

“Waiting on the Lord?”

Isaiah 40:31

*But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.*

Back in the 1990's the book “All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten” was very popular. Through short stories and anecdotes, the book outlines important lessons learned during this formative time in life. If I were to write such a book, it would be titled, “All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Argentina.”

Perhaps the most important lesson I learned, and have continued to relearn since, pertains to waiting. As a very impatient person, waiting does not come easily for me. As you can imagine, all of the passages in the Psalms and elsewhere that emphasize “waiting on the Lord” have always, frankly, annoyed me. Why should we wait on the Lord? If God knows the answer and God has a solution to my prayer, why should I wait? It seems so arbitrary to my impatient self.

We did a lot of waiting in Argentina. I can remember the first time we went out to eat in a restaurant. We ordered our food, and the meals did not come for almost 2 hours (and that is not an impatient person's exaggeration!). When we did some remodeling and repair work at the church in Luis Beltran, we had to wait between each stage of the project. For example, after we had prepped the walls to put up the “mud”, I went to a local hardware store to purchase the mud. The owner told me we would need to wait, so I waited in the store for most of the morning. Just before that day's siesta, the owner inquired why I was still in the store. I told him I was waiting for the mud and he took me to a calendar to explain to me that the mud would come in several days. I learned later from Juan Sieber (a Mennonite Pastor in Argentina) that the owner would have to order it, mix it, and then would call when it was ready. No one just had mud in stock like we do at Lowes or Home Depot! The same waiting took place at each stage of the project!

What I learned is that waiting can be a blessing. When we wait, we are programmed to fuss over how much time is being wasted. But perhaps waiting can be an opportunity to slow down or even “stop and smell the roses.” Perhaps waiting creates time and spaces to pray, to deepen our fellowship with family and friends, to just simply do nothing but “be” with God and God’s people. Perhaps we are told so many times in scripture “to wait on the Lord,” because God understands that it is when we slow down that we actually draw nearer to God and one another.

I find myself doing much more waiting as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. I wait in line to get into the bank, and then wait in another line inside the bank to talk to a teller! Waiting is part of our new COVID-19 reality. Let me encourage each and every one of us to look on the waiting as an opportunity to experience a blessing, rather than a curse.

