

- ❖ Daniel 6:6-27
- ❖ Daniel in the lions' den
- ❖ There's a lot of waiting in this story:
 - the king is waiting in hopes that Daniel survives,
 - there's Daniel waiting for the soldiers to arrest him (while he's praying),
 - there's Daniel waiting in the den of lions,
 - Then there's Advent, the time of waiting.
- ❖ The season of Advent means simply *the season of waiting*.
 - “Advent” is simply the Latin phrase for “*that which is coming*”.
 - I suspect there are some of you out there who hate waiting as much as I do.
 - When I was a teenager, while I waited in line for movies or in the store or wherever else I had to wait,
 - I would do the math and figure out, if I had to do this waiting thing a few times a week for as long as I was standing in whatever forsaken line I was, years and years of my life would be wasted just waiting.
 - *Here's how Larson explains his estimate that some people spend 1-2 years of life in line: "My judgement is that for many Americans, especially those who commute to and from work in cars every day, that the great majority of their total queue time in life is the time in traffic congestion. The 'queueing' here is more than just time spent waiting at stop signs and traffic lights. If the speed limit of your road is 40 MPH and you can only move at 20 MPH — due to slow moving traffic, then you are losing 20 miles of travel during each hour of this slow movement. That is also queue delay. It takes you twice as long to drive while moving then it would if there is no traffic congestion. So, for instance, suppose that a home-to-work trip on a Sunday morning takes you 30 minutes. But on a working weekday it takes you 60 minutes. That corresponds to 30 minutes each day, each way, of traffic-caused queueing — 60 minutes of traffic queueing each day, or 300 minutes each week. If you make reasonable assumptions about 5 days a week of driving like this, both ways, for an entire career, then one comes up with figures of one-to-two years of your waking life spent in queues, mostly rush hour traffic queues and slowness which is equivalent to queueing."*
- ❖ Elements of waiting.
 - There's the **ennui of waiting, the human thing**.
 - It was the 1950s, and a high-rise office building in Manhattan had a problem. The tenants complained of an excessively long wait for the elevator when people arrived in the morning, took their lunch break, and left at night. Engineers examined the building and determined that nothing could be done to speed up the service.

- Desperate to keep his tenants, the building manager turned to his staff for suggestions. One employee noted that people were probably just bored and recommended installing floor-to-ceiling mirrors near the elevators, so people could look at themselves and each other while waiting. This was done, and complaints dropped to nearly zero.
 - ◆ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/11/27/what-you-hate-about-waiting-in-line-isnt-the-wait-at-all/>
 - According to MIT Prof Richard Larson
 - ◆ People will wait for a long time in a single serpentine line - first come, first serve - because it is just and right.
 - ◆ People will leave a wait with multiple lines because it does not seem fair.
 - In 1985, the Venezuelan psychologist Edgar Elías Osuna dug deep into the **psychological cost** of waiting, and after a ton of fancy math, determined that the stress of waiting could be “explained by the sense of waste the individual associates to the time spent in waiting, and by the uncertainty he may have about the time he will still have to wait.” What’s worse, he says, is that stress accumulates the longer you wait, as anyone who’s been marooned by flight delays at LaGuardia can attest. But real-time knowledge of the wait reduces “the psychological stress and anxiety” associated with a given queue.
 - <http://nymag.com/scienceofus/2016/08/why-subway-countdown-clocks-are-a-balm-for-the-soul.html>
- There's the **spiritual waiting**, trusting God, hoping for God's deliverance. Waiting with a certain acceptance of whatever the outcome will be:
- Frank Partnoy - Wait: The Art and Science of Delay
 - <https://www.brainpickings.org/2012/07/02/wait-frank-partnoy/>
 - Thinking about the role of delay is a profound and fundamental part of being human. Questions about delay are existential: the amount of time we take to reflect on decisions will define who we are. Is our mission simply to be another animal, responding to whatever stimulations we encounter? Or are we here for something more?
 - Our ability to think about delay is a central part of the human condition. It is a gift, a tool we can use to examine our lives. Life might be a race against time, but it is enriched when we rise above our instincts and stop the clock to process and understand what we are doing and why. A wise decision requires reflection, and reflection requires pause. The converse of Socrates’s famous admonition is that the examined life just might be worth living.
 - It seems to me Daniel would be just as fine with being eaten by the lions as not being touched by them. Daniel seems to have exceptional trust (V. 23).
 - Daniel trusts that God will deliver him.

- ❖ We're not waiting for comfort or even for good things to happen.
 - We are waiting for God to make God's self known for our deliverance, our union with God,
 - Waiting isn't for a good thing or a bad thing...
 - The waiting is for God's presence, God's deliverance.
 - There's the thief on the cross waiting for deliverance.
 - There's the centurion waiting for his daughter to be healed.
 - ◆ There's the waiting in Jerusalem after the death on the cross.
 - ◆ There's the waiting after the resurrection.
 - There's the waiting after prayer.
 - There's the waiting during prayer.
 - ◆ There's the waiting after personal disasters.
 - ◆ During illness. Before a diagnosis. After the diagnosis.
 - There's the waiting in the darkness of night.
 - There's waiting in the light of day
- ❖ The *key to spiritual waiting* is not a good or bad outcome.
 - The key element is waiting as Daniel waits...
 - There are *two parts to spiritual waiting*:
 - **first**, there is waiting for the information needed in order to take some sort of action;
 - What will God lead me toward?
 - How will the Holy Spirit guide me?
 - What are the signs I need to read in order to make the best decision?
 - and **second**, there is enduring suffering and hardship with an understanding which may or may not be known to us that the Holy Spirit is at work within us.
 - Both parts require a focus on God and eternity rather than the temporal.
 - In the case of the first, patience leads to good decision-making,
 - In the second, patience leads to endurance, perseverance and welcoming God's blessings in even the smallest things.
 - Trusting in the Lord in the face of the government, the illness, the disaster, the pain.
- ❖ For centuries and centuries, the Israelites reflected on the words of the Prophets and examined the history of their people, from Genesis through the Psalms, looking and speaking and preaching
 - and, of course, waiting.
- ❖ In the midst of their waiting, it became clear that the Israelites were waiting for a Messiah, a great rescuer, one who would save them from oppression, from bondage to external authorities and kingdoms, from themselves.

- Their waiting was legitimate because they had already experienced the freedom from oppression, the release from bondage and the freedom from self that God could and does provide.
 - Whether it was from Egypt or Babylon,
 - whether it was from persecution or attack,
 - they knew that God is the God who frees, the God who releases, the God who gives peace to the distressed and justice to the oppressed.
 - ◆ And so they waited.

❖ And we also wait, humanly and spiritually

- Spiritual waiting, though, has support
- Through Scripture

- **Romans 8**

- *¹⁹For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; ²⁰for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; ²³and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴For in ^{*}hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes ^{*}for what is seen?²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*

- **2 Corinthians 4-5**

- *¹⁶So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, ¹⁸because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.*
- *⁵For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling— ³if indeed, when we have taken it off^{*} we will not be found naked. ⁴For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.*

- Think of stories that require periods of agonizing waiting
 - Noah and his family waiting for the flood waters to recede

- Rahab waiting for the soldiers to rescue her and her family as Jericho collapses all around her
- The centurion waiting for his daughter to be healed.
- Martha & Mary waiting for Jesus after Lazarus died.
- Mary waiting after the Annunciation to see how things would go with Joseph and her family.



- George Fox, the founder of the Quakers. He says, *“Be patient and still in the power and still in the light that doth convince you, keep your minds unto God...If you sit still in the patience which overcomes in the power of God, there will be no flying.”*
- ❖ Daniel waits for his judgment by the king in
 - Prayer
- ❖ Daniel waits for the outcome of his time with the lions in
 - Confidence that the Lord is with him
 - Regardless of the outcome
- ❖ Daniel waits in the Spirit
- ❖ Let us enter Advent like Daniel
 - In Prayer to a loving God
 - In Hope of a saving God
 - In Confidence of a present God