

# Wait

by Jim Cymbala

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*Jim Cymbala's sermon 'Wait' teaches the importance of trusting God's timing and direction in our lives.*

**Duration:** 17:06

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 13:8

**Topics:** "Waiting On God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of King Saul and his failure to wait for God's instructions. Samuel had instructed Saul to wait for seven days at Gilgal, but as the days passed, Saul became anxious and took matters into his own hands. Despite the worsening situation and the pressure to act, Saul failed the test of faith by not waiting for God's guidance. The preacher emphasizes the importance of waiting on God and trusting His timing, highlighting that God is never late. The sermon also highlights the tragic consequences of Saul's impatience and disobedience.

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## Transcript

I felt this strong prompting that I'm not supposed to speak about what I spoke about this morning, but I'm just supposed to give an exhortation now from a story about a king. I don't want the musicians to move or anyone. This will be very brief.

I wasn't planning to speak on this today, but I want to obey the Lord because there could be some people behind me and some people in front of me who are ready to, well, who really need to hear this. The first prophet that comes about in the Old Testament as a prophet, prophet after the book of Judges, is Samuel. Samuel heard the word of the Lord as a little boy.

None of his words fell to the ground. Samuel was known to be the one that God spoke through as he was in Shiloh where the tabernacle was. The people got edgy and said, we're the only nation that doesn't have a king.

We want a king. Samuel was heartbroken that they wouldn't trust God to lead them, that they wanted a king. So the Lord said, that's okay.

I'm going to give the people what they want. And who was chosen was a man taller and better looking, taller by more than a foot or a head, than anybody in Israel. And his name was, who was the first king? Saul.

Now Saul seemed to be an ungodly type in a way. He didn't know much about Samuel. And the Bible tells us, this will go quickly so focus, the Bible tells us that God sent Samuel to Saul to anoint him and then to tell him so that he wouldn't be nervous several things that will happen to him when he would leave Samuel so that when those things were fulfilled, Saul would know, this is the Lord who is making me do this.

It's the Lord who called me. Now we're going to read how he was anointed. At the last second, I just asked them to put these verses up.

And then the Bible tells us that after those things were fulfilled, including the spirit of God coming on Saul, where he starts to prophesy with the prophets, you talk about a change. In fact, the Bible says God gave him a new heart. But there was an instruction given.

I want you to just look at this, okay? Samuel comes to Saul. Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on Saul's head and kissed him, saying, has not the Lord anointed you leader over his inheritance? And then those things happen that he said would happen. And then finally, Samuel tells him this, this is all that's going to happen to you and it all happened that way.

And then finally, he gives him this instruction, go down ahead of me to Gilgal and I will surely come down to you to sacrifice burn offerings and fellowship offerings. But you must wait seven days until I come to you and tell you what you are to do. As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's heart and all of these things happened.

So let's just stop there. Samuel comes to Saul. He says, you're the man that God has chosen.

This is what's going to happen to you. A man's going to come. They're going to tell you they found your lost donkeys.

And this is going to happen. That's going to happen. God knew everything.

And now you're going to be the king and you're going to meet some prophets and the spirit of God is going to come down upon you. And it all happens, ladies and gentlemen. And then Samuel says, now wait, you're going to go to Gilgal, which was a special town.

And now wait for me. And after seven days, I'm going to come and I'm going to offer certain sacrifices to God, which will show your thanksgiving. And then I will tell you what you should do.

I want you to notice that God was telling Saul, I'm not only going to make you king, I want the privilege of directing all the footsteps of your life. Not only going to make you king, I will tell you what to do. And now we're going to see one of the great tragedies in the whole Bible.

It all happens. He's king. And now the Philistines gather to fight a battle against the Israelites.

And Saul is in Gilgal and he doesn't know what to do. He's afraid to let the men go and fight because the sacrifice to God hasn't been offered. Samuel hasn't come.

Day after day goes by. It's not yet the seventh day, but then the seventh day comes. And now look at what happens.

When the men of Israel saw that their situation was critical and that their army was hard pressed, they hid in caves and thickets among the rocks and in pits and in cisterns. And some Hebrews even crossed the

Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. In other words, they're dispersing.

Saul remained at Gilgal and all the troops with him were quaking with fear. So people are taking off. The other ones are scared.

The Philistines look like a huge army that's going to roll over them. He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal.

And Saul's men began to scatter. So he said, bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings. And Saul offered up the burnt offerings.

Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived. And Saul went out to greet him. What have you done, asked Samuel.

Saul replied, when I saw that the men were scattering and that you did not come at the set time and that the Philistines were assembling at Michmash, I thought now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal and I have not sought the Lord's favor. So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering. You acted foolishly, Samuel said.

You have not kept the command that the Lord your God gave you. If you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. But now your kingdom will not endure.

The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people because you have not kept the command you have not kept the Lord's command. And brothers and sisters, all I want to say to you is that that command was only one thing. Wait.

And he couldn't. And he lost everything. The Lord wanted to show Saul, I'll make you king and I'll be with you.

But you must let me order your steps. You can't do your thing and have me bless your thing. You must do my thing because I've made you king.

When Jesus Christ died on the cross and he saved us, he purchased us. We don't belong to ourselves anymore. And what Jesus our king is saying to us is, yes, I gave you the gift of eternal life and I saved you, but I want the privilege of ordering your steps on everything.

On what you buy, where you move, where you go, how you raise your children and everything else about your life. You belong to me now. I didn't buy you with silver and gold.

It cost me my own blood. But now you belong to me. Have the faith the Lord is saying to King Saul.

Have the faith the Lord is saying to us today. Have the faith to trust that I will tell you what to do and when you should do it. Well, King Saul, and I'm done.

King Saul goes to Gilgal and he's waiting. Samuel told him, just one instruction, wait seven days. Seven is a number of completion and perfection in the Bible.

So it kind of speaks of waiting for that moment, the next moment the Lord has to speak. And seven days go by and what does he see, choir members? He sees things getting worse. No word from the Lord.

Things are getting bad. His troops are scattering. The guys that are with him are shaking with fear.

The Philistines, the Bible says in the verse before this, I believe, where we were reading, it says they were like the sands of the sea. They're mounting up. The guys are leaving.

Everybody's scared. You got to do something, don't you? But the Lord said, don't do something. Wait.

The hardest part of faith is waiting. There's a time in life to do something. When God tells you, you do it.

Activity is part of God's plan for our lives. But one of the hardest moments in life when you can lose everything is when you're not sure what to do and there's all these voices and pressures and you feel I got to do something. I got to make a decision.

He wants me to marry him or I'm supposed to take this job and there's no word from the Lord and the test is will you act on your own or you wait for the Lord to give you direction? And imagine how important this is to God. Because Saul wouldn't wait, God says, I'm done with you. I found a man after my own heart and what do we learn about David? He was imperfect.

But you find David time after time, ladies and gentlemen, inquiring of the Lord and saying, God, show me what to do. I'm at a crossroads. Should I fight this battle? You read David's life.

Should I fight this battle? If I fight it, how should I fight it? Lord, where should I go? Where should I hide? Tell me what to do. And because of that spirit, God said, that's a man after my own heart. And Saul was rejected because he wouldn't wait.

I have no idea why I'm saying this. I had no plan to say this. But I asked Vanessa to put these verses together because if you're here today and you feel some outside pressure to make a decision but you're not sure it's God, I'm going to lay down in front of your car.

You're going to have to run me over to do that. Because you can make a humongous mistake and mess up your life. It could be financial.

It could be a move. It could be a guy. It could be a girl.

I don't know what it is, but I did not want to do this. I have no sermon. I have no notes.

You see me up here. I'm just pleading with you. If God has permitted you to be in a situation and yet you have not heard from him, you see there's something in us that's all type A. We got to do something.

We got to do something. The hardest thing to do in life is to wait when you don't know what God wants you to do. How many know that that's hard? And yet, that was the acid test of Saul's faith.

And Saul failed it and lost the kingship. You and I would say, listen, I go to church. What are you getting all fanatical about it? Imagine how important that was to God.

No, I'll make you king, but I'm going to tell you what to do, and you'll wait for my instructions. And when it got tight, he said, I can't wait for God. God's late.

I want to declare to you in closing, God is never late. Come on. Can we put our hands together? God is never late.

Come on. Let's really do it loud. God is never late.

And if you're here today and you're about to make a decision, oh, I think how God helped me when I was ready to make ... I've made blunders because I haven't waited. I have. I confess that.

But I could have made some humongous blunders. But God gave me the grace or sent someone to tell me to wait, to wait upon the Lord, to say, God, it doesn't look good and it's getting worse. And it seems like you're not on time, but I'm going to wait anyway.

I am not going to move. I will not decide. Let's close our eyes.

This is the strangest thing. If you're here today behind me or in front of me, and you're troubled about some decision, either you're at a crossroad, you don't know ... Pastor, stand with me on these steps, please. You don't know whether to go left or right, or you're getting into something and something is warning you, you're rushing.

You're rushing. Why are you pushing this? Now, if God has spoken to you about it, don't let the devil ruffle you. But if it's God, the Holy Spirit saying, be careful, be careful, certain steps you can't undo so easily.

If you're here today and you say, Pastor, I want to wait. That was for me. I want to ask God to give me the grace to wait.

Look, the choir will sing, we'll take an offering, we'll dismiss, we'll get ready for Dr. Evans to preach. But right now, this could mean, who knows what this could mean. If you're in the balcony or downstairs and you're one of those people, just come up right to the edge.

Schooling, financial decision, don't rush. Lord, we stand in your presence quietly. Don't make us like Saul, make us like David.

When we're supposed to move, help us to move. But until we know your word, teach us to have the faith that waits. You're never late.

That's a lie from hell. You are never late. Your promise is that you will direct us in the way that we should go.

But sometimes you don't speak when we wanted God, and you don't give us the directions when we'd like to get them. But today, we trust you enough. We don't care how big the enemy seems, we don't care what the troops are doing.

We will wait until you tell us what to do. Let that be better than the lifting of our hands and the singing of hymns. That we trust you and love you enough that we won't move unless you tell us what to do.

Bless the people now and direct them in the way they should go. We know you're going to do it, for we ask it in Jesus' name. And the whole church said, Amen.

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