

Kingdom Men | Women
Don't Waste the Wait • Message 3
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October 18, 2026

Prayer Points for Prayer Time:

- **Pray for faithfulness when waiting becomes frustrating.**
- **Ask God to deepen your trust in His timing and purposes.**
- **Thank God for His faithfulness even when you don't understand His plans.**

Worship Psalm:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)

Scripture Reading:

Year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the LORD Almighty at Shiloh, where Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the LORD. Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the LORD had closed her womb. Because the LORD had closed Hannah's womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the LORD, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat. Her husband Elkanah would say to her, "Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?" Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on his chair by the doorpost of the LORD's house. In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the LORD, weeping bitterly. And she made a vow, saying, "LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head." As she kept on praying to the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk and said to her, "How long are you going to stay drunk? Put away your wine." "Not so, my lord," Hannah replied, "I am a

woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD. Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief.” Eli answered, “Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him.” She said, “May your servant find favor in your eyes.” Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast.

1 Samuel 1:3-18 (NIV)

A. Introduction

We're continuing our series today called *Kingdom Men / Women*. I highly encourage you to go back and listen to the last two messages that specifically address men and women separately. For the rest of this series, we will be discussing characteristics of Kingdom-oriented people.

Also, we had to change up the order a bit in this series with scheduling changes. So, in your devotionals, if you have the printed versions, week five will go with this week's message. If you are on the app, you won't need to do anything.

I've titled this message: **DON'T WASTE THE WAIT.**

Today, I want to talk about something that I think is universal.

Waiting.

Now, I don't know about you, but I'm not a very patient person. I don't like waiting in traffic. I don't like waiting in line. I don't like waiting for my food.

Someone recently invented a mini oven called an air fryer, because the big oven is too slow.

And we've gotten to the place in our culture where we don't even like waiting for things that are supposed to be fast!

We've gotten used to getting what we want, when we want it. But here's the problem.

God doesn't always operate on our timetable.

Sometimes we're praying for something, believing God for something, trusting Him for something and nothing seems to happen.

Days turn into weeks. Weeks turn into months. And sometimes months turn into years.

And here's what I've learned: Waiting doesn't just test our patience. It reveals our character.

It's easy to be faithful when everything is going our way.

But what happens when we're disappointed? When prayers aren't being answered?

Because here's the truth:

We want God to work something OUT in our circumstances, but sometimes God is working something IN us through our circumstances.

And that brings us to a woman in Scripture named Hannah.

Hannah knew what it was like to wait. She knew what it was like to be disappointed. She knew what it was like to pray for something year after year without seeing an answer.

But her story teaches us something about what it means to be a Kingdom man or woman.

So today, I want to talk to you about three choices we can make while we're waiting.

B. Don't Waste the Wait

1. Choose FAITHFULNESS over FRUSTRATION.

(1 Samuel 1:3-8. C/R: James 1:2-4)

In 1 Samuel 1, we meet Hannah, a woman who desperately wanted something that God had not yet given her. She wanted a child.

The text tells us that Elkanah and his family traveled to Shiloh year after year to worship and offer sacrifices to the Lord. Shiloh was the center of Israel's worship at this time, where the tabernacle was located.

Notice the repetition of the phrase "year by year" in verses 3 and 7.

Year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the LORD Almighty at Shiloh, where Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the LORD.

1 Samuel 1:3 (NIV)

Because the LORD had closed Hannah's womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the LORD, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat.

1 Samuel 1:6-7 (NIV)

Hannah wasn't experiencing a brief season of disappointment. Her suffering had continued for years.

And her pain was intensified by three realities:

Her longing was unfulfilled. Hannah desperately wanted a child, but she was unable to conceive. Every passing year was another reminder of what she didn't have.

Her pain was aggravated by someone close to her. Peninnah, Elkanah's other wife, had children and continually provoked Hannah because of her barrenness (v. 6). It's difficult enough to wait for something you desperately want. It's even harder when someone close to you has the very thing you're praying for-and continually reminds you of it.

Illustration: And let's be honest, we don't always need a Peninnah in our lives anymore. We've got social media!

You're praying for a vacation, and everybody else is posting pictures from the beach. You're trying to save money, and somebody just bought a new truck. You're having a rough Monday, and somebody posts, *Living my best life!*

And you're thinking, *Good for you. Must be nice!*

Her suffering wasn't fully understood. Elkanah genuinely loved Hannah, but his question in verse 8- *Am I not more to you than ten sons?* - reveals that he didn't fully understand the depth of her pain.

Sometimes you can be surrounded by people who love you and still feel alone in what you're going through.

I want to pause here for just a moment. I recognize that for some people in this room, Hannah's story isn't just something you're reading in the Bible. It's something you're living.

You've prayed for a child. You've watched other families celebrate pregnancies and births. You've walked through disappointment month after month, maybe even year after year.

And sometimes, even well-meaning people have said things that made the pain harder.

I want you to hear something today.

Your struggle to have children is not a reflection of your worth, your faith, or God's love for you.

And having children is not what makes you complete as a man or woman of God.

I can't promise you that your story will end the way Hannah's did. But I can remind you that the same God who saw Hannah in her suffering sees you in yours. And as a church, we want to be the kind of people who don't minimize that pain, but walk alongside those who are carrying it.

Year after year, Hannah continued going to Shiloh.

Another year. Another trip to worship. Another reminder of the child she didn't have. Another year of unanswered longing.

But she kept showing up. And she kept showing up to the Lord.

But don't misunderstand Hannah's faithfulness as an absence of frustration.

Verse 7 tells us that Hannah wept and wouldn't eat. She was deeply distressed. Her faithfulness didn't mean she wasn't hurting.

Faithfulness doesn't mean you aren't hurting. It means your hurt doesn't have to drive you away from God.

Hannah's story raises an important question for every Kingdom man and woman: What is your season of waiting doing to your relationship with God?

John Ortberg says this:

"Who we become while we are waiting is much more important than the thing we are waiting for."

-John Ortberg

It's relatively easy to worship when life is going the way we hoped. But disappointment exposes what we really believe about God.

- Will I continue seeking God when He doesn't give me what I want?
- Will I remain faithful when someone else seems to be experiencing the blessing I've been praying for?
- Will I allow frustration to turn into bitterness, or will I continue moving toward God?

We often spend so much time asking God when our circumstances will change that we forget to ask Him how our character needs to change.

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

James 1:2-4 (NIV)

James teaches that the testing of our faith produces steadfastness, and steadfastness contributes to our spiritual maturity. In other words, the trials we endure can become opportunities for God to develop something within us.

We want God to work something out in our circumstances, but God can also work something in us through those circumstances.

Waiting can develop patience. Waiting can strengthen perseverance. Waiting can expose areas of our lives where our trust in God needs to grow.

The waiting doesn't automatically produce maturity. What matters is how we respond to God in the middle of it.

Kingdom men and women are not people who never experience frustration. They are people who refuse to let frustration determine the direction of their faith.

Maybe you've been praying for something for months or even years.

A relationship hasn't been restored. A financial situation hasn't improved. A door hasn't opened. Someone you love hasn't changed.

And somewhere along the way, frustration has started affecting your faithfulness.

Maybe you've stopped praying as consistently. Maybe you've pulled away from church or Christian community. Maybe you've become discouraged watching other people receive what you've been asking God to provide.

Here's the question:

What has frustration caused you to stop doing that faithfulness is calling you to start doing again?

You cannot always control your circumstances, and you certainly cannot control God's timing. But you can choose how you respond to Him while you wait.

Keep seeking Him. Keep worshiping. Keep doing what He's called you to do.

Not because faithfulness guarantees that you'll receive everything you've asked for, but because God is worthy of your faithfulness even when the answer hasn't come.

Don't allow a season of waiting to become a season of wandering.

Hannah kept showing up, but she wasn't pretending everything was okay. Her faithfulness brought her to the place of worship, and her pain drove her to prayer.

And that's the second characteristic we see in Hannah's story.

Will I remain faithful when someone else seems to be experiencing the blessing I've been praying for?

Will I allow frustration to make me bitter, or will I continue directing my life toward God?

Kingdom men and women are not people who never experience frustration. They are people who refuse to let frustration determine the direction of their faith.

2. Turn your PAIN into PRAYER.

(1 Samuel 1:9-16. C/R: Psalm 62:8)

The pain we carry can either push us away from God or draw us closer to Him.

Hannah had spent years waiting for God to answer her prayer. She was disappointed, frustrated and deeply wounded by the constant provocation of Peninnah.

But in verse 9, something significant happens.

Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on his chair by the doorpost of the LORD's house. In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the LORD, weeping bitterly. And she made a vow, saying, "LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head."

1 Samuel 1:9-11 (NIV)

Hannah didn't come to God pretending everything was okay. She didn't hide her emotions or manufacture a positive attitude. She brought her pain into the presence of God.

In verse 15, Hannah explains her behavior to Eli:

"Not so, my lord," Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD."

1 Samuel 1:15 (NIV)

Hannah wasn't offering a rehearsed religious performance. She was opening her heart to the Lord.

She was hurting, and she told God. She was disappointed, and she told God. She was desperate, and she told God.

God doesn't require us to disguise our pain before bringing it to Him.

Sometimes we think strong faith means never questioning, never crying, or never admitting we're struggling.

But Hannah shows us something different. Faith doesn't mean pretending our pain doesn't exist. Faith means knowing where to take our pain.

Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.

Psalms 62:8 (NIV)

Notice the connection between trusting God and pouring out your heart.

Prayer isn't where we pretend to be strong. Prayer is where we acknowledge our dependence on God.

One of the greatest dangers of prolonged disappointment is that pain can begin directing our lives.

We become consumed with what we don't have, bitter toward those who have what we want, or frustrated with God because our prayers haven't been answered. But Hannah demonstrates another response.

She takes the very thing that's breaking her heart and brings it before the Lord.

Consider the difference:

- Worry keeps rehearsing the problem.
- Prayer brings the problem before God.

Worry can convince us that everything depends on us. Prayer reminds us that we are dependent upon Him.

Illustration: Isn't it amazing how much time we can spend worrying about something?

We'll think about it in the morning. Think about it while we're driving. Think about it before we go to bed.

We'll have three imaginary conversations with people who aren't even in the room!

And by the time we're finished, we're upset about something somebody didn't even say! Isn't it amazing that we can spend hours rehearsing a problem, but only five minutes praying about it.

We often approach prayer because we want God to change our circumstances. But through prayer, God can also begin changing us. Sometimes the greatest work God does through our prayers isn't changing what's happening around us, but deepening our dependence on Him.

This doesn't mean our requests are unimportant. Hannah's longing for a child mattered.

But prayer is more than presenting requests. It's cultivating a relationship of trust with God.

Notice something else about Hannah's prayer.

In verse 11, she makes a vow to the Lord. She asks God for a son but promises to dedicate that son to the Lord's service.

Think about that.

Hannah is asking God for the very thing she is willing to give back to Him.

Her specific vow wasn't a formula for getting an answered prayer. But it reveals a heart willing to place even her deepest desire before God.

Kingdom men and women don't simply ask God to fulfill their desires. They learn to submit their desires to Him.

Instead of only asking, *God, when are You going to give me what I want?* We begin asking, *God, how can my desires and my life be used for Your purposes?* We don't stop bringing our requests. We learn to bring them with open hands.

Hannah brought her pain into God's presence. She prayed honestly, wept bitterly, and poured out her soul before the Lord.

But when she leaves, something remarkable happens.

Her circumstances haven't changed. She still doesn't have a child. She still doesn't know exactly how God will answer.

Yet verse 18 tells us that she went away, ate, and her face was no longer sad.

She walked into prayer carrying a burden, and she walked away with a different countenance.

That leads us to our third point.

3. RELEASE the OUTCOME to God.

(1 Samuel 1:17-18. C/R: 1 Peter 5:6-7)

Something remarkable happens at the end of Hannah's encounter with Eli.

Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him." She said, "May your servant find favor in your eyes." Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast.

1 Samuel 1:17-18 (NIV)

Don't miss the significance of this moment. Hannah isn't pregnant yet. Her circumstances haven't changed. She hasn't received an explicit promise from God that she'll have a child.

But Hannah leaves differently than she arrived.

She came in weeping, but she leaves with a changed countenance. She came in unable to eat, but now she returns to the table. The answer hasn't arrived, but Hannah is able to move forward.

Most of us want certainty before we're willing to experience peace.

We want to know how things will turn out, when things will change, and whether we'll get what we've been asking for.

But Hannah doesn't have those answers.

Eli offers a blessing, and Hannah responds by returning to her life.

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

1 Peter 5:6-7 (NIV)

Notice that Peter connects humility with casting our anxieties on God.

Surrender requires acknowledging that we are not in control.

We don't determine God's timing. We don't control every outcome. But we can trust His character. Faith doesn't require knowing what God will do next. It requires trusting who God is.

One danger of waiting is that we can begin living as though life won't really start until we receive what we're waiting for.

I'll be happy when...

I'll have peace when...

I'll start serving God when...

You know how this works. *When I get through this busy season, then life will slow down.* And for some of us, we've been saying that for 20 years!

At some point, you have to realize that the busy season may just be your life! If you're waiting for everything to be perfect before you start enjoying what God has given you, you're going to be waiting a long time.

We also convince ourselves that everything depends on a future answer. But notice Hannah's response. She gets up, goes her way, and eats. Hannah resumes ordinary life while her longing remains unresolved.

She doesn't know the outcome, but she doesn't remain paralyzed by uncertainty.

Don't become so focused on what you're waiting for that you neglect what God has already placed in front of you.

There are still people to love, responsibilities to fulfill, and opportunities to serve. Kingdom men and women don't wait for ideal circumstances to start living faithfully.

Hannah eventually receives the son she's been longing for. But her change of countenance happens before Samuel is born.

We often tie our security to a particular outcome. *If this works out, everything will be okay. If God answers this prayer, then I'll finally have peace.* But what happens when the answer doesn't come?

God's faithfulness isn't measured by whether He gives us the outcome we desire. The God who cared for Hannah before Samuel was born was the same God who cared for her afterward. Our confidence must rest in Him, not in a particular answer.

CLOSE

Hannah's story doesn't end with her walking away from the tabernacle.

If you keep reading in 1 Samuel 1, you'll discover that God eventually answers her prayer. Hannah gives birth to a son named Samuel.

And Samuel would become one of the most significant prophets in Israel's history. He would help lead God's people and eventually anoint David as king.

Hannah was praying for a son. God was preparing a prophet.

She couldn't see everything God would do through Samuel. She only knew the pain of what she was waiting for.

And sometimes that's where we find ourselves.

We see what hasn't happened. We see the prayers that haven't been answered. We see the doors that haven't opened. But we don't always see what God is doing.

We can't assume God will answer every prayer the way He answered Hannah's.

If you've been praying for a child and that answer hasn't come, I don't want you leaving here thinking you haven't prayed enough, believed enough, or surrendered enough. We will have Care Volunteers down at the front in just a moment to join with you in praying.

We can trust that He is at work even when we don't understand His purposes.

That's why the question isn't just, *What am I waiting for?* The greater question is, *Who am I becoming while I wait?* Because waiting will affect you.

It can make you bitter, or it can deepen your faithfulness.

Hannah shows us what Kingdom men and women do in seasons of waiting.

Choose FAITHFULNESS over FRUSTRATION. Don't let disappointment drive you away from God.

Turn your PAIN into PRAYER. Don't carry alone what God invites you to bring to Him.

RELEASE the OUTCOME and TRUST God. Don't put today's obedience on hold while waiting for tomorrow's answer.

And remember, Jesus Himself demonstrated what it means to trust the Father when the path ahead is painful.

In the garden of Gethsemane, He prayed, *Not my will, but yours, be done.* (Luke 22:42).

Our confidence isn't that every season of waiting will end the way we want. Our confidence is in the God who has proven His love for us through Jesus Christ.

So maybe you're in a season of waiting right now.

You're waiting for an answer, a breakthrough, a relationship to change, or a difficult chapter to end.

I want to challenge you to ask God a different question this week.

Instead of only asking, *God, when are You going to change my circumstances?*

Begin asking:

God, who are You calling me to become in the middle of these circumstances?

Because what God forms in you while you wait may be more significant than the very thing you're waiting for.

And you don't have to wait for your circumstances to change to begin becoming the Kingdom man or woman God has called you to be.

If that is you, we will have Care Volunteers down front who would love to pray for any need you have in your life.