

Worship in All Circumstances: Waiting

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 July 2016

Preacher: Jeremy Tam

[0 : 0 0] My name is Jeremy. If you haven't met me before, I am one of the staff leaders here at Watermark. And even as I was preparing and thinking about this message this morning, I'm just reminded of Isaiah's words.

Gosh, I'm a man of unclean lips. And I don't stand here with any sort of, as Oscar was saying, righteousness that I've somehow earned myself.

God has been preaching to me. His spirit has been convicting me throughout this week and all the time. And so this morning, I really want to begin with the tone that the Lord is speaking to all of us as a church.

And although I get the, I guess, this place of speaking to you, in every single way, I am also speaking to myself. So as a community, as a church, let's kind of grow together.

So let me just pray for me. And please pray for me at this time and pray for us as a church. Heavenly Father, thank you for your word.

[1 : 0 9] Thank you for the psalms that you have so graciously given us to teach us, to encourage us, to challenge us. And I pray for my heart right now and the hearts of every single one of us here, Lord, that we would be receptive, that our eyes and our hearts would not wander to the distractions so many they may be in the world and our lives, but we would just look you, look at you, look you in the eye, set our hearts on you right now, and be open to what you want to teach us, Lord.

And I pray that for myself, Lord. Would you even now continue to speak and challenge me, God? In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

So the topic we're looking at today is waiting. Waiting. And it's something you do every day. Some of you here already are waiting for lunchtime.

And your stomachs are telling you. So I admonish you right now, ignore those voices, and just for the next 30 minutes or so, focus on the bread of life, on Jesus.

But waiting is something we do every day. And some things we wait for, you know, they're a little more trivial. You know, we wait for the MTR or bus like all of you did coming this morning.

[2 : 3 2] We wait in line at the supermarket. You know, we wait seemingly endlessly for that person to pick up at customer service. Hours and hours, it seems like.

And we wait for, I guess, getting to rides in Disneyland, right? And experts estimate, from what I've seen over the last research, over the last week or so, experts estimate that people can spend up to two years in their lifetime just waiting in line for different things.

It's pretty crazy, right? Up to two years. And in our culture today of Internet and social media and instant gratification, you know, many experts think we're actually becoming more impatient because we're expecting everything to come in the blink of an eye.

And you want to go on a date? Tinder. You want to buy something? Get same-day delivery online. Don't want to wait for that ride at Disneyland?

Fast pass. And I'm not necessarily endorsing any of these things, but I'm just saying that's what you see in society today. And a few years ago, one researcher looked at 6.7 million people and their kind of online viewing habits.

[4 : 01] And he found that some people started abandoning their videos after two seconds of loading because it wasn't fast enough. And then by the 10-second mark, half of these people ditched their video.

And this was already a few years ago. Today, I don't even know how fast the Internet speeds are. But I think that's just a small kind of commentary on this instant gratification culture that we live in.

And these things can be trivial, but they remind us that we, collectively, as a developed society, you know, we are very much expecting convenience.

It's the norm. But some things we wait for are far from trivial, right? And that wait can be agonizing. Students, you are waiting for your exam results.

You wait for that acceptance or rejection letter from a school. You wait in the hospital waiting room. You wait for results from a medical test, from a checkup.

[5 : 06] You wait for a company to call back after that interview that you think went great or bombed completely. And we also might face a lot of adversity in waiting.

At some point in your lifetime, you will be waiting for some kind of difficulty to pass you by. You wait for relief from sickness. You wait for that demoralizing work environment to just change.

You wait for a spouse or a loved one to change from their hurtful ways. We wait for things to get better.

We wait. We're going through a series on Psalms and this idea of God's call for us, for his people, for all people, to worship him at all times, in all seasons.

And the Psalms give us a great insight into how we can genuinely pour out our emotions to God, how we can be real and honest before him.

[6 : 18] Over the last three weeks, you may have heard how the Psalms call us to preach to ourselves daily. And most importantly, the Psalms tell us, teach us how in every season, in every emotion, we can be worshiping God.

So today we turn to Psalm 62, a psalm about waiting. And it's not a long psalm, so we're just going to kind of look at it through a few key themes.

Please kind of go, have your bulletin there, taking a look at the scripture. And I'll just highlight some of the relevant verses for us. And just to give you an outline for how you can follow with me, I'm just going to go through like three major points.

Firstly, I'm going to talk about our goals of waiting. Our goals of waiting. And secondly, our process of waiting. And thirdly, our model of waiting.

So our goals, our process, and our model. So let's frame that first point as a question. The question is, what are you waiting for in life?

[7 : 31] What are you waiting for? Now everyone has things that they hope to achieve, and inevitably, we spend time waiting for them. I've already listed a few things at the beginning of things we wait for, and Psalm 62 is no different.

It gives us a snapshot of the goals that people may have in the process of waiting. And so in 62, it seems like the psalmist is facing adversity.

He's facing challenge from others. He's waiting for relief. He's waiting for deliverance.

Verse 3, how long will all of you attack a man to batter him like a leaning wall, a tottering fence?

The imagery there is like a structure that's been battered, and it's been rendered unstable, a tottering fence, if you can imagine, that's what the psalmist feels like.

Verse 4, they only plan to thrust him down from his high position. They take pleasure in falsehood. They bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse.

[8 : 45] Now, I don't know if any of you have faced the adversity that the author of Psalm 62 seems to be experiencing, but I think we've all, I'm sure we've all experienced some kind of attack or deceit or hypocrisy in some shape or form, right?

And in these times of difficulty, of challenge, we want, we wait for things to get better. And then in verses 9 and 10, they give us this good perspective on what people put their hope in.

Those of low estate are but a breath. Those of high estate are a delusion. in the balances they go up, they are together lighter than a breath.

That's basically addressing this issue of social status. And the psalmist realizes that these things have no weight. Like if they're in a balance, they just go up like a breath.

No matter if you have a high or low social status, there is no eternal significance in those things. verse 10, put no trust in extortion.

[10 : 05] Set no vain hopes on robbery. If riches increase, set not your heart on them. You know, many people wait, they wait all their life to get rich.

They might even resort to violence, to robbery, to extortion. But the psalmist sees that wealth and prosperity, they're not worth setting our hearts on.

They too, like social status, have no eternal significance. so the psalmist paints this picture for us. He says this, like basically in life when you're facing adversity, the world tells us that status enriches our solutions to your problems.

you know, we work hard and then we wait for that hard work to pay off. We're waiting all day for that day where we reach that goal that we think will give us success and satisfaction.

People spend their entire lives waiting for that day that they'll finally be happy and they become so enamored and obsessed with these goals that they're even willing to trample on others, to batter others, to step over others.

[11 : 27] And when you reach that goal, you realize it's not quite as satisfying as I thought. And then there's the next goal and the next goal. And the psalmist is basically saying to us, those goals are empty and you can just read the news, look at your celebrity magazines, your gossip and OK Magazine, whatever, from the broadsheets to the tabloids, countless examples of people who are rich and famous, who crash and burn, who fall into overdose and addiction and suicide because they have reached the top but it was empty.

There's a pithy quote from Jack Higgins that I really found compelling. Jack Higgins is a British writer. His novels have sold over 150 million copies worldwide, translated into 55 languages and as he was reflecting on his success, someone asked him, what would you have liked to know as a boy from when you were a boy?

And this was his answer that when you get to the top, there's nothing there. There's nothing there. But the psalmist in 62 paints a very different picture of what we should be waiting for.

For God alone, my soul waits in silence. God himself is what the psalmist is waiting for.

Through the psalm, we see that God is described as a rock, a fortress, a refuge. God is the source of salvation and glory.

[13 : 25] Verses 11 and 12, we see that power, power and steadfast love belong to God. You know, the things that we chase after, love and power, are, they actually belong to God.

So this morning, whether you're Christian or not, no matter what your worldview or your faith, Psalm 62 is drawing this stark contrast between waiting for God and waiting for everything else.

God is the source of everything good while everything else passes like a breath, like vapor. So the first thing for us to start thinking about as we dwell on Psalm 62 is the question, what are you waiting for in life?

What are your real goals if you're honest about yourself? The second question, the second point is this, how are you waiting?

And this speaks to the process that I was talking about. The second point is the process of our waiting. So you can be waiting for something that's a good thing.

[14 : 45] You know, maybe you're waiting for that job offer. You're waiting to be in love. Or you're waiting for that loved one to come around, to get better, to recover from illness perhaps.

Maybe some of you are even waiting for Christ to return. Now, all those things are good things and there's nothing inherently bad about those things. But if our focus is solely on those specific things, what happens is that we get stressed, we get impatient, we lose sight of the process, we lose sight of how we're waiting, and our waiting starts to become agonizing and frustrating.

the New York Times reported that some years ago, executives at a Houston airport faced a troubling customer relations issue.

The passengers were lodging just countless complaints about the long waits at baggage. Anyone ever experience that? Everybody, right?

in response, the executives increased the number of baggage handlers, right? Very, very sort of prudent thing to do. And the plan worked.

[16 : 09] The average wait time fell to eight minutes. And this was well within industry benchmarks. If any of you guys work within the aviation industry, you'd be like, yeah, yeah, that's really good.

But the complaints persisted, okay? And the executives were puzzled. Okay, what's going on? Why are these complaints continuing? So they went and took a more careful on-site analysis and they found that it took passengers one minute to walk from the gate to the baggage claim.

And then seven more minutes to actually get their bags. So in other words, roughly 90% of their time was spent standing around and waiting for their bags.

So the airport decided on a new approach. Instead of reducing wait times, it moved the arrival gates away from the main terminal and routed the bags to the outermost carousel.

So the passengers now had to walk six times longer to get their bags. And guess what happened? No more complaints. It dropped to nearly zero.

[17 : 15] So if you studied organizational behavior at all, there's actually a lot of examples like this. You know, the notice in lifts, you have lots of mirrors around you.

It's a way for you to kind of look at yourself and be kind of occupied or look at other people if you're creepy like that. You know, all the candy and magazines you see at the checkout aisle when you're waiting for supermarkets?

That's organizational behavior there because you get annoyed when you're waiting. You're looking around to the people next to you and you're like, wow, that's faster than me. That checkout's faster. But if you're looking at the juicy celebrity gossip or thinking about which candy to buy, it's another way for you to be waiting well in the perspective of the supermarket owners.

waiting, it's another thing. It's another thing that is going to be able to have to get to the money. But hear me out here. I'm not saying that what we should do is just distract ourselves with these trivial things.

But what these examples tell us and tell you from the experts, from people who make a living out of waiting and processing lines, is that the actual process of waiting is just as important, if not more important, than the actual time you spend waiting.

[18 : 45] So your perspective on your waiting is critical from every perspective of these experts. I was thinking about this for myself.

I'm studying to get my seminary degree right now and people often ask me, some of you have done this yourselves, they ask me when I'll finish. And because I'm doing a part-time, it's going to take a while, kind of just chipping away at this statue.

It's going to take quite a few years and if I'm honest, sometimes I think, man, this is going to take forever. And there's this creeping kind of feeling that, oh, I just wish it was over now.

I just want to get it over and done with. But the issue is if I'm focusing on that specific end of getting that degree, I might get discouraged.

But in this process, God's been reminding me little by little that every little class I take, every chapter, every book, every paper, that in and of itself is part of the process.

[19 : 51] And there's inherent value in every little step on the journey. But if I'm only fixated on the prospect of getting that degree, inevitably I'm going to get frustrated.

I'll miss out on really enjoying and growing in the moment. You see, the Christian has a very unique process of waiting.

The psalmist declares, for God alone, my soul waits in silence. The psalmist not only recognizes that God is the only one waiting for.

He also recognizes that we should wait for God in silence. Now, I don't know if you really picked up on that, but when I first read it, I was like, what does that mean?

Why is it in silence? And the Hebrew word for silence carries this idea of stillness, of rest. It carries this idea of a quiet confidence.

[21 : 00] confidence. So when we wait for God, we're not doing it with some kind of wishful, hopeful thinking. We wait with confidence because, like the psalmist says, power and steadfast love belong to God.

The God we wait for is powerful and faithful, and when we wait for God, we're waiting with trust in his character. Now, you might be thinking to yourself, well, Jeremy, it's easy to wait when you're doing something, you know, like building towards a degree.

You're taking these classes. It's very active. You're doing. It's hands-on. You're thinking. You're looking at yourself in the mirror. It's very active.

You love looking at yourself. These are very active things that engage us, but what about the hard things in life? The things that don't seem like there's anything active I can be doing?

What about things that I have no control over? What about those really big things that keep me anxious at night? It's not something like waiting in a checkout line.

[22 : 14] That's so trivial. What about relief from the suffering and anxiety that we experience? I'm not here today to just give you some kind of formula.

about waiting through hard times. But Psalm 62, it gives us some really good indicators about how we should be waiting. You know, when we face adversity, it can seem a lot of times that we're just waiting around.

There's nothing we can do about it. We're just waiting passively. But the psalmist shows here that he is waiting in a very active sense.

If you recall in previous messages in this series, we've talked about how psalms are a lot about preaching to yourself. See that very clearly here.

So verse one, for God alone my soul waits in silence. And then it's repeated in verse five. But notice it's a little different.

[23 : 22] It says, for God alone, oh my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him, from the Lord. You see how it switches?

And you're directly addressing your own soul. You're telling your soul, soul, heart, mind, wait in silence, in confidence, for the Lord.

So when you're waiting for God, you're actively preaching to yourself. And that's very, very important when we're going through the psalms. You're reminding yourself.

When you're doing communion, you're not just putting a cracker and juice into your mouth. You are reminding yourself and preaching to yourself of what God has done.

Notice all these action words in the psalm. Verse 8, trust, trust in him at all times. Pour out your heart to him.

[24 : 23] You know, there's nothing passive about this kind of waiting. God is telling you to be brutally honest with him because you don't need to sugarcoat your feelings.

You don't need to sugarcoat your frustrations with some kind of Christian bubble wrap because God already knows everything good and bad that's swirling around in the depths of your heart.

For Christians, the process of waiting can be an active opportunity to rely on God and ask him, God, God, what are you teaching me through this?

What can I learn from you? how can I grow through this season of waiting? So next time you're waiting in that lift for seemingly endless, endless time and you're looking in that mirror, instead of being fixated on yourself, just think about how you're made in the image of God.

Think about the God who fashioned you, who created you, who loves you. that you're precious to him. I also want you to notice that in this section, not only is the psalmist preaching to himself, he's calling out to the people around him, guys, listen, people, trust in God.

[25 : 55] And I can't stress this enough because it's not just that you're preaching to yourself. The reason why God gave us a church, a community, is for the very precise reason that we were never designed to live and grow as individuals isolated.

That's why we're called Watermark Community Church. That's why you go to your community groups and you meet and you check up on each other and you remind each other because the psalmist is telling you that it's not enough to just preach to yourself because we are forgetful.

people. And as we see God working in each other's lives, as we hear of God's faithfulness, as you tell each other in your community groups how good God is that you should trust in him, I can't tell you how many times I've just been reminded and encouraged and challenged by the people I see in my life, by my community group hearing about God at work.

work. So this process of waiting is meant to be done in community, not in isolation. So we have to think about our goal in waiting.

We have to think about what we're waiting for in life. We also think about how we wait. We think about the process of waiting. waiting. But I don't want us to hear these things and just think, okay, I just need to do a better job focusing on God, and I just need to do a better job waiting.

[27 : 32] I just need to have better waiting techniques. I don't want you guys to think of that because ultimately the beauty of the gospel is that God has also given us a model for waiting, a model of waiting that provides us with everything we need to wait throughout our lives.

So that's our third point, a model of waiting. You see, you know, when you're waiting, you're always modeling your hope after someone or something.

Maybe you see someone in your life or you read about somebody, you see someone who has something you want, and you see how they've waited for it, and they finally get it.

Maybe it's that story that a lot of us have read, you know, that story of that hot single person was waiting for that special someone. But first he learned to find contentment and singleness, and then God provided, and he got married.

You know, those are great testimonies, and I'm not knocking that at all. I've seen that happen, and it's amazing. God doesn't promise that we'll get exactly what we want just because we wait long enough or pray long enough.

[28 : 55] The story, the testimony could just go, just as well go like this. The single person learned contentment. He continued to grow in contentment for the rest of his life.

He trusted that God knows what's best for him, and that testimony would be just as wonderful just as God glorifying.

So my point is, when we're modeling our waiting, we have to remember that waiting is not a way to manipulate God. It's not a way to earn what we want.

It's not a way to earn what we think we want. we deserve. That's not what the psalmist means when he says that God will render to a man according to his work. Psalm 62 and the whole Bible, it's about salvation.

It's the reality that we as human beings need to be saved. We need to be saved because we have rejected the only thing that matters.

[30 : 08] God. God. We've turned away from having eternal life in a loving relationship with him, the one who created us.

So when I read Psalm 62, that God is my salvation, I'm declaring that my salvation rests on God. That's what the psalmist is saying. It rests on God, not anything that I've done, not any technique that I've applied in my waiting.

Everything is resting on God and because of that, because I'm relying on God, God will give me according to the work of relying on him. Psalm 62 shows us that there is a real model of waiting.

It's no one that you've seen in your life. It's nothing that you've seen in the world. The model for waiting is God's faithfulness. It's his character.

It's what he did throughout the entire Old Testament, from Genesis to Revelation. Saving people, Exodus, bringing the people out of captivity.

[31 : 21] And as a Christian today, looking at the psalm, we have an even clearer model. And that model is Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ, God became a human being.

He experienced everything we experience today. He waited in every way that you wait today. But instead of sinning, instead of falling short, instead of becoming unrighteous, Jesus lived a perfect life.

He should never have died. But he chose to die in our place. And he was resurrected with the new heavenly body.

So guys, today, if your faith is in what Jesus Christ did for you, you're in relationship with God. You're waiting for eternal life.

And in that eternal life, God will render to you according to your work today. When we model our waiting after Christ, we have this amazing assurance that is just incomparable.

[32 : 39] No matter what you're waiting for right now, no matter how long you've waited for it, you can be absolutely certain that God is your heavenly Father, that He loves you.

unconditionally, He knows what's best for you. He's promised you eternal life when everything will be made right. There's a lot of good things to be waiting for in life, and I'm not telling you now to just kind of give up waiting for them.

but Jesus gives us this ultimate model for waiting in His life, death, and resurrection, that we are actually waiting for eternal life, heavenly bodies in a new creation with no sickness, sorrow, or pain.

All of your waiting today, small or big, it all ties back into this grand story of waiting waiting for the ultimate redemption, ultimate restoration.

And we have to see this big picture to understand how every step of waiting is part of a greater waiting that Jesus points us to. But the amazing thing is unlike anything else you wait for in life, anything in this world that you might wait for, the amazing thing is you don't ever have to wonder if this kind of waiting, a waiting that's modeled after Jesus, you don't have to worry that it won't pay off or it won't result in anything.

[34 : 15] You know for sure that God will give eternal life because he showed us factually, historically, in Jesus dying on the cross.

This isn't something that we just conjured up to create a hopeful thing. This is historical. This is truth that Jesus died and resurrected. He is our model for waiting.

Jesus is our rock. Jesus is our salvation, our refuge, our glory. So if you're following Christ today, when you think about your goals of waiting, when you contemplate the process and how you are waiting, you can be sure that you're not just waiting for God in some abstract sense.

happiness, it's not the power of positive thinking. You're not putting your hope in some general made-up idea of God's goodness. You are putting your hope on Jesus.

It's based on the truth of the gospel. If you're not a Christian today, the question that Psalm 62 continues to pose to you is this, what are you waiting for in life?

[35 : 38] Is it something of this world that will pass like vapor, that will disappear inevitably on your deathbed? Or is it something everlasting that can only come from the God who created you, who loves you, who wants to spend eternity with you?

I want to close with just a little bit more research on waiting that I came across. There are two recent studies from some top-tier universities that I came across.

We're talking about big names. University of Chicago, Cornell, UC Berkeley. And one study found that, this is the main conclusion that it found, it found that waiting actually makes us more patient because we place a higher value on what we're waiting for.

Okay? And the other found that waiting can actually make us happy because if we're waiting, especially if we're waiting for an experience, the data actually showed that the waiting for that experience made people happy.

And as I was kind of thinking about these studies, it hit me, it's great that these top-tier schools and institutions and top minds are thinking about this issue and they're researching these topics in the 21st century.

[37 : 10] But with a lot of things, God's word addressed that about 2,000 years ago. In the book of Romans, God tells us that the sufferings of the present are not worth comparing to future glory.

We read in Romans 8 that all of creation, it's groaning and waiting eagerly for freedom. We're waiting for our bodies to be made new.

And then God tells us something interesting. He says, hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes in what he sees?

But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. If we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

That sounds like some of these conclusions that people are finally coming to today. Because we don't know exactly what eternity will look like.

[38 : 19] We don't know exactly what eternal life will look like, but God promises us that it will be amazing. So God, along with these top tier universities, they're telling us that we can find joy even in waiting.

Even in waiting because the most amazing eternal experience is ours to have through Jesus. All the waiting, all the wondering, all the suffering in this lifetime, the Lord says, it is worth it.

The psalmist calls us to wait, to hold fast to the Lord's word, and follow Christ to the end. I'm going to invite the band to come back up right now.

But before jumping right into just singing again, I think there's something in what the psalmist is telling us, to wait in silence.

And I don't know if you do that often. But to wait in silence in that confident rest.

[39 : 36] Let's take a minute to do that right now because every single one of us here is waiting for something. And I can't speak to exactly what it is.

Some of you in here may be waiting for very good things, but they're not just good things, they've become your ultimate things. And that waiting is causing you anxiety and frustration.

Because even though they're good things, things that you will enjoy, that God may even desire for you, you have made them your ultimate. and you're no longer waiting for eternal life in God's presence, you're just waiting on God to give you stuff.

Some of you may be waiting for God intently and God tells you to wait in silence because He will return, He will provide, He will assure you, you never know when He will return.

And He says wait patiently, wait expectantly, wait with hope and trust. Some of you may have no idea what you're waiting for this morning.

[40 : 55] So take this time to just reflect, what is it really that you're waiting for, if you're honest? Is it just that promotion? Is it just that special someone?

Is it a child? Is it having kids? Is it that next vacation? And where does that fall within God's call to wait for Him and wait for eternity?

So just take this time to reflect and close your eyes if you want, meditate, and Julie and the band will lead us when we're ready to go.