

Isaiah 64:4

Look Up

November 5, 2017

Main Point: Isaiah points God's long suffering people towards the tangible hope of waiting upon a good Father. God has proven his goodness through his actions. Yet, Isaiah knows that waiting is long and hard. While we wait, we look back at what God has done in order to have confident strength to look and walk forward.

Trusting the Father in the midst of waiting. / How long, oh Lord, how long? Usually longer than you think.

SI: 63:7-64:12 are 25 verses of an intercessory prayer. This is one verse within that prayer. It is a prayer about remembering both God's goodness and their rebellion. It is a pleading for God to be merciful. Isaiah knows they deserve judgement. And so he is giving hope to God's people to persevere, to wait, to look up at God as their Father, their Redeemer, their Friend.

(*See 1 Cor 2:9 for parallel passage – not direct quote, an allusion to what the OT says.)

Intro:

*Main point, say over and over... will you wait? Will you wait for Him? Will we as a church? Will you as you ask, seek, knock? Can you ask for help in the waiting? What is hard for you to wait on?

... "When the time had fully come..." That is the answer from God of what He gives to those who wait for Him.

Story from scientists looking into the rate of ice melt in the arctic... how complex, how difficult. The enormous work of research, of digging, of seeking, of finding... but how searchable and discoverable it all is...

What is discoverable? 1) What God is like. 2) That He acts on behalf of His children 3) Waiting for Him is worth it.

1) The God-ness of God: None Other Like Him

The eye and the ear – these are what your body uses to get your attention. The senses. To sense, to feel, to know, to adjust to your surroundings, to survive, to adapt for the

sake of survival, to ascertain danger or safety. There is a longing to see, to hear of something that will not let us down, that will give us what we want.

Invitation from this text: Look up. Look up into the Heavens. It is easy to get locked into our own snow globe, our own lives and circumstances. Or, to get busy and distracted and just surviving through entertainment or work.

Speak to the longing in our hearts, in our culture...

The search for Meaning – Who are we? Ever since we turned away from God's good plan and fell for the lie of evil in the Garden of Eden, mankind has been on a search for Meaning.

The band Muse has this song (Knights of Cydonia) that says

Come ride with me
Through the veins of history
I'll show you a God
Falls asleep on the job

No one's going to take me alive
Time has come to make things right
You and I must fight for our rights
You and I must fight to survive

It's a rebellion song. Of giving up on God and taking up the mantra of self-definition. A song Isaiah would be familiar with (see v. 5) b/c of Judah's constant pattern of belief and unbelief, of trust and non-trust, of dependence and independence.

The mantra of self-definition – secularism, sexual distortion – is a search for Meaning
(See Harvest USA magazine – Cooper Pinson)

From of old, no one has heard or seen a God besides You... Isaiah recognizing and magnifying God, inviting us to look, see, investigate. What is this God like?

2) The Goodness of God: He Acts

Why do we repackage fairy tales over and over?

Why are stories so powerful in our culture?

Why do we keep telling them?

B/c God has made time and God has made memory and therefore story. Why? To awe us, to woo us, to draw us into the Great Story. And so, He acts.

Look at God > Ps 119:18 “Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in Your law.”
Why is this His goodness?

B/c we are profoundly broken and God is in the repairing business.

And so, God acts through crosses. Through sufferings, through trials, through difficulties. B/c we have fallen into death and the only way to get rid of death is that death would die. The death of death in the death of Christ.

And we have to, we personally have to go through death (s) in order to get to life, to be raised, to be born anew, to be born again, to be reborn, rebirthed.

And God continually brings crosses, sufferings into our lives to continually teach us to find our meaning in Him, not in ourselves and our own ways. To teach us to wait on Him with confident expectation.

So what can you do, what can we do to help us?

Look Back:

At how God has provided > look at creation > and look at your own life –

God protects His children

He allows them to go through pain so they know there is no end to love.

He allows them to suffer so they will cry out for help from outside.

Most of all, look at Christ > 1 John 1:1-4 – He acts in the incarnation of the Messiah – what we have seen and heard and touched. And writing so that our joy may be complete.

Trans to 3: His acting is designed to give us confidence to wait.

3) The Requirements of God: Wait For Him

This waiting for God is at the heart of Isaiah’s whole book, and one of the grand themes of the whole Bible. Waiting for salvation from a Messiah, waiting for that Messiah to deal a death blow to sin; and now waiting for the Messiah to establish His kingdom forever.

“Biblically speaking, to wait is to manifest the kind of trust that is willing to commit itself to God over the long haul. It is to continue to believe and expect when all others have given up.” - John Oswalt

What wait for Him means and what it looks like.

Time

Expectancy

Trusting Obedience

Story of writing letter to Tim Keller – “Do a good job where you are.”

Time:

Waiting really does mean waiting. Time. Ceasing to strive.

14 months >

Rom 8:23 – ‘we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we await eagerly for...the redemption of our bodies.’

Living in the “time between” – The Kingdom has come, but is yet to come.

Life in the interim creates tensions... some can’t handle it. Some will fail to wait.

Waiting tests us, and some will fall away. Don’t let it be you.

*The contrast Isaiah constantly gives between those who wait and obey and those who don’t wait and live by instinct, by reaction, by stimulus. They are slaves to their passions. But God did not give up on them (see v. 5) and Isaiah did not give up on God.

ILLUS of when a medical issue hits you – I don’t have time for this – but God says you do. You are flat on your back and cannot get up. You are forced to wait. This is a gift from God. Besides praying for you all to have a medical emergency, what else can we do? Seek out times of quiet and rest for the purpose of remembering God, and truly enjoy the Sabbath.

Waiting requires time,

Expectancy: Waiting comes with promises – Is 40:31 – all of Is. 40 –

Have you not known? Have you not heard?

The LORD is *h*the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary;

*h*is understanding is unsearchable.

²⁹ He gives power to the faint,
and to him who has no might he increases strength.

³¹ but *h*they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength;

they shall mount up with wings *m*like eagles;

they shall run and not be weary;

they shall walk and not faint.

*Isaiah 30:18 . "Therefore the LORD waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him"

Waiting requires time, expectancy, and

Trusting Obedience:

The dangers of NOT waiting directly related here – Psalm 106:13-15

But they soon forgot his works;
they did not wait for his counsel.
... and then things went bad...

Beware of forgetting the Godness of God and the goodness of God, as seen in His actions. B/c then you will easily slip into going your own way, into obeying your flesh, the world, and the devil's lies instead of God's truth.

Implications:

Worship service is an act of tangible waiting. I am going to trust that I will hear from You, Lord. I am going to wait on You. Not attending worship services is step one towards forgetting His works.

Conc: Look up again – Look to the cross.

I used to think to myself, well, it was easy for Jesus in His humanity to wait on the Lord, b/c He knew what was coming. He is omniscient, He knows everything, including what is coming next. He knew that when He was about to face crucifixion that resurrection was coming.

And yet, it was still the cross of pain, judgement, abandonment, and penalty. It was excruciating pain for Jesus as He was accomplishing our salvation. Jesus, fully human, and subject to all our human fragility, even asked if this salvation could be accomplished any other way, please Lord....

Yes, waiting is one of the crosses we have to bear.

And as you look to the cross, as you look up, as you look to Jesus, you receive grace to see – to see what? To see that you too have a resurrection coming. You can endure, even unto death, as you wait for your salvation to be accomplished in full. There is a new heaven, a new earth, and for those whose hope in Christ endures to the end, a new perfect, imperishable body. You can wait for it.

* Psalm 27:14 > Wait for the LORD;
Be strong, and let your heart take courage;
wait for the LORD!

