

# (The Works of Faith) Wait for God to Act

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon teaches that true faith requires patience, emphasizing the importance of waiting for God's timing to fulfill His promises.*

**Duration:** 1:10:37

**Scripture:** Genesis 13:7, Isaiah 49:23, Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 6:12

**Topics:** "Faith And Obedience", "Godly Relationships"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of Abraham and Lot in Genesis 13. He highlights the strife between their servants and emphasizes the significance of the last sentence in verse 7, which mentions the Canaanites and the Perizzites. The preacher suggests that the heathen were watching the conflict between these two men who claimed to follow God. He then draws a parallel to the present day, stating that the world is observing how Christians interact with one another. The preacher urges the audience to make a decision to seek God's best in their lives, repent for past mistakes, and wait for God's timing rather than rushing and potentially ruining His plans.

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## Transcript

Let's turn to a verse in Hebrews, in chapter six. Hebrews, chapter six, there is a quality of love, a part of the character of Jesus Christ, which most Christians in the twentieth century don't pursue too much, and that is patience. 1 Corinthians 13 says love is patient, and it says love suffers long.

Here it speaks in Hebrews 6.12 about not being sluggish. It says don't be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Now many people have believed that if you only have faith you inherit the promises, and we wondered why sometimes we thought we had faith and we didn't inherit the promises.

But the Bible says faith and patience. You need faith and patience to inherit the promises. There are many things in scripture that go together, like husband and wife, like two legs to stand on, the balance that we need, many, many areas of Christian life like grace and truth, the fruit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, etc., love to God and love to man.

There's always two sides, and where you have one side missing, you know something is wrong. There are two sides to truth, like the two wings of a bird. If you use both wings, you move forward.

If you have only one wing, you go round and round and round and round, and that's what a lot of Christians do. Many, many areas. The trouble with a lot of Christians is not that they've got a wrong doctrine, but they've got one side of doctrine.

When the devil said to Jesus, it is written, and told him to jump from the temple, his angels will take charge of you, Jesus said, it is also written. That's truth, balance. So it's not by faith that we inherit the promises, it's not by patience, it's by faith and patience that we inherit the promises.

And then it says here about Abraham, when the Lord told him, I will surely bless you and multiply you, it says he patiently waited, and he waited for twenty-five years. God gave him that promise when he was seventy-five, and he got a seed only when he was a hundred. And he says, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise.

Now, I think in the olden days, and probably even in the villages today, people, it's easier for people to be patient. But those of us who live in the cities, and we're more advanced in civilization, we know how everything has to move so fast. A hundred years ago in the villages in India, people didn't think anything of walking twenty miles.

They'd walk. It takes seven, eight hours to get there, but they'd walk. We'd never, none of us would ever dream of walking twenty miles.

Huh, getting a place in eight hours? We'd like to get there in fifteen minutes. See, and the prospect of reaching a place twenty miles away in eight hours is so horrible to us, that we'd say, forget it. We want to get there immediately.

Now, that's okay as far as going distances is concerned, but it's the same thing. It affects many, many areas of our life. You know why instant coffee is so popular? Because the old business of waiting for it to boil and get a decoction and all, it takes too much time.

In every area it's like that. Even in examinations nowadays, the old system of teacher correcting all these long answers, it's all gone. It's all, you put it on the computer, you get the result, by the time your exam's over.

And unfortunately, this is in all areas of life. Even the doctors now, don't wait for a woman to come to her time of delivery. They say, no, you've got to operate immediately, otherwise you may die.

And the poor woman's scared, they have a caesarean and the baby's born, because the doctor doesn't want to come in the middle of the night. Usually babies are born in the middle of the night. They don't want to come in the middle of the night, so they say, well, nine o'clock we'll have a caesarean and frighten this poor woman and deliver the baby, and that's it.

And unfortunately, this carries over into our Christian lives. God, in the name of Jesus, you said you'd give me this thing, I'm asking for this thing. You wait two minutes, the answer hasn't come, God doesn't answer prayer.

He does answer prayer, but He's not going to answer it according to your dictating the time to Him. One of the things which I've learnt in my Christian life is this wonderful truth. You know, all Christians speak about Acts 1.8. Well, a lot of Christians do.

You know what that is, Acts 1.8? You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. How many Christians know Acts 1.7? More important, actually, in a sense. In fact, it's linked to Acts 1.8. Acts 1.7 says, listen to this and don't forget it all your life.

It is not for you to know the time when God will do something. Do you hear that? It's not for you to know the time when God will do something. You know the question, you see, I'm paraphrasing those words because the disciples asked Jesus, Lord, is this the time when you're going to restore the kingdom to Israel? We think it's about time.

We've had enough of these Romans ruling us for 40, 50 years. We're sick and tired of them. They make life so miserable for us.

In the name of Jesus, restore the kingdom. Jesus said, it's not for you to know the time. You can pray, thy kingdom come.

Sure, we Christians have been praying it for 2,000 years, but it still hasn't come. It's not for you to know the time. It is not for you to know the time or the epochs, dates.

The father has fixed by his own authority and a humble person will acknowledge that. Do you know the number of stupid, I wouldn't say only stupid, but proud, arrogant Christians who through the years have even decided that they know when Jesus is coming again? Somebody said he's coming in 1841, then they changed it to 1844. And then when he still didn't come, they said, well, he came halfway and he sort of got stuck somewhere there and he's on his way because he wouldn't admit that I made a mistake.

It's true. One of the cult groups teach that. And then people have waited on mountains in the year 2000 and even in the year 1000, I heard people waiting for the coming of the Lord.

What would a humble man do? Do you know who was the humblest man who walked on the earth? Who was that? Jesus. You know what he said? He said, I don't know the date of my own second coming. He didn't know the date of his own second coming when he was on earth.

Then who are these people who think that they know and fix dates and all that? Arrogant, proud man. It's not for you to know. It's not for you to know when Jesus is coming again.

You can know when he's near, but you won't know the date or time. Jesus said that. Jesus himself did not know when he was on earth.

Today he knows because he's gone back and taken back all that authority he had from all eternity as God. When he was on earth, he had it, but he didn't use it. He was God, but he never used those powers.

Otherwise he wouldn't be an example for us. That's why he gave up even the knowledge of many, many truths. So there are many, many things like that.

When is God going to answer this prayer of mine? Well, it's not for you to know the time. But faith says, if I have asked something according to the will of God, he will definitely grant it to me. Have you asked for victory over sin? You didn't get it in one day and you got discouraged.

See, this is the great danger. I want to give you a promise which has been a tremendous help and blessing to me through many, many, many years. It's in Isaiah chapter 49.

You know, many, many problems we have in our life, we don't have an answer because we don't study the word of God. There is an answer in scripture to every single problem, question, doubt we have in our whole life. It says here in Isaiah 49 and verse 23, those who wait for me shall never be ashamed.

Those who hopefully wait for me, those who have hope, God will answer my prayer because I have asked according to his will. He will answer me. That's faith, faith and patience.

When God has promised something and you know that that is God's will for you. Now, there are a lot of areas where we don't know whether it's God's will for us. You ask God to give you a particular job.

I don't know whether that's God's will for you or not. You want to marry a particular girl or a particular boy. I don't know whether it's God's will for you or not.

A lot of people marry people whom God never chose for them. They just were in a hurry and got married. OK, that's up to them.

But God, those who wait for him will never be ashamed. It's true, never. You can be absolutely sure if you want God's perfect will in your life in every single area, you don't have to grab anything.

You wait for God's time and he will give you the best. I found that in 43 years of my Christian experience. I've never missed anything in my life which God wanted me to have.

And as far as I can remember, I never grabbed anything. No, nothing. I believe that if God wanted me to have something, he'd give it to me.

If he didn't want me to have it, it'd be far better if I didn't have it in any case. And the sad thing is, there are certain things which God may want you to have, but he may not want you to have it now. He may want you to have it three months from now, or three years from now, or ten years from now, I don't know.

God wanted Abraham to have a son, but he wanted him to have it 25 years later. And that's where patience is tested. You're sure God wants you to have it.

God wants you to have victory over sin. But very often we don't get it in one day. Let me ask you a question.

I think even those children can answer this one. You remember Esau and Jacob, the sons of Isaac? And before they were born, listen to this, before they were born, God gave a promise that there'll be twins there, but one will come out a little before the other, so he's the elder. Who was that? Esau.

And God said the elder will serve the younger. God said that before they were born. And God's promise was that the birthright should go to the younger, because the elder has to serve him.

Jacob knew that from the time he was a little boy, his mother told him, you know, God said to me, Esau, your elder brother will serve you. The birthright is yours. And I can imagine that their mother must have told that to him a hundred times.

God wants you to have the birthright. And yet, one day, when Isaac, his father, decided, today I'm going to give the birthright, and the mother heard Isaac tell Esau, go and bring some killer deer and bring its meat to me. I really like that.

Bring it to me and I'll give you the blessing. The mother got into a panic. Jacob got into a panic.

And Jacob was not a little kid. He was at least 40 years old by then. And they said, we better scheme.

If he don't grab something quickly, we won't get it. We better grab quickly. Otherwise, Esau will get it.

In other words, Esau is more powerful than God, right? That's what they believed. And so they schemed, and they planned, and they deceived, and did all types of things to get what they wanted. You think believers don't do these things? I've seen in my own life, believers scheme, and plan, and deceive, and tell half-truths.

Why? To get something. It may be the will of God, but the way they're getting it is not the will of God. The way they're doing it is not the will of God.

The time they're getting it is not the will of God. There are young men who want to marry a young woman. They say, if I don't grab her quickly, somebody else will get her.

They scheme, plan, deceive, and get her. Maybe it was God's will, but that was not the way to get it. They've ruined their life.

How many years of their life? Jacob lost 20 years of his life because he got it the wrong way. And you know, you can use a lot of what God wants you to have when you grab before God's time. That's why I said, remember Acts 1-7.

It is not for you to know the time. That is in God's hand. Trust Him.

He won't let you down. How can, if Jacob had said to God, and supposing Jacob had told him, even if his mother told him, hey, let's do something. Let's cheat our dad, and fool him, and deceive him, and get what we want.

Otherwise, we'll miss it. Supposing he had said, no mom, God's almighty. He's on the throne.

He's in control. He can give me what I want at the right time. He who said before I was born that I would get the birthright, I will trust Him to give me the birthright.

Do you think God could have given it or not? Yes or no? Yes or no? Now, all of you who said yes, remember that when your time comes, okay? Remember that when your time comes. God can do it if He's promised you. We can trust Him to do it, because how would God have done it? I don't know.

As if I have to give ideas to God how to do things. But the Bible says the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord. He can turn it wherever he wills.

And I'm sure Isaac's mind was in the hand of the Lord, and God could have changed Isaac's mind. And delayed, he saw, like he kept all the fish one day away from the lake of Galilee, he could have kept all the deer away that day. Do you think God could have done that? Sure.

And God could have made Isaac think, something's wrong here. God didn't bring a deer. That means, remember what God told you 40 years ago.

You've got to give the blessing to Jacob. And He would have given the blessing to Jacob. Without Jacob deceiving, cheating, lying, He would have got it the good way.

I believe God wants us to have wonderful things in life. The Bible says, if you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask Him? If you believe that, can't you trust Him? Can't you trust Him to give you the best at the right time, without your grabbing, without your scheming, without your deceiving, without your having to tell lies, without your having to, you know, do so many things and ruin your own life? God says, I could give it to you in a better way. You wouldn't trust Me.

Your faith had no patience in it. And therefore, it was not real faith. Real faith always has patience.

If you believe that God can give you, even if somebody grabs something from you, God can give it back to you. You remember once, you read in Luke chapter 12, a man came to Jesus and said, tell my brother to divide the property with me. My father is dead.

We're only two brothers. I should get 50 percent. He should get 50 percent.

But the fellows grabbed the whole thing. What did Jesus say? He said, I didn't come here to divide property. No.

Let him have it. Let him have 100 percent. What God wants you to have, you'll have.

If that man had trusted God, God's righteousness demands that I should get 50 percent. Because my dad died and we were only two brothers. But that chap has grabbed the whole thing.

But God, there must be a very good reason why you have allowed him to do it. I trust you. Let him have it.

What? God can do amazing things. God can kill him and you get 100 percent. Don't you think God can do that? Or God may know that if you get that 50 percent, you'll get so taken up with your money and your business that you'll go to hell.

You'll get taken up with your money. God saves you from that. There could be many, many reasons.

I'm just mentioning two of them. Why God did not allow that man to get his 50 percent share at that time. It was a test of faith.

And God will test your faith in different situations where he's going to see whether you can trust him there or whether your faith is only on Sunday morning in CFC and not in daily life. I want to tell you this. If your faith is only here on Sunday morning, it's not faith at all.

It's a deception. It's a whitewash. Let me turn you to Genesis in chapter 13.

Here is an example of another man, the man we first read of, Abraham. It says here there was strife, verse 7, between Abraham's servants and Lot's servants, verse 6 and 7, chapter 13 of Genesis. There's a very interesting statement here, the last part of verse 7. It appears as though it has got no connection.

What's the connection between that last sentence, the Canaanites and the Perizzites were dwelling in the land What's that got to do with the context of the story? It's got to do with the fact that these two people who talked about God were fighting with each other and the heathen were watching. That's the point. It's exactly what's happening in the world today.

Christians are fighting with each other and the Canaanites and Perizzites are watching this whole thing. And Abraham, who was the senior man, the godly man, this chap who was his nephew, who had no business to come with him, first of all, God called only Abraham. He could have many reasons why he could have said, listen Lot, I'm senior, I'm your uncle, and I'm the one whom God called, you've got no business to be here, and so you find some other place.

That is the legal thing. If Abraham had gone to court, that's what any judge would have said. That's not what a godly man does.

A godly man does not go by the rules of law. He gives up his rights. And he told Lot, let there be no strife.

He says, we are brothers. He doesn't say, you're my nephew, I'm your uncle. No, he says we are brothers.

So, isn't the whole land in front of you? You choose first. You go to the left, I'll go to the right. If you go to the right, I'll go to the left.

So, you see, he allowed Lot to choose first. Now, imagine if Lot did choose first, he would naturally choose the best part of the land, and Abraham would get the worst part. Isn't that how it is? You allow a selfish person to choose first, he's going to get the best part of the land.

And Abraham said, that's fine. That's faith. What God wants me to have, I'll get.

Even if Lot grabs it, I'll get it. I will not grab. I will wait.

I want to say to all of you who are impatient, who want things quickly, immediately, if you don't get rid of that way of life, you'll never get God's best in your life in anything. You've already probably missed many, many things, because you read these stories, but you don't practice them. God gave you an opportunity to practice them, and you would not practice them, because you were in a hurry.

Abraham could wait. And Lot took the best of the land. It says, Lot lifted up his eyes and took the best.

There's a lovely verse in verse 11. You notice that? The mark of a man of the world. Lots of believers live like this.

Lot chose for himself. God chose for Abraham. You got it? Lot chose for himself.

Abraham allowed God to choose for him. Lot decided when he wants his property. Abraham decided that God will decide when he should have the property.

So, Lot took the property and left. It says, the Lord said to Abraham, verse 14, Okay, Abraham. I saw exactly what happened.

Lot didn't know that I was watching, but I was watching. And do you know, my brother and sister, when you grabbed something, when you were in a hurry somewhere, God was watching. You didn't know he was watching, but God was watching.

God told Abraham, now lift up your eyes, and you can look north, south, east, west. This whole land, I'll give to you and your descendants. Now, I'll tell you something, Abraham did not get it in his lifetime.

But he was willing to wait. He lived nearly another 100 years, till he was 175 when he died. And he never got it.

But he died trusting that God would give it to his children. I'm not surprised that God blessed a man like Abraham. And I'm not surprised that God doesn't bless many believers like that today.

Because they don't have faith. They don't believe in God's timing. They believe in their own timing.

Are you like that? Are you in a hurry to get instant answers to your prayer? You can't wait? For God to give you in his own time, in his own way, the very best. Whatever you grab will always be second best. I'll tell you that.

Or tenth best. What you wait for God to give you will be his best. You can get many things if you don't wait for God.

The world is full of people who are always grabbing, left, right and center. They're grabbing, grabbing, grabbing, grabbing. They violate every law of God and grab, and grab, and grab, and grab, and grab.

And they suffer. And when believers grab and suffer, and they suffer, then they'll come and say, Brother, please pray for me. We are in suffering.

Well, how did that suffering come? It came because you were grabbing. And so we see here an example of one who waited and he was not ashamed. Because God gave him what he waited for.

That's how it is always in Scripture. We read about David. Samuel came one day and knowing to them, we read with oil and said, You are the king.

God has given up on Saul. And do you know how old David was at that time? Probably around 20. We don't know.

His age is not given. 17 years, 20 years. And do you know how long he had to wait? After he was anointed to get the king, to become king.

10 years. And during those 10 years, you read in 1 Samuel, you take time to read it sometime. There were many opportunities he had to grab the throne.

There were times when King Saul lay in the cave in front of him and his soldier said, This is God. God's given you the opportunity. Kill him.

He said, No. I'll never do it. I will not go against God's principles.

Of course, he could have grabbed like Jacob. He could have violated God's laws and grabbed and killed Saul and become king. But he would have become king before he had finished his education.

He needed 10 years of spiritual education before he became king. Do you know that God knows the right time when you have finished your education spiritually, when He can give you a ministry? You try to grab a ministry like a lot of people have tried before God's time. That would be exactly like David killing Saul saying, God's anointed me.

There are people who have done that, made a mess of their life. We read that Joseph had visions of God when he was 17. Of ministries, brothers bowing down to him.

But he had to wait 13 years before that was fulfilled. And he didn't grab. He didn't grab.

These are the men. Joseph, Abraham, David. These are the men we read about, we appreciate on Sunday morning.

Monday to Saturday, we can go and live just like any worldly person and lose out. I want to tell you, my dear brothers and sisters, I believe God had some tremendous plans for some of you. If only you had waited for God's time.

He tested you to see whether you'd wait, but you were not willing to wait. You grabbed. Okay, you got what you wanted, but you missed God's best.

And you got to repent of it now. And until you acknowledge your sin and acknowledge, Lord, I did something wrong. I never waited for you.

I was impatient. I was in a hurry. I repent of it.

I'll tell you, you'll never have what God wanted you to have because you don't acknowledge your sin. You keep justifying what you did. Oh, but that was God's will.

Well, it was God's will for David to be king. It was God's will for Joseph to have his brothers bow down to him. But the time, the times are in God's hand.

The time when you were supposed to have something was in God's hand. Some of you are in a hurry to get married. How do you know you're ready to be married? How do you know you're ready to be a father? Maybe you need five more years to be ready to be a father or a mother.

But you're in a hurry. What's the result? Maybe you'll have children who'll grow up to be godless because you were in a hurry to be a father or a mother. You want to get married before God's time.

Don't be stupid. Don't be foolish. I'm not sure all of you are going to listen to me because that impatience that is in your flesh may be more powerful than the voice of the Holy Spirit in your conscience.

Then I can only feel sorry for you. But those who have years to hear and who don't practice their faith only on Sunday morning and who practice it Monday through Saturday, who have years to hear, let me tell you, you'll never miss God's best if you wait for God. You don't have to grab.

You don't have to fight. You don't have to do any such thing. Just trust in the Lord.

He will do everything at the proper time. He can do miracles. He can do miracles.

You need never, never, never be afraid that if you wait on God, you'll miss what He has. God's timetable is always perfect. Everything runs on time.

There's a beautiful expression in Galatians 4 which says, in the fullness of time, God sent His Son. Galatians 4, 6 I think it is. In the fullness of time, verse 4 or 6 anyway, that means at the perfect time God sent His Son.

He wasn't one minute late. He arrived exactly on time. Mary had delivery pains exactly at the right time when no room was available in the hotel.

You know, if Mary had delivery pains one week later, she probably would have got a room in a hotel because some people would have vacated who had come for the census. They'd given their names and

gone. But then the Son of God would have been born in a good room.

But that was not the will of God. The will of God was the Son of God must be born in a cowshed. Why? Because He has come to serve all men and no human being I've ever heard of in my life was ever born in a cowshed, not even those in the slums.

So God arranged that Mary would have delivery pains when there was no room available anywhere in Bethlehem. That was the perfect time. God is never late.

He's never early. I thank God for the assurance God's given me in that. I remember, I'll give you one or two examples from my own life.

On the 6th of May, 1964, God spoke to my heart and said that I was to leave my job in the Navy. It was very clear. And I was on leave.

As soon as I went back to work, I put in my resignation. And I said, Dear sir, the Lord Jesus Christ has called me to serve Him. So I cannot serve the country anymore in the Navy.

I have to leave. Went up to naval headquarters. They probably laughed at it and sent it back, rejected.

Okay, what do I do? I waited. I asked the Lord, Lord, what shall I do? And the Lord said, What did Moses do when Pharaoh said no? Went back again. So I went back again.

Let my people go, that they may serve me. And I went back again. And two years later, God released me.

You know what people told me in those two years? Brother Zach, why don't you say you're sick? Get released on compassionate grounds. Why don't you use the influence of some MP or something like that? I said, No, I don't have to say I'm sick because I'm not sick. How can I say I'm sick? Now I don't want to tell a lie in order to go out and serve God.

I don't want to say my mother is dying or anything like that. All this rubbish people say, you know, to get something done. They tell lies to take leave.

And yeah, yeah, yeah. You take leave by telling a lie. You'll be out of the will of God.

I'll tell you that. And use human influence to manipulate. I may have succeeded, but I would have left the Navy before God's dying.

And then I would not have been ready to serve the Lord. God knew I was not ready. So he kept me waiting two more years.

And I'm sure I learned a lot of lessons in those two years, which I would not have learned otherwise. So I waited. And I don't regret it today.

I knew the exact in the fullness of time. I didn't have to tell a lie. I didn't have to cheat.

I didn't have to deceive. I remember when our somebody suggested our marriage proposal for me with Annie and we met and decided to get married. Her father said, I'll never let you marry that man.

He doesn't have a job. He doesn't have a salary. And I don't blame him.

Will you let your daughter marry a person who's got no salary, no job? Before you criticize someone, I'd like to see the person who allows his daughter to marry someone who's got no job and salary. I said, OK, let's trust God. That's what I told her.

I said, let's trust God. Is God almighty or not? We'll wait. We had to wait 10 years.

We wait 10 years. I never went to meet him. He never saw me.

I never saw him. Three months later, without seeing me, without seeing him, he said, OK. Who was that? I didn't suddenly get a job.

I was still jobless, salary-less. Not jobless. I was serving the Lord.

Best job of all. But humanly speaking, salary-less, yes. God, at the right time, that delay was necessary.

So we waited some eight months or nearly a year before we finally got married. It's OK. What's there if you get married and married one year later? What do we lose today? God is the time and season is God's.

Don't ever forget that. I remember when we got married, we didn't have money to rent a house. We were much poorer than all of the people whose marriages I've conducted in CFC all these years.

It was good for us. Of course, I could have done what a lot of people do today, borrow money. But I knew if I borrow money, I'm violating the Word of God, which says, O no man anything.

So I will not borrow money, leave alone to build a house. I won't borrow money even to rent a house. I'd say, God, when you decide that I can have a house, you'll give it to me.

Not when I decide. And I waited. I got a house about four years after I got married.

It's fine. We lived in one room for about two years, ten feet by ten feet. What did we suffer? Physically, yes.

But look at the lessons we learned. I don't believe I would have had a ministry today if I hadn't gone through those lessons I learned in those two, three years. If I had violated God's laws and chosen comfort, I'd have got comfort, but no ministry like a lot of you.

My brothers and sisters, it's not worth it, violating God's laws. God tests you to see whether you'll be patient, whether you tremble at His word. Oh God, I'd like to have ministry.

Sure, God wants to give you a ministry too, but you've got to tremble at His word first. You can't just do what you like and have a ministry from God. Impossible.

That's what a lot of preachers out there in the world are trying to do and they don't succeed. Have we learned it in CFC after all these years that if you want God's best in your life, you must tremble at God's word. You must accept limitation.

Do you want to come to a place of abundance and spiritual wealth? Shall I show you the route to it? You really want to see the route? How many, if I ask you, how many of you want to come to a place of spiritual abundance, overflowing rivers, wealthy, spiritually placed? All of us will raise our hand. Now, by the time I've showed you the route, I don't know how many will raise their hands. I'll show you the route.

Psalm 66, David says, here's the destination. Last part of verse 12, you brought us into a place of abundance. That's where David finally ended.

I can testify to that. God's brought me to a place of abundance, spiritually. That word in the Hebrew language is the word which is used in only one other place in the Old Testament.

It's where David says in Psalm 23, my cup runs over. That's what the same word here, place of abundance. God, you brought me to a place where the water is running out of my life.

Rivers of living water. How do you get there? Now that's the question. Here's the route.

Verse 11, verse 10, you tested us. You refined us like silver is refined in a fire. You brought us into a net.

A net means you didn't give us freedom to move. Have you seen fish in a net? And fish in the sea? You brought us into a net. You laid a burden, an oppressive burden upon our loins.

That means on my back there was a burden which never got lifted despite prayer, prayer, prayer, prayer, prayer, that burden. But it was there. You allowed men to ride over our heads.

Men trampled me, pushed me down, humiliated me, told false stories about me, crushed me, took you to court, harmed you, you went through fire and then after the fire, cold, ice cold water, back into the fire again. But in the end, you brought us into wealth and great abundance. How many want to go there? I hope we all want to go there.

It's worth it. When you get to heaven, you'll discover like we sing in the song, it was worth it all. We'll say it's worth it all when we meet Jesus.

That everything we faced on earth, it was worth it. To trust God, not to violate His laws, to tremble at His word, not to do anything contrary to His word, to trust Him that in His own time He will give me the best. You don't have to grab, you don't have to do anything.

I'll give you another example. I remember the days when we were struggling. We were getting 150 rupees a month and it went up to a little more than that.

I didn't have a house to live in. I didn't have a telephone in my house. And there was a Christian organization here in Bangalore, a very good evangelical Christian organization that told me, their foreign directors called me and said, Brother Zach, we trust you.

We want you to be the director of our organization. We'll pay you so much salary. We'll give you a free car, free house, free telephone and all this.

If you will come and sit at this desk and be the director. All I had to say was yes. And I was in real need.

And I said no. God has not called me to sit behind a desk. There's nothing wrong with this organization.

It's doing good work, but God's not called me to sit behind a desk. God's called me to preach His word. And I will not do something other than what God has called me to do.

Even if there's free house, free telephone, free car, free everything. You know, that was 30 years ago. And if I had responded to that invitation 30 years ago, I wouldn't be here.

And I would not have any ministry that God wanted me to have. I would have lived in comfort. And missed the will of God.

That's all. It was a test. Now this is not the invitation to be head of some Hindu organization.

It's a good Christian evangelical organization. They do the Lord's work. But it was not the will of God for me.

And God was testing me to see whether I would value His calling or house, telephone, car, more than that. What do you value? Do you know that God can never give you a ministry before He tests you? He tested me when I was going to leave the Navy to see whether I'd grab. He tested me when I wanted to get married to someone, whether I'd grab or wait for His time.

He tested me when I was going to have a ministry to see whether I'd grab or wait for His time. Everything. He always tests.

He tested Abraham. He tested Joseph. He tested David.

He has tested you. And He's tested me. By faith and patience, we inherit the promises.

They shall not be ashamed, says the Lord, who wait for me. And I could give you numerous instances like that in matters of family property, my family, my wife's family property. Always I've given up.

I said, take it. I don't want it. You take it.

And I've never regretted till today. Never. I'm just telling you that for your encouragement to say that many of you have missed God's best and are missing God's best because you grab.

Maybe you got it. There are a lot of people in the world who grab and get. But they get something which is either not God's will or something which is not in God's time.

That's the thing. If you... It's not only in this area of waiting for God to give us something in His time. Think of this verse.

In 2nd Timothy chapter 4, Paul says, Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. The Lord will repay him according to his deeds. When somebody does you much harm, you don't have to pretend that he did not do you much harm.

Humanly speaking, he did harm. Of course, Romans 8, 28, God made it work for good. That's another thing.

And whatever Alexander the coppersmith did to Paul, I don't know what all he did. But they caused him harm. But he left it in God's hands.

It's okay. God will repay him. I'm not going to do anything.

Has somebody done you harm like Alexander the coppersmith or any other smith, silversmith? Can you trust God to deal with that? Or are we impatient? When is the Lord going to repay Alexander the coppersmith? Probably not in his whole lifetime. Probably he hasn't still repaid Alexander the coppersmith. Paul said that's fine.

That's up to God when he is going to repay him. But one thing is sure. Anyone who harms another human being, leave alone a child of God.

Child of God is worse. If you harm another human being, one day God will repay you. He may wait two thousand years, but he'll repay you.

He will close the accounts one day. It's better to settle your accounts before you leave the earth. If you don't settle your accounts before you leave the earth, I guarantee, it's more certain than the sun rising tomorrow morning, God will repay you.

If you settle it before you leave the earth, it's settled here. If it's not settled before you leave the earth, you'll have to settle it on the day of judgment. There's no doubt about it.

If you have harmed another person in any way, maybe spoken evil about that person or that person's family members, and you've never humbled yourself and gone to that person and apologized and gone to all the people to whom you spread those scandals and apologized and withdrawn your statements. If you haven't done it, please mark my words and don't tell me in the day of judgment I didn't warn you. You will pay up because of a word of God which says in Romans chapter 12, the Lord says in Romans 12 verse 19, Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God.

For it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord. Heaven and earth will pass away, but that word will not pass away. God doesn't say, I might repay or maybe I'll repay, maybe I'll change my mind.

I will repay. If God says to me, I will give you eternal life, He will give me eternal life. If God says, I will repay, He will repay.

You can be pretty sure of one thing, that you'll see that in the day of judgment. God will keep His word. He will repay every single person who ever did harm to another person in any way, starting with Cain.

Cain got a little curse way back there in Genesis 4, but that's not the end. He's going to come up in the day of judgment in the final day and stand before God and get His final payment. He hasn't got His final paycheck yet.

Cain and a lot of other people since Cain who harmed God's people in any way, if you have touched a hair on somebody's head, you're going to get it back unless you apologize, set it right and ask God for forgiveness and ask that person for forgiveness. You can cast aside what I say, but don't forget in the day of judgment that I reminded you, you had the opportunity in your earthly life to set it right. And I say also this, my brothers and sisters, if somebody has harmed you, don't wait to try and get your own back on him.

The Bible says, never take your own revenge. Never take your own revenge. At any time.

Will you come here please? We need to teach our children to be a little more well-behaved. There are some children who are consistently badly behaved. And I find they're always the same ones.

And I want to encourage parents to please take more responsibility to discipline your children and teach them to sit properly in the house of God. So what I want to say is, never take revenge for what you have and if somebody has done to you, God will repay them at the right time. And if you leave it to God, He will do it in His own time, in His own way.

I know the times when God has said to me, when somebody has done something wrong, do you want me to deal with them or do you want to deal with them? The answer is very clear. Lord, I want you to deal with them. Why don't you let God deal with them? Why don't you forgive them? Release them.

Let them go and let God deal with them in His own time. If He's going to take 2,000 years, give Him 2,000 years. God knows the time and season is in God's hand.

He's the one who's going to decide what is the right time to deal with somebody. You are not to decide that. I'm not the one to decide that.

God is the one who decides when is the right time. And He's patient. There's a reason why He waits.

We don't know all the reasons. Maybe He's hoping that person will repent. Maybe He's giving that person a chance to set matters right.

You think He should drop dead tomorrow. God may give him 50 years of health. Health! Because only if he has health, he's got a chance to repent.

Leave it to God. Those who wait for Him will never be ashamed. I believe we are living in an age where everybody wants something immediately.

A lot of people who pray for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Let me come to that. You know what Jesus said to His disciples? In, let me read this to you.

Luke 24, verse 49. Behold, I'm sending forth the promise of My Father upon you. But you must stay in the city until you're clothed with power from on high.

You must stay in the city until Acts chapter 1 and verse 4. He told them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait. And they waited. I remember seeing a cartoon once of these disciples waiting in the upper room on the day of, you know, waiting, waiting, waiting.

And one man getting up and telling the others, listen, I've waited nine days and I've had enough. I'm going home. You fellows can wait if you want.

And he goes home. And the next day he hears that the Holy Spirit fell on all those people who were waiting. How would he feel? Why, if only I had waited for one more day.

Brothers and sisters, many of us seek for the baptism in the Holy Spirit but we're impatient. We want something in a hurry because we want the badge to tell others we also got it. And the devil knows you're in a hurry and he'll give you a counterfeit.

You go to some meeting. Some fellow will make you say blah, blah, blah. And you say you got it.

And you come home thinking you got it. You got nothing. What you got was that blah, blah, blah.

That's all. I've been to meetings like that where somebody, when I was 23 years old, some pastor told me to say whatever he wanted me to say. I said no.

Nobody taught the apostles on the day of Pentecost to say anything. They waited. I said I'm willing to wait 10 years to get the real thing.

And I had to wait 10 years. I said I don't want a cheap counterfeit. I don't want a badge.

I don't want to tell other people I got something. Do you know the multitudes of people today in the world who have missed a genuine baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire because they were in a hurry. They didn't believe.

They believed in Acts 1.8. They didn't believe in Acts 1.7. Do you want a cheap counterfeit? Do you want a cheap counterfeit gift to the Holy Spirit? The devil's got plenty. His bag's full of counterfeits. Whatever experience you want, the devil will give it to you if you want a counterfeit.

But those who wait for me, says the Lord, will never be ashamed. In every area of life, I want to say to you, my brothers and sisters, wait for God. He'll give you the best if you wait for Him.

God called the Apostle Paul on the day he rode to Damascus. Do you know when he began his ministry? God told him that day through Ananias, you're going to suffer great things. You're going to have a great ministry to the Gentiles.

Do you know how long it took for him to have that ministry? Ten years. Between Acts chapter 9 and Acts chapter 13. Ten years.

And during those ten years, he had to go three years to Arabia, the desert for three years. So, there was a time. And God's willing to wait.

And Paul was willing to wait. Unlike a lot of Christians today who jump up, they say, we are anointed. I want to have a ministry like this other brother.

They go out and make a mess of their life. Let me say to you a lesson which 20th century Christians need to learn. Wait on the Lord.

Those who wait upon the Lord will one day rise with wings like eagles, the Bible says. One last verse. Says in Proverbs in chapter 29, verse 20, on the margin of my Bible, it says, Do you see a man who is hasty in his matters? There's more hope for a fool than for him.

Solomon wrote 29 chapters in the book of Proverbs. Chapter 30 we read was written by Agur and chapter 31 was written by Lemuel. Solomon wrote the first 29 chapters.

And in 29 chapters, Solomon talks about various types of fools. This type of fool, that type of fool, the other type of fool, this type of fool, this type of fool. Before he closes his book, he says, now I will tell you the greatest fool of all.

The one who gets first prize. The man who is hasty, who can't wait for God's time. He takes the prize as the biggest fool of all.

Who speaks quickly, answers quickly, writes letters quickly, never waits, never waits. No time to wait on God. He's in a hurry.

Everything they do in a hurry. Even in the world, they have a proverb which says, Marry in haste and repent at leisure. It means that you can take your own cool time to repent because you've got all of your life for that.

Where are the Christians who have learned to wait for God? I've seen very few. I find most believers, even in our churches, are always in a desperate hurry. Determined that God must do everything for them like instant coffee.

And God does not do it. And so they get God's second best, tenth best, hundredth best, etc. in life and waste the one life God has given them.

The ministry God's given them, they miss for some cheap earthly blessing. Let me tell you this, my brother, sister. It's better not to have a house than to have a house which is not in the will of God.

It's better not to have a job than to have a job which is not in the will of God. It's better not to get married than to get married to someone who's not in the will of God. It's better not to get married too soon than to get married sooner than God's will.

In everything, wait on the Lord, honor Him. You'll never miss God's best. Let's pray.

Is it just one more message that stirs you tremendously at this moment and by tomorrow morning forgotten? Like a lot of other messages in the past. That choice is yours. Jesus says, He who has ears to hear let him hear.

Brother, sister, I want to encourage you this morning to take a decision before God. Take a decision. Say, Lord, I want your best in my life.

I repent of the various things I've done in the past where because I was in a haste, I have messed up your plan even though I don't realize it. But I don't want it to continue in the days to come. Lord, I want to wait for your time in everything.

Teach me that lesson, Lord, before I waste any more of my life, before I frustrate any more of your plan for my life, before I destroy whatever ministry you're trying to have for me. Lord Jesus, teach me to wait. How you waited in 4,000 years in heaven before you came to earth.

How you waited 30 years in Nazareth before you started your ministry. Teach me, Lord, to wait. Teach us, Lord.

We're all so impatient. We're impatient for comfort. We are impatient to satisfy our lusts.

We're impatient to do what we want to do in our time. We have no time for you. And yet we claim to be holy people.

Forgive us for our hypocrisy. For being deceivers. Help us to repent.

To show that we're no better than any worldly person. Teach us, Lord, to wait on you. Teach us never to take vengeance on anyone who has harmed us because you will repay them in your own time, in your own way.

Teach us to wait on you for the mighty power of your Holy Spirit. Never to give up seeking thirsting trusting that by faith and patience we can inherit all of your promises. Thank you, Father.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Downloaded Freely Our mailing address is Christian Fellowship Center, 40 D'Costa Square, Bangalore, 560-084-INDIA If you would like to receive a weekly message by Zach

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