

# When Things Don't Make Sense

by Jim Cymbala

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of waiting on God and trusting His timing, rather than becoming impatient and looking to men and physical things instead of God.*

**Duration:** 19:26

**Scripture:** Exodus 14:21, Exodus 15:23, Exodus 16:4, Exodus 16:20, Exodus 17:2, Exodus 32:1, Exodus 32:4

**Topics:** "Confusion"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of worshiping God in the invisible, rather than relying on physical signs and experiences. He warns against seeking tangible proof of God's presence and instead encourages the congregation to praise and worship God regardless of what they see or feel. The sermon references the story of Moses and the Israelites, who became impatient and built an idol in the form of a calf while waiting for Moses to come down from the mountain. The preacher highlights the consequences of their impatience and urges the congregation to wait on God's timing and not rush ahead in their own desires.

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## Transcript

There are some highlight days in the history of Israel in the Old Testament, and then there are some very terrible, dark, ominous days. Let's see if we can think of one great night that we've been talking about during Palm Sunday and Easter holiday, Passover night. When they put the blood on the doors, what happened when the death angel came? God said, when I see the blood, I will what? Passover you.

How about this? They were led to an impossible situation, the Red Sea. But there, God divided the sea, and they were able to walk across. And that testimony is found all through, the prophets are still talking about it, hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years later, still remembering that day.

The building of the temple. The coronation of David. Before that, before the temple was built.

But there's one horrible, horrible day in the history of Israel. Maybe, I can't scan it right now in my mind, but maybe the worst day in their history, where God almost destroyed all of them in one fell swoop. If it wasn't for Moses' intercession.

And that was the day that strangely happened right after miraculous things that God was doing in their lives. They had come out of Egypt, Passover night. Then they were delivered at the Red Sea.

And then God led them, and he tested them. Sometimes he brought them to nice places, like Elam, palm trees and water. Then he led them into the desert of sin.

At other times, he led them, because they were only following the cloud, remember. And in that desert of sin, which has nothing to do with sin, the moral term, there was a lack of things. They went to another place, Mara, there was bitter water.

He was testing them and trying to get them to trust him. And they saw all of his delivering power and all his miraculous supply, manna every morning. Every morning, manna, fresh, except for the Sabbath, and so on and so forth.

But with all of that, they fell in to the worst problem you could imagine. So, let's just see how it happened. And you know it.

And maybe if you haven't read the book, you saw the movie, The Ten Commandments. When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, "Come, make us gods who will go before us." "As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, "we don't know what's happened to him." Aaron answered them, "Take off the gold earrings that your wives, "your sons and your daughters are wearing, "and bring them to me." "So all the people took off their earrings "and brought them to Aaron.

"He took what they handed him "and made it into an idol, an idol." Aaron, who while Moses is up on the mountain right now, getting not just the Ten Commandments, but all the instructions on worship, that's where Moses is, for 40 days, 49. He's up there getting all this, including instructions about how God is gonna anoint and provide for Aaron and his sons. That Aaron.

You talk about God's grace. God is saying, this is now what you're gonna do for Aaron. I want his thing be anointed with blood, oil on all of his, the turban and oil on the ephod, and all of that.

And God knows that while he's giving it, Aaron's up to no good down in the valley. Oh, how many are happy for God's grace? That he just, oh my goodness. Oh my goodness.

Idol cast in the shape of a calf, that probably was an imitation of one of the main idols in Egypt that they had seen, which was a young bull. Fashioning it with a tool. And then they said, these are your gods, oh Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.

When Aaron saw this, he built an altar. Now he's starting a whole religion. He built an altar in front of the calf and announced, tomorrow there'll be a festival to the Lord.

Notice the syncretism. They're mixing the Lord's name in with junk. Idolatry, blasphemy, right with the Lord.

This is what God got so angry about. So the next day, the people rose up early and sacrificed burnt offerings, which were useless, and presented fellowship offerings, more nonsense. Afterward, they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.

And that word in the Hebrew has sexual connotations. Then the Lord said to Moses, go down, because your people whom you brought up out of Egypt have become corrupt. They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf.

They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, these are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt. Now, obviously, one of the commandments that God had already recited to them, Moses had recited this command to them or had been given by God, you'll never make any image that represents me. You never make any image, nothing physical should ever represent me.

Because no physical object is worthy to represent the invisible, eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent God. So here they were violating that just less than two months after they got this. They just polluted themselves.

Now, Moses is up on the mountain with God in God's presence. And God is giving them not only a reiteration of the 10 commandments, but he's giving them instructions of how to build the tabernacle. That takes up a lot of Exodus.

The exact specifications of the tabernacle. That was basically no roof on it. It was a big enclosed like football field rectangle.

And then inside with just walls around it, no ceiling. But then there was an enclosed building which had two parts to it. The holy place, taking up let's say two thirds.

And then the other part, the holy of holies. And God had furniture in there. And God was giving them specifications.

This is what you should do. And these are the offerings they should bring. And do this so that I can dwell among you.

God's planning something beautiful for his people. And meanwhile, they're in the valley and they're doing this horrible thing. The part that I didn't read, when God sees it, God just says, Moses, step aside and I'll just, I'll build a new people just out of you.

Forget this, I'll just go with you, your descendants. And Moses intervenes for the people and says, no, then wipe my name out of the book. And then if you do that, you know what the people will say? That you brought them out of Egypt but you couldn't bring them in, God.

And he prays a beautiful intercessory prayer. Now, so you go from Passover night to the Red Sea to God providing manna and God providing quail for them to eat. How do you end up building an idol in the form of a calf and calling it God and giving it reverence and bowing down to it and offering sacrifices to it and saying, this is what got you out of Egypt? How do you get there, how do you do that? Well, it's a lot easier than you think because I just want you to look at one verse, the first verse to show you what precipitated all of that because I felt the Lord lay this on my heart and the airplane coming up early, early, early this morning from Dallas, I felt like this has some prophetic application to some people here.

So this is not a teaching so much but hopefully God will give me unction here and it'll get into your heart because some folks in here really need to hear this and be careful because God's brought you here tonight to hear this word. So here's the first verse. When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, come, make us gods who will go before us as for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what's happened to him.

Let's look at it again. When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, come, make us gods who will go before us as for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him. The thing that precipitated this

whole thing and got them going in the wrong direction was they couldn't wait for God.

If you look at the genesis of this whole problem, it was where's Moses? We got to do something. Where's Moses, what are we supposed to do now? Hey, you were 400 years in slavery and God delivered you and he's up there 40 days and 40 nights, you can't wait? And if God did all these things before you and delivered you and has helped you in so many ways, you're now gonna think God is gonna leave you to die in the desert? But see how we get? We're all impatient by nature. And the worst mistakes you make is when you can't wait for God's timing.

Moses comes down right at the end of the revelry. So what was it, hours, a day or two? We can't judge the time span. But Moses walks in on this thing and he has a conniption and he just expresses his anger and disapproval of what they're doing.

But he was just almost there and now you corrupt yourself, you lose out with God, God's judgment comes upon you, thousands of people died that day among the people through the judgment of God through unusual means, but it was all born because they couldn't wait for God to do it in his time. And a lot of us get in trouble, maybe somebody here today, you're not waiting for God. You're getting antsy, you're getting impatient.

And because you don't see God doing anything, you don't think he's doing anything. If they only could have seen that right at that moment, God was planning blessings for them. God was planning worship and a sacrificial system and a priesthood and all kinds of provision for them and an altar of incense that the priest could minister at and a beautiful tabernacle that they could come and offer their own sacrifices at.

God was planning something beautiful and they almost blew up the whole thing, why? What was the main reason? Not a demon, they couldn't wait. They couldn't wait, they had to take things in their own hand. Haven't you and I ever done that? We gotta see something, we gotta feel something, we gotta know what God's doing.

This is going on too long, 40 days. 40 days and we don't know what's happening. And when you get impatient with God and I get impatient with God and when we take things into our hand, you can be assured we're gonna mess up everything.

Do I get a witness here for that? We are gonna mess up everything when you can't wait for God. Wait, my soul, upon the Lord. Why would David say that so many times? Wait, my soul.

He talked to himself. No, I feel you getting anxious now and you wanna do something. Wait, my soul.

Blessed is the man who waits for the Lord. In Isaiah it says he works for those who wait for him. The hardest part of faith is waiting.

The hardest part of trusting God is waiting. When thunder and you can see God's hand and everything's happening, that didn't take a whole lot of faith. But when you commit something to God and you don't see anything and you think he's behind the time and his clock isn't running up to your requirements, oh my goodness, that's how they got in all that trouble.

So let me close. My brother will come. There's another thing in there.

Did you notice that got them? So just remember, if you're here today and you're rushing God, somebody here, some young lady, some young man, some man, some woman chomping at the bit. I got, you know, I'm getting old and my biological clock is running. You forget your biological clock.

Worry about God's clock. How many say amen? God got a clock for you. You get anxious, you gotta get it.

I don't know what God's doing. Where's the guy of my dreams? You take it into your own hands. You'll lament that day till you die.

You'll cry. Listen to someone who's counseled 1,000, 10,000, I don't know how many people I've counseled over the years. You know how many tears I've seen? Because just like this, they didn't make them idle, but they got ahead of God.

You can't beat God's timing. God's working out something beautiful for you. Wait, do you hear me? Wait, wait on the Lord.

He's gonna come through. Did you notice the other thing that gets us in trouble? The preoccupation with the physical. Did you notice in that first verse, there's no mention of God? Where's Moses? Moses, who do you think's been sending down manna every morning? Who do you think opened the Red Sea? Moses just held up a staff.

You don't think he did that. But see, there's a tendency in all of us, not only to impatience, but we love the physical. They went from Moses, we don't know where Moses is.

Moses is the man. Meanwhile, they almost killed him before when they got upset with him. But now they turn to Aaron.

I was once in a church growing up where the man of God was used by the Lord, the pastor. I bet my friends have seen something like this. The only thing they've seen is Aaron.

The only trouble was the man of God was used, but if he wasn't in the meeting, it was like the people wouldn't even come to church. If they knew he was on vacation, he wasn't gonna come. Why, because Pastor so-and-so's not gonna be there.

Nothing good can happen, I mean. Well, what happened about God? You think God's depending on any man, some pastor, some evangelist? Come on, our God is an awesome God. Can we say amen to that? When you look to a man, you will always be disappointed.

When you look to a woman, you will always be disappointed. When you look to a pastor, you'll always be disappointed. Appreciate anyone that God uses, but get your eyes off of the man.

Looking unto Jesus, come on, the author, the finisher of our faith. Their eyes were on Moses. How in the world could you see all of that and say, relax? The manna every morning, the Red Sea open, we saw 10 plagues, we saw Passover night.

You think God's gonna let us down now? No, no, no, all of us, we gravitate toward the physical. We gotta see something, we gotta touch it, but the Father seeks those who will worship him in invisible, invisible. God loves when we don't see a thing and we say, I love you, Lord.

Lift your hands up with me, let's just praise him. Come on, just open your mouth up and praise him. Gloria tu nombre, señor, gloria tu nombre, señor.

We praise you, come on, just praise him out loud. We don't have to feel anything, we don't have to see anything. You are God, awesome God, we praise you.

Keep our eyes off of men, God. The human, keep our eyes on you. You may put your hands down.

One last thing, did you see it there in the first verse? All their trouble began because they got impatient. That was the origin of it. Then number two, always looking for men.

Back in the Zusa Street revival, then I was thinking today about some of the writings of these people who were waiting in Los Angeles, interracial, waiting for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit. And some of the writers, one man by the name of Frank Bartleman, who was one of the historians of that age, he said that a lot of the prayer meetings were held back because the people wouldn't pray until the pastor came. That's what they said, yeah.

And he said God is refining us to get our eyes off of men. You think Jesus is gonna share his glory with some preacher? Come on, he might use a preacher or a teacher. He's not sharing his glory with some man made of clay and he's the son of the living God.

He wants us to be so focused on him, on God, on his presence, on the Holy Spirit, that we go, yeah, if God uses someone, praise God. But whether God uses someone or not, I can always have God. I can always have God.

Lastly, for this man Moses, we don't know what's happened to him. See, that's how the golden calf came about. Impatience, this crazy attachment to the physical, notice Moses, Aaron, and now a golden calf, like the other nations.

See, we gotta be like the other nations. We gotta have something that it looks important. When God says, no, I want you to have nothing but me, faith in me.

The other thing though that precipitated all of this was when you're bewildered and you can't figure things out, if you don't stop and trust, you're gonna do something that you'll regret. Moses, we don't know where he is and because we can't figure it out, it must mean God's no longer in control. I hear that every time I pray with people.

Pastor, I don't know what's going on in my life and pray for me because I just don't know what's going on. Do you think that because you and I don't know what's going on at a given moment that God's not on the throne? God's on the throne whether you can figure it out or not. His ways are not our ways.

Neither are his thoughts our thoughts. Neither is his timing our timing. So when you think he's late, hold on and trust him.

When you're tempted to look at man, don't. Just keep looking at Jesus. And when you don't understand what's going on, don't you know God is doing the best things when you don't understand? How many have gone through disappointments and God turned the disappointments into blessings? Come on, anybody like that? Oh my goodness.

This building, oh my goodness. And then God came through. God comes through.

So you have to mature to the place. I have no idea what's going on. I don't understand and it seems late to me.

And I don't see any help to my faith that I know in whom I have believed. And I'm persuaded, come on, that he is able to keep that which I've committed to him against that day. Close your eyes with me.

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