord. They are just the howls of a wild animal.

When you pray ask God to give you guidance, ask yourself this question: *Guidance for what?* Guidance to make your life smooth? Guidance so you will end up with profitable financial transactions? Guidance so you will be more wealthy or more comfortable? Or are you asking for guidance into how you can best bring glory to God and serve in His Kingdom?

So right at the very beginning of Saul’s reign his problem was a failure to wait. God tells Saul, “Wait for Samuel to offer the sacrifice and I’ll give you victory.” And Saul sees the Philistines, and Samuel is taking a

long time, and so he reverts to an alternative plan and offers the sacrifice himself. And now, here at the end of his life, he has not changed a bit. He throws up a prayer, God does not give him what he wants, so he reverts to a sinful alternative way of getting what he wants.

David waited

Willingness and unwillingness to wait on the Lord is one of the most fundamental differences between Saul and David. Ever since he was anointed as king by Samuel back in ch.16 – probably a good ten years before this, David has been giving us a clinic on what it means to wait on the Lord.

Has David been dormant? Has he spent all this time sitting around on the couch waiting for a crown to drop down on his head. Not at all. It is when David had the greatest faith that he was the most proactive. If the encounter with Goliath was the high water mark of David's faith, was it not also the high water mark of his exertion? It is unbelief, not faith, that paralyzes you. Faith gets you moving.

And waiting on God gets you moving, because remember the first part of waiting – eager anticipation? When you are waiting for something you are looking forward to it with eagerness, and that gets you moving.

Work hard and trust

That principle has a lot of applications in every area of life. If you are single and want to be married, what does it look like to wait for God? Do what you can to meet other singles, do what you can to make yourself attractive to the type of person you want, do what you can to develop relationships – do all you can within the bounds of God's Word and wisdom. All of that is fine. But if you marry an unbeliever, then you have failed to wait on God because you have stepped outside of what God has commanded and decided your own way is better. Or if you decide to go to a church where there are lots of singles, but the preaching is bad, you have stepped outside of the path of wisdom and you are not waiting for God. Waiting is not sitting dormant. Waiting is just refusing any sinful or unwise alternative.

David waited, not by being dormant but by refusing any sinful alternative path to the throne. He has the chance to take Saul's life repeatedly, but he will not do it. He will not step outside the bounds of God's law to get what God has promised – even if it means waiting an extra decade. He is not like Abraham, who got the promise of a son and figured he needed to bend God's rules a little bit and sleep with Hagar in order to get it done. That was a failure to wait on God. But David would not do that. He was like Jesus, who was tempted by Satan in the desert to take what God had promised sooner rather than later by stepping outside of God's will. And Jesus said, "No, I will wait."

Importance of waiting

Isaiah 40:30 Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; 31 but those who wait for the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

No doubt you have read that at one time or another and thought, I want to soar like an eagle, I want to run and not grow weary, I want strength and stamina and energy and renewal. And how do you get it? Who is all this strength promised to? Those who wait for the Lord.

Waiting for God is a major theme in Scripture, and it is a huge part of the Christian life. When you think of what living a godly life entails, you might think of prayer, acts of love, giving, reading your Bible, going to church, etc. But do you every think much about waiting for God? When you give your prayer requests in small group, every week someone will ask for wisdom or patience or love or peace or self-control, but how often does someone ask for prayer in the area of waiting for God? When you talk to a new Christian about how to live the Christian life, you tell him about church and fellowship and reading his Bible and prayer – but do you say anything about waiting for God? I think the amount of attention we give to waiting for God rarely matches the amount of emphasis it gets in Scripture. There are many, many commands in the Psalms and wisdom literature and prophets to wait for the Lord. Here is a small sample:

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

Psalm 37:34 Wait for the LORD and keep his way.

Isaiah 64:4 Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.

Lamentations 3:24 I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." 25 The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; 26 it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

Waiting for God is right at the core of the Christian life.

Every sin a failure to wait

This principle has such wide ranging application for our lives. In fact, isn't pretty much every sin a failure at some level to wait for God? Revenge is a failure to wait for God's justice. Stealing is a failure to wait for God's provision. Gluttony, sexual sin, or any other kind of over-indulgence – isn't all that a failure to wait for God to satisfy the cravings of your soul? What about worry? Isn't that a failure to eagerly and joyfully anticipate God's promised grace? What about boasting? Is that not a failure to wait for that Day when each man will receive his praise from God? (1 Cor.4:5) Isn't laziness a failure to wait for the rest God has promised? Isn't every kind of selfishness a failure to wait for the lavish rewards and grace of God? How about failure to pray? If I bail out of my devotions and turn on the TV because I want to feel good, what is that but a failure to wait on God to satisfy my soul?

Obedience more important than sacrifice

Unwillingness to wait for the Lord is the source of endless varieties of evil because it rises from the belief that there is some value or goodness or blessing to be found apart from God. Any time you are tempted to compromise something in God's Word, and you are thinking, "I *need* to cut this corner. I know it is wrong, but I have to do it." - when we think that way it is because we think the task we are trying to achieve is more important than obedience. That is what Saul thought. He thought getting that sacrifice offered was more important than obeying God.

1 Samuel 15:22 But Samuel replied: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice.

Sometimes even in ministry people get so caught up in the task that they forget that. They are so concerned about reaching souls for Christ that they are willing to fudge on some little command of God to do it. And if this principle applies to ministry it certainly applies to any other aspect of your calling. If you are at work, and in order to get the big contract you have to cut just a little moral corner, or in your family situation in order to deal with this hard relationship issue you just have to fudge a little bit on a Biblical principle; any time you think that way you need to ask yourself, "Why am I doing this task in the first place? Why do you go to work and do your job? Why do you do what you do in your family? Is it not for God? So does it make any sense to dishonor and displease and mock God so that you can serve Him? To obey is more important than any task or any goal or any objective or any relationship or anything else. There is nothing so important that it is worth any amount of disobedience.

Saul's "Bravery" – Determined Sin

But Saul thinks there is. If God is not going to give him what he wants he will try to get it another way.

7 Saul then said to his attendants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, so I may go and inquire of her." "There is one in Endor," they said.

Of all places – Endor is just northeast of Shunem where the Philistines are camped. This medium is behind enemy lines. It was already risky for Saul to go to a medium *anywhere* because he would risk being seen by some Israelites. But to get to Endor Saul will have to sneak across the valley - past the Philistines.

But he doesn't hesitate. Even with all his fear of the Philistines, and all his cowardice and terror in his heart, he will risk everything to commit this sin. That is the way sin is – when you are enslaved to it, it is a very hard master. And it makes all kinds of unreasonable demands that you feel powerless to say no to. I think this event is a good illustration of the truth of

Isaiah 46:1 The images that are carried about are burdensome, a burden for the weary.

When we set up idols in our heart those idols become burdensome for us. The service we have to render to our own sin is oppressive. And yet the bondage is so powerful that even when our sin is killing us – destroying our lives, ruining our relationships, depleting all our resources, taking up all our time, making us miserable – still we will not stop obeying every impulse of the flesh. We have seen amazing acts of bravery throughout this book – David going against Goliath, Jonathan attacking the Philistine stronghold by himself, David sneaking up on Saul when he was surrounded by all his soldiers - but the only time you ever see Saul risk his life like that is when the sin he wants to commit is behind enemy lines.

Lack of hatred of sin

So Saul makes his way to Endor.

8 So Saul disguised himself, putting on other clothes, and at night he and two men went to the woman.

Obviously he cannot bring his whole army, so he just picks two bodyguards, puts on a disguise and sneaks off into the night. He quietly makes his way down the mountainside into the valley, moves slowly, watching all the time for Philistine patrols. Finally he makes the eight to ten mile trip, and finds the medium's house. He knocks on the door. Knocks again. Finally the door slowly opens just enough for the woman to see these three guys on her doorstep. Two regular looking guys and then a tall guy in the middle with the disguise Saul had on. She asks what they want.

8 ..."Consult a spirit for me," he said, "and bring up for me the one I name." 9 But the woman said to him, "Surely you know what Saul has done. He has cut off the mediums and spiritists from the land. Why have you set a trap for my life to bring about my death?"

She is afraid Saul is an undercover cop. And she was half right. He was under cover – but not so he could enforce the law. It was so he could break the law.

Some of the commentators are quick to praise Saul here for the fact that at least he had banned witches and mediums from Israel. I have to say I am not all that impressed though. Saul may have passed a law, but obviously he did not enforce it. Saul says to his men, "Find me a medium" and no one says, "Are you kidding? You know there are no mediums in Israel." No, they know right off the top of their head where one is. If Saul was serious about the no medium law, how could his top officials know about this woman and not be doing anything about it?

You see, Saul had banned this sin, but he did not hate it. That is a mark of a legalist. They look down on people who commit certain sins but they do not really hate sin itself. They do not really hate drunkenness or how it dishonors God, they just look down on people who drink. They are not really offended at how various sins dishonor the name of Christ, they are just offended by the people who commit those sins. And so as a result they are like Saul. Saul is quick to condemn mediums when he himself felt no need for a medium. But as soon as he wants to commit that sin, he does not hesitate. In fact, not only is Saul not putting her to death like he should for her sin of necromancy, he is pressuring her to commit the sin. He grants her full immunity if she will do it.

10 Saul swore to her by the LORD, "As surely as the LORD lives, you will not be punished for this."

He even swears by the life of Yahweh! (Talk about using the Lord's name in vain!)

This is an amazing picture. The woman is resisting and Saul is the one pressuring her. It is not like Saul is being enticed or lured or drawn in to this sin by some person tempting him. She is actually resisting and he is the one pressing the issue. He finds the most wicked person in the nation and it turns out he is even more wicked than she is. When you reject the grace of God that could restrain your sin, spiritual decline turns into freefall. And it all stemmed from Saul's unwillingness to wait for the Lord.

Conclusion: Have you tried waiting?

Where do you go in your darkest hours? David went to Nob. Saul went to Endor. David ran to the priest who represented God. Saul ran to an occultist. Where do you end up in your darkest hours? Do you run to your favorite sin, Or to those who will point you to God?

And what do you do when God is silent? When God did not answer David, David just kept pressing until He did answer. For David it was – “receive an answer from God or die waiting on His doorstep.” Saul cried out to God, gave it five minutes, then went another route. What do you do when God does not answer? Do you have another option you turn to?

What about when God's ways do not seem to work? I recently heard a guy tell some people to serve God with their lives and God would reward them. That much is right on. But then he said this – “Test God in this. If He does not come through, find yourself another God.”¹ The human wreckage of that approach is littering the landscape of the Church. People who have “tried” God and found Him wanting. They tried prayer or tried church and it did not work for them.

Those people never really did try God, because the only way to try God is to try waiting on God. If someone tells me they tried God or church or prayer or the Bible and found that it did not work, my question is, “Did you try waiting for God?” To which the answer is obviously no. If you come to God with an attitude that says, “Snap to it and perform as I expect by a certain time or I will turn elsewhere,” do not expect any response from Him because anyone who has that attitude does not have faith, and God responds to faith.

God has made it clear in His Word – there is no other savior. There is no other helper. There is no other source of satisfaction. And if you believe that, you are left with only one option – “God, answer me or I will die.” And if He does not answer and does not answer and does not answer – if you believe there is nowhere else to go, your only option is to keep waiting and keep seeking hard after Him. But if you peel off and go elsewhere you prove you do not really believe He is the only savior, which means you do not have faith, which means your prayers are not even being heard. True faith says, “Whom have I in heaven but You?” (Ps. 73:25) There is nowhere else for me to go. If you are caught out in a blizzard at night and you find a cabin and knock on the door and there is no answer, if you believe there might be some other cabins in the area, then you will eventually give up knocking and go try somewhere else. But if you genuinely believe there is only one cabin, then you will just keep knocking. And you will say, “Either this person comes to the door or I die on the doorstep.” Like Job, who said, “Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him.” (Job 13:15) Even if God kills me, what choice to do I have but to trust in Him? Do I have someone else in heaven besides Him? When many of Jesus followers abandoned Him Jesus asked the 12 if they were going to leave too and Peter said, “Where would we go?” (Jn. 6:68) If He is not going to rescue you, then you are just not going to be rescued. And so you might as well just knock until you die on His doorstep if need be. That is what it means to wait for the Lord.

God is worth the wait!

Let me close with this: I have urged you to wait for the Lord because it is commanded so often in Scripture and is such a central part of living the Christian life. But there is a much bigger reason to wait for the Lord. Wait for Him because He is worth the wait. God has attached great and precious promises to every last one of His commands. He will make it more than worth your while every single time you obey because you will be rewarded with nothing less than the nearness of His glorious presence, which is a treasure worth any price.

¹ I think I know what he meant by that. I think what he was trying to say is that he was so certain that God would come through that he could say that without any fear. But the problem with it is God very often doesn't “come through” in the timing or manner we expect.

Benediction: Isa 30:18 18 Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!

Devotionals

Day 1

1 Samuel 28:3-6 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in his own town of Ramah. Saul had expelled the mediums and spiritists from the land. **4** The Philistines assembled and came and set up camp at Shunem, while Saul gathered all the Israelites and set up camp at Gilboa. **5** When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid; terror filled his heart. **6** He inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets.

David was gone, Samuel was gone, and the Philistine army had pushed deep into Israelite territory and was now confronting Saul, and Saul was terrified. He sought guidance from God, but God would not answer him so Saul reverted to a wicked alternative way of getting guidance: the Occult.

Saul knew very well that what he was doing was wrong, and yet he does not hesitate to do it. Back in ch.15 we found that a great deal of Saul's failure stemmed from one particular sin in his heart – fear of man. That is a sin that causes countless other sins, because it displaces fear of God. You cannot fear both man and God – if you fear one you will not fear the other. You will fear whichever one your heart believes has the most power to hurt or help you. And you can see that very clearly in this chapter. Saul sees the Philistines and is scared out of his mind. But he is fearless when it comes to breaking the law of God. He does not bat an eye when it comes to committing a capital offense against God. But he is petrified over those Philistines. Fear of man has a lot of terrible results, but the worst of all of them is the fact that it takes the place of fear of God, so that you are not afraid of what you should be afraid of, and you are afraid of things you should not fear.

Psalm 25:14 The LORD confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them.

God makes known His secrets to us. No ear has heard nor has any mind conceived of His secret council, yet He has revealed it by His Spirit to us. His Spirit searches the deep things of God and knows everything about the Father – things that could never be discovered any other way. And He has given us His Spirit that we might understand what He has freely given.

We sometimes worry that a person who focuses too much on intimacy and friendship with God will forget His awesome majesty and will fail to properly fear Him. But this promise is that God will grant that close intimacy and friendship only to those who do fear Him. The solution is built right in to the promise at the very beginning in a way that prevents the problem from even occurring. We could imagine we have intimacy and friendship with God while failing to fear Him, but we will never actually have it until we fear Him.

Lord, teach me to fear You that I might have access to intimacy with You. Rescue me from my Saul-like tendencies to take seriously the temporal threats of this world and take lightly the much greater threat of Your displeasure. What wretched unbelief is in my heart when I fearlessly venture into sin, provoking You to withdraw Your presence from me! Oh Lord, teach Your servant to fear You. It's hard, because Your mercy is so great, Your patience so enduring, Your love so tender, Your forgiveness and patience so lavishly given – it's hard for my forgetful soul to remember the sting of Your rod. Oh Lord, teach me to fear You.

Day 2

So it is obvious enough that what Saul did was evil because of the occultism. But there is another reason why it was especially sinful.

There is an interesting commentary on this event in 1 Chr.10:13. That verse tells us why Saul died.

1 Chr.10:13 Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD; he did not keep the word of the LORD and even consulted a medium for guidance, 14 and did not inquire of the LORD. So the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse.

Saul did not inquire of Yahweh. And yet notice verse 6 of 1 Samuel 28.

5 When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid; terror filled his heart. 6 He inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him... 7 Saul then said to his attendants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, so I may go and inquire of her."

Verse 6 says that Saul inquired of the Lord. 1 Chr.10 comments on this passage and says the reason Saul died is because he *did not* inquire of the Lord. There was something about Saul's inquiring that made it a non-inquiry. There was something about his prayer that made it a non-prayer. How do you pray in such a way that God will judge you for not having prayed?

Here is the formula: Praying without waiting on the Lord = not praying. What made Saul's sin so sinful, beyond the occultism, was the fact that he was not willing to wait for the Lord to answer. As soon as God did not respond Saul reverted to another source for guidance.

And that sin - unwillingness to wait on God has been at the core of Saul's apostasy right from the beginning. Remember back in ch.10 – right after Samuel first anointed Saul as king, he told him, "The Spirit of the LORD is going to come upon you. Now go down to Gilgal and wait for me to come offer the sacrifice." So Saul went to Gilgal, but Samuel did not seem like he was going to come, Saul got anxious, took matters into his own hands and offered the sacrifice himself. That was the sin that was behind God's first rejection of Saul in ch.13. From the beginning of his reign right to the very end Saul was marked by an unwillingness to wait for the Lord.

Waiting for the Lord has two parts.

1) Eager expectation

Waiting is not just sitting around until something happens. It is being eager for that thing to happen.

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

So the first part of waiting is looking forward to the thing you are waiting for.

2) Refusal to turn to any substitute

Proverbs 20:22 Do not say, "I'll pay you back for this wrong!" Wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you.

See how the opposite of waiting for God to give you justice is to step in and get revenge yourself? If you chose an alternative, like taking revenge yourself, then you have not waited for the Lord to do it. So any time you are willing to step outside the bounds of God's law in order to get what you want, that is the opposite of waiting for the Lord.

That is important to understand because sometimes people get confused about what it means to wait. They think waiting means sitting around doing nothing – waiting for God to act apart from your efforts. Sometimes waiting might involve that, but other times waiting requires plenty of effort on your part. So how do you know which it is? How do you know when should you move ahead and be proactive, and when should you just be still and wait? The answer to that is very simple. Take all the action you can take without violating God's Word. If you can charge ahead without stepping off the path of God's way and violating His Word – charge ahead. But if charging ahead would mean breaking God's law, just wait for God to act.

Let wisdom determine how fast or slow you move. But waiting for God is not a matter of moving fast or slow. Waiting for God is a matter of working as hard as you can within the bounds of God's Word, but then stopping dead in your tracks when you get to the point of stepping over the boundary of God's way.

So waiting for the Lord is looking forward to what He is going to do, and trusting Him to do it – trusting Him so much that you do not resort to any substitute or alternative. So with that understanding of waiting on God, you can see that Saul's sin was a dual sin. It was sin because it was occultism, which was forbidden. But it was also sin because it was a failure to wait on God. Saul wanted guidance, did not get it from God when he asked, so he reverted to a sinful alternative.

That is why as far as the writer of 1 Chronicles is concerned Saul did not even pray to God. If you are not willing to wait – if you are going to revert to some sinful alternative to get what you want if God does not come through in time; that means your prayer is really a non-prayer. It is not a real prayer. It is a James 4 prayer, and God does not answer James 4 prayers.

James 4:3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

When we pray for something, and in our hearts is a willingness to sin to get that thing if God does not deliver, then we show that our motive for praying is something other than advancing the Kingdom of God. And when your motive is something other than advancing the Kingdom of God, your prayer is a non-prayer and God will not listen to it.

Whenever you ask God for anything there is only one acceptable motive. There is only one category of things we are allowed to ask for – things that will enable us to advance the Kingdom of God. If you pray for money, it had better be for the sake of the Kingdom. If you pray for healing, it had better be for the sake of His glory. If you pray for strength or wisdom or guidance or protection or sleep or a new car or a relationship or anything else, if your motive is not the glory of God and the furthering of His Kingdom, your prayer is adulterous.

James 4:4 You adulteresses! Don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God?

“But how do I know if my motive is wrong?” One way you can know for sure is if you are willing to sin in order to get what you are asking for. Saul thought he was inquiring of the LORD. He said, “Dear LORD, give me guidance. Show me what I should do.” But that was not a true prayer. It was not a true inquiry of the Lord because Saul's motive was something other than God's glory. He just wanted to know what to do for his own preservation, which was a higher priority in his heart than the glory of God. And we know that because when he did not get an answer from God he was willing to seek the answer through an alternative means that was forbidden by God. If he cared more about the glory of God than his own physical safety he would not do that. And so his prayer is a James 4 prayer which means it is a non-prayer. The James 4 prayers of the selfish heart are not a real inquiring of the Lord. They are just the howls of a wild animal.

When you pray ask God to give you guidance, ask yourself this question: *Guidance for what?* Guidance to make your life smooth? Guidance so you will end up with profitable financial transactions? Guidance so you will be more wealthy or more comfortable? Or are you asking for guidance into how you can best bring glory to God and serve in His Kingdom?

So right at the very beginning of Saul's reign his problem was a failure to wait. God tells Saul, “Wait for Samuel to offer the sacrifice and I will give you victory.” And Saul sees the Philistines, and Samuel is taking a long time, and so he reverts to an alternative plan and offers the sacrifice himself. And now, here at the end of his life, he has not changed a bit. He throws up a prayer, God does not give him what he wants, so he reverts to a sinful alternative way of getting what he wants.

Dear Father, has my prayer been James 4 praying? Have I been unfaithful to You by asking You for things that have no kingdom purpose? Have I been guilty of friendship with this world, which is adultery against You? Oh Lord, if I have prayed adulterous prayers, please expose that in my heart that I might repent before You. How easily selfish, James 4 type prayers can be disguised to look like real prayer. Make the heart of Your servant faithful to You, and passionate enough about Your kingdom that I wouldn't pray for anything

else because I wouldn't desire anything else. What else is there to desire? There is nothing on earth or heaven worthy of desire besides You.

Day 3

Isaiah 40:30 Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; 31 but those who wait for the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

No doubt you have read that at one time or another and thought, *I want to soar like an eagle, I want to run and not grow weary, I want strength and stamina and energy and renewal.* And how do you get it? Who is all this strength promised to? Those who wait for the Lord.

Waiting for God is a major theme in Scripture, and it is a huge part of the Christian life. When you think of what living a godly life entails, you might think of prayer, acts of love, giving, reading your Bible, going to church, etc. But do you every think much about waiting for God? When you give your prayer requests in small group, every week someone will ask for wisdom or patience or love or peace or self-control, but how often does someone ask for prayer in the area of waiting for God? When you talk to a new Christian about how to live the Christian life, you tell him about church and fellowship and reading his Bible and prayer – but do you say anything about waiting for God? I think the amount of attention we give to waiting for God rarely matches the amount of emphasis it gets in Scripture. There are many, many commands in the Psalms and wisdom literature and prophets to wait for the Lord. Here is a small sample:

Psalms 27:14 Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.

Psalms 37:34 Wait for the LORD and keep his way.

Isaiah 64:4 Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.

Lamentations 3:24 I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." 25 The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; 26 it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

Waiting for God is right at the core of the Christian life.

Willingness and unwillingness to wait on the Lord is one of the most fundamental differences between Saul and David. Ever since he was anointed as king by Samuel back in ch.16 – probably a good ten years before this, David has been giving us a clinic on what it means to wait on the Lord.

Has David been dormant? Has he spent all this time sitting around on the couch waiting for a crown to drop down on his head. Not at all. It is when David had the greatest faith that he was the most proactive. If the encounter with Goliath was the high water mark of David's faith, wasn't it also the high water mark of his exertion? It is unbelief, not faith, that paralyzes you. Faith gets you moving.

And waiting on God gets you moving, because remember the first part of waiting – eager anticipation? When you are waiting for something you are looking forward to it with eagerness, and that gets you moving.

That principle has a lot of applications in every area of life. If you are single and want to be married, what does it look like to wait for God? Do what you can to meet other singles, do what you can to make

yourself attractive to the type of person you want, do what you can to develop relationships – do all you can within the bounds of God’s Word and wisdom. All of that is fine. But if you marry an unbeliever, then you have failed to wait on God because you’ve stepped outside of what God has commanded and decided your own way is better/ Or if you decide to go to a church where there are lots of singles, but the preaching is bad, you have stepped outside of the path of wisdom and you are not waiting for God. Waiting is not sitting dormant. Waiting is just refusing any sinful or unwise alternative.

David waited, not by being dormant but by refusing any sinful alternative path to the throne. He has the chance to take Saul’s life repeatedly, but he will not do it. He will not step outside the bounds of God’s law to get what God has promised – even if it means waiting an extra decade. He is not like Abraham, who got the promise of a son and figured he needed to bend God’s rules a little bit and sleep with Hagar in order to get it done. That was a failure to wait on God. But David would not do that. He was like Jesus, who was tempted by Satan in the desert to take what God had promised sooner rather than later by stepping outside of God’s will. And Jesus said, “No, I will wait.”

Lord, it is so easy for my attitude about the tasks of my life to become confused. They are important only because they are done in obedience to You. So to disobey You for the sake of hurrying them along – what folly! Teach my heart to value obedience above anything else, dear Lord.

When I cut a moral corner in order to serve You “better” that implies that You are in need of my service. You do not need anything. I serve You because I am in need, not because You are in need. Serving You is a privilege that benefits me and profits me and brings untold grace to me; but it gives nothing to You. In fact, it takes from You. For me to serve You the strength and resources must all come from You. Forgive me, dear Lord, for forgetting that so often, and behaving as though You needed what I offer.

Day 4

1 Samuel 28:7 Saul then said to his attendants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, so I may go and inquire of her." "There is one in Endor," they said.

Of all places – Endor is just northeast of Shunem where the Philistines are camped. This medium is behind enemy lines. It was already risky for Saul to go to a medium *anywhere* because he would risk being seen by some Israelites. But to get to Endor Saul will have to sneak across the valley - past the Philistines.

But he does not hesitate. Even with all his fear of the Philistines, and all his cowardice and terror in his heart, he will risk everything to commit this sin. That is the way sin is – when you are enslaved to it, it is a very hard master. And it makes all kinds of unreasonable demands that you feel powerless to say no to. I think this event is a good illustration of the truth of

Isaiah 46:1 The images that are carried about are burdensome, a burden for the weary.

When we set up idols in our hearts those idols become burdensome for us. The service we have to render to our own sin is oppressive. And yet the bondage is so powerful that even when our sin is killing us – destroying our lives, ruining our relationships, depleting all our resources, taking up all our time, making us miserable – still we will not stop obeying every impulse of the flesh. We have seen amazing acts of bravery throughout this book – David going against Goliath, Jonathan attacking the Philistine stronghold by himself, David sneaking up on Saul when he was surrounded by all his soldiers - but the only time you ever see Saul risk his life like that is when the sin he wants to commit is behind enemy lines.

So Saul makes his way to Endor.

8 So Saul disguised himself, putting on other clothes, and at night he and two men went to the woman.

Obviously he cannot bring his whole army, so he just picks two bodyguards, puts on a disguise and sneaks off into the night. He quietly makes his way down the mountainside into the valley, moves slowly, watching all the time for Philistine patrols. Finally he makes the eight to ten mile trip, and finds the medium's house. He knocks on the door. Knocks again. Finally the door slowly opens just enough for the woman to see these three guys on her doorstep. Two regular looking guys and then a tall guy in the middle with the disguise Saul had on. She asks what they want.

8 ... "Consult a spirit for me," he said, "and bring up for me the one I name." 9 But the woman said to him, "Surely you know what Saul has done. He has cut off the mediums and spiritists from the land. Why have you set a trap for my life to bring about my death?"

She is afraid Saul is an undercover cop. And she was half right. He was under cover – but not so he could enforce the law. It was so he could break the law.

Some of the commentators are quick to praise Saul here for the fact that at least he had banned witches and mediums from Israel. I have to say I am not all that impressed though. Saul may have passed a law, but obviously he did not enforce it. Saul says to his men, "Find me a medium" and no one says, "Are you kidding? You know there are no mediums in Israel." No, they know right off the top of their head where one is. If Saul was serious about the no medium law, how could his top officials know about this woman and not be doing anything about it?

You see, Saul had banned this sin, but he did not hate it. That is a mark of a legalist. They look down on people who commit certain sins but they do not really hate sin itself. They do not really hate drunkenness or how it dishonors God, they just look down on people who drink. They are not really offended at how various sins dishonor the name of Christ, they are just offended by the people who commit those sins. And so as a result they are like Saul. Saul is quick to condemn mediums when he himself felt no need for a medium. But as soon as he wants to commit that sin, he does not hesitate. In fact, not only is Saul not putting her to death like he should for her sin of necromancy, he is pressuring her to commit the sin. He grants her full immunity if she will do it.

10 Saul swore to her by the LORD, "As surely as the LORD lives, you will not be punished for this."

He even swears by the life of Yahweh! (Talk about using the Lord's name in vain!)

This is an amazing picture. The woman is resisting and Saul is the one pressuring her. It is not like Saul is being enticed or lured or drawn in to this sin by some person tempting him. She is actually resisting and he is the one pressing the issue. He finds the most wicked person in the nation and it turns out he is even more wicked than she is. When you reject the grace of God that could restrain your sin, spiritual decline turns into freefall. And it all stemmed from Saul's unwillingness to wait for the Lord.

It disgusts me, dear Father, when I see the appeal some sins have on my heart. Your Word reveals that they are wicked and vile and ugly and lethal and disgusting. You compare them to putrid sores, disease, excrement, rotteness, and filthiness. What a calamity it is when my soul craves and longs for something like that! What peril I am in when something so grotesque appears as desirable to my soul. Oh dear Lord please – teach me not to just avoid sin, but to hate it. Open my eyes to the uncleanness of it, that my affections might draw near to Yours.

Day 5

Isn't pretty much every sin a failure at some level to wait for God? Revenge is a failure to wait for God's justice. Stealing is a failure to wait for God's provision. Gluttony, sexual sin, or any other kind of over-indulgence – isn't all that a failure to wait for God to satisfy the cravings of your soul? What about worry? Isn't that a failure to eagerly and joyfully anticipate God's promised grace? What about boasting? Isn't that a failure to wait for that Day when each man will receive his praise from God? (1 Cor.4:5) Isn't laziness a failure to wait for the rest God has promised? Isn't every kind of selfishness a failure to wait for the lavish rewards and grace of God? How about failure to pray? If I bail out of my devotions and turn on the TV because I want to feel good, what is that but a failure to wait on God to satisfy my soul?

Unwillingness to wait for the Lord is the source of endless varieties of evil because it rises from the belief that there is some value or goodness or blessing to be found apart from God. Any time you are tempted to compromise something in God's Word, and you're thinking, "I *need* to cut this corner. I know it is wrong, but I have to do it." - when we think that way it is because we think the task we are trying to achieve is more important than obedience. That is what Saul thought. He thought getting that sacrifice offered was more important than obeying God.

1 Samuel 15:22 But Samuel replied: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice.

Sometimes even in ministry people get so caught up in the task that they forget that. They are so concerned about reaching souls for Christ that they are willing to fudge on some little command of God to do it. And if this principle applies to ministry it certainly applies to any other aspect of your calling. If you are at work, and in order to get the big contract you have to cut just a little moral corner, or in your family situation in order to deal with this hard relationship issue you just have to fudge a little bit on a Biblical principle; any time you think that way you need to ask yourself, "Why am I doing this task in the first place? Why do you go to work and do your job? Why do you do what you do in your family? Isn't it for God? And so does it make any sense to dishonor and displease and mock God so that you can serve Him? To obey is more important than any task or any goal or any objective or any relationship or anything else. There is nothing so important that it's worth any amount of disobedience.

Where do you go in your darkest hours? David went to Nob. Saul went to Endor. David ran to the priest who represented God. Saul ran to an occultist. Where do you end up in your darkest hours? Do you run to your favorite sin, Or to those who will point you to God?

And what do you do when God is silent? When God didn't answer David, David just kept pressing until He did answer. For David it was – "receive an answer from God or die waiting on His doorstep." Saul cried out to God, gave it five minutes, then went another route. What do you do when God does not answer? Do you have another option you turn to?

What about when God's ways do not seem to work? I recently heard a guy tell some people to serve God with their lives and God would reward them. That much is right on. But then he said this – "Test God in this. If He does not come through, find yourself another God."² The human wreckage of that approach is littering the landscape of the Church. People who have "tried" God and found Him wanting. They tried prayer or tried church and it did not work for them.

Those people never really did try God, because the only way to try God is to try waiting on God. If someone tells me they tried God or church or prayer or the Bible and found that it did not work, my question is, "Did you try waiting for God?" To which the answer is obviously no. If you come to God with an attitude that says, "Snap to it and perform as I expect by a certain time or I'll turn elsewhere," don't expect any response from Him because anyone who has that attitude does not have faith, and God responds to faith.

God has made it clear in His Word – there is no other savior. There is no other helper. There is no other source of satisfaction. And if you believe that you are left with only one option – "God, answer me or I will die." And if He does not answer and does not answer and does not answer – if you believe there is nowhere else to go, your only option is to keep waiting and keep seeking hard after Him. But if you peel off and go elsewhere you prove you do not really believe He is the only savior, which means you do not have faith, which

² I think I know what he meant by that. I think what he was trying to say is that he was so certain that God would come through that he could say that without any fear. But the problem with it is God very often doesn't "come through" in the timing or manner we expect.

means your prayers are not even being heard. True faith says, "Whom have I in heaven but You?" (Ps.73:25) There is nowhere else for me to go. If you are caught out in a blizzard at night and you find a cabin and knock on the door and there is no answer, if you believe there might be some other cabins in the area, then you will eventually give up knocking and go try somewhere else. But if you genuinely believe there is only one cabin, then you will just keep knocking. And you will say, "Either this person comes to the door or I die on the doorstep." Like Job, who said, "Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him." (Job 13:15) Even if God kills me, what choice do I have but to trust in Him? Do I have someone else in heaven besides Him? When many of Jesus followers abandoned Him Jesus asked the 12 if they were going to leave too and Peter said, "Where would we go?" (Jn.6:68) If He is not going to rescue you, then you are just not going to be rescued. And so you might as well just knock until you die on His doorstep if need be. That is what it means to wait for the Lord.

I have urged you to wait for the Lord because it is commanded so often in Scripture and is such a central part of living the Christian life. But there's a much bigger reason to wait for the Lord. Wait for Him because He's worth the wait. God has attached great and precious promises to every last one of His commands. He will make it more than worth your while every single time you obey because you will be rewarded with nothing less than the nearness of His glorious presence, which is a treasure worth any price.

I believe You are worth the wait dear Lord. Help my unbelief.