

The Waiting Room

Big Idea: While we wait God is at work in us.

Purpose: To challenge people to see waiting as a gift.

Passage: Genesis 40-41

Opening

I Hate to Wait

-Our family visited *Disneyland* for the first time about a year and a half ago. We had a blast and made some wonderful memories. Some of my favorite rides at Disneyland were the *Incredicoaster* and *Soarin'*. Our family's favorite ride was *Big Thunder Mountain Railroad*. I bet we rode that 15 or 20 times over our week at



Disneyland. We love getting beignets and exploring Tom Sawyer's island. We didn't tire of the nightly fire work extravaganza. There is a reason people call *Disneyland* the happiest place on earth.

-What I didn't love about *Disneyland* was the waiting. There is no getting around the reality that the majority of time spent at Disneyland is spent waiting. We went offseason and I could barely handle it. I can't imagine what it is like during peak times. I don't want to know.

Because I love you and want you to flourish in life I did a little research to help you avoid the wait at *Disneyland*. **The day with the longest wait times is May 20th. The average wait per ride is 42 minutes. The day with one of the shortest wait times is January 22nd. The average wait time is 7.6 minutes.** If you don't want to spend all your time at *Disneyland* waiting, avoid December, mid-May, and July. Shoot for September and January. On average, *Space Mountain* has the longest wait times at 65 minutes. When the *Guardians of the Galaxy* ride opened in May of 2017, the average wait was 2 hours and 54 minutes. Some people waited for 5 hours. It is a 2-minute ride. We even waited for the *It's a Small World* ride. They should pay *us* to go on that ride. I'll never get that song out of my head. *Disneyland* is awesome, but the waiting is horrible.

-The best way to avoid the wait at *Disneyland* is the *Fast Pass*. A *Fast Pass* ticket for a ride gives you a time period you can return to by-pass the regular line and enter the *Fast Pass* line. There is no greater feeling than passing all those losers waiting in the regular line. There is no worse feeling than being one of losers waiting in the regular line. There is nothing to do. There is nowhere to go but one step forward every 10 minutes. *You are just waiting*. I hear *Disney* sells a *Fast Pass* that doesn't even require you to get tickets. I don't know how much it costs but it is worth every penny. ***The problem is there is no Fast Pass to life.***

-We spend a lot of our lives waiting. On average we wait 32 minutes to see our doctor. We wait 28 minutes in security at the airport. We wait 21 minutes for our significant other to get ready to go out. We wait 15 minutes for a table at a restaurant. We wait 7 minutes for a coffee. (That's well worth the wait.) We wait 13 hours each year on hold for customer service. That's about 43 days of our life on hold. We wait 50 hours each year in traffic. The average American will spend *2 years* of their life waiting in line, and *6 months* at traffic lights. Americans spend *37 billion* hours waiting in line somewhere for something each year. We spend a lot of our lives waiting.

-I hate to wait. I don't think I am alone in that sentiment. Waiting is not popular. Why? *We consider it a waste of time*. It's this wasted time between where we are and where we want to go. We live in a world of immediate gratification. We want what we want and we want it now. We don't want to wait. I didn't have the internet when I was a kid. And then we had dial-up internet. It seemed miraculous at the time. Not anymore.

The other night, our wireless stopped working, so I rebooted our modem. And then I just stood there with my laptop open watching for all the little lights on the modem to start blinking and then go solid. Even when they weren't all on, I kept trying to access the internet again and again. It felt like forever, but after 5 minutes everything was great again. Now researchers from Australia just broke the internet speed record. They perfected a method that will deliver 1,000 high definition movies in less than a second. Where do I sign up? I hate to wait.

-Today we are going to discover that we shouldn't hate waiting. We will learn that waiting is not wasted time. We may even come to see what waiting really is - ***a gift***.

Review

-We are in the 4th week of a series we are calling ***You'll Get Through This: Lessons from Joseph***. Our ***Big Read*** is a book with the same title by Max Lucado. **Joseph was the great-grandson of Abraham and Sarah, the patriarch and matriarch of the Family of Promise.** Joseph was the favored son of his father Jacob even though he was the 11th in line. Joseph was a spoiled brat. His brothers hated him and left him in a pit to die. At the last moment, they sold him as a slave. Joseph was shackled and sent to Egypt. He went from the penthouse to the pit and into slavery. It was a rough stretch for young Joe.



But Joseph ended up in the house of a powerful man who served Pharaoh. There Joseph clung to the truth that the LORD was with him. Joseph knew that ***in God's hands, intended evil becomes eventual good***. God is not the author of evil and suffering, but God can transform evil and suffering into eventual good – like a master junk-artist.

Over the next decade, God transformed Joseph from a spoiled brat into a man of character. Joseph rose through the ranks until he ran the entire household. But then Joseph caught Mrs. Potiphar's eye. She wanted to sleep with Joseph. Joseph continually refused her. In the end, she framed him and Potiphar had no choice but to send Joseph to prison. From the penthouse to the pit, to slavery, back to the penthouse, back down to prison. But Joseph continued to believe that the LORD was with him. Joseph continued to trust that God could transform evil and suffering into eventual good. God was ***using Joseph's trouble for training***. God was transforming a kid that used to be a spoiled brat into a Prime Minister who would save the world.

We pick up our story with Joseph in prison, where Joseph has once again proven himself worthy. The warden has put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners. Joseph is a prisoner in charge of prisoners.

Public reading – Genesis 40

Some time later, the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their master, the king of Egypt. ² Pharaoh was angry with his two officials, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, ³ and put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the same prison where Joseph

was confined. ⁴ The captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph, and he attended them.

After they had been in custody for some time, ⁵ each of the two men—the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were being held in prison—had a dream the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own.⁶ When Joseph came to them the next morning, he saw that they were dejected. ⁷ So he asked Pharaoh’s officials who were in custody with him in his master’s house, “Why do you look so sad today?”

⁸ “We both had dreams,” they answered, “but there is no one to interpret them.” Then Joseph said to them, “Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams.”

⁹ So the chief cupbearer told Joseph his dream. He said to him, “In my dream I saw a vine in front of me, ¹⁰ and on the vine were three branches. As soon as it budded, it blossomed, and its clusters ripened into grapes. ¹¹ Pharaoh’s cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh’s cup and put the cup in his hand.”

¹² “This is what it means,” Joseph said to him. “The three branches are three days. ¹³ Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your position, and you will put Pharaoh’s cup in his hand, just as you used to do when you were his cupbearer. ¹⁴ But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison. ¹⁵ I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon.”

¹⁶ When the chief baker saw that Joseph had given a favorable interpretation, he said to Joseph, “I too had a dream: On my head were three baskets of bread. ¹⁷ In the top basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head.”

¹⁸ “This is what it means,” Joseph said. “The three baskets are three days. ¹⁹ Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head and impale your body on a pole. And the birds will eat away your flesh.”

²⁰ Now the third day was Pharaoh’s birthday, and he gave a feast for all his officials. He lifted up the heads of the chief cupbearer and the chief baker in the presence of his officials: ²¹ He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, so that he once again put the cup into Pharaoh’s hand, ²² but he

impaled the chief baker, just as Joseph had said to them in his interpretation.

²³ The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.

Color Commentary

The Cupbearer and Baker

-Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker ended up as prisoner under Joseph's care. They were high ranking members of Pharaoh's inner circle. We don't know why they ended up in prison. We can guess that Pharaoh did not suffer fools. They each had different dreams on the same night. The next day, Joseph visited them and noticed they were sad. He wanted to know why they are sad. *Maybe because we are in prison, Joseph.* But it was more than that. They were sad because they had no one to interpret their dreams.

In the Ancient Near East, dream interpretations were a whole industry. You could major in dream interpretation in college. They had elaborate dream books they used to interpret dreams. The cupbearer and baker were sad because they didn't have any professional dream interpreters at their service.

-Joseph promptly responded: *"That's God's business."* Then he says: *"Tell me your dreams."* What Joseph is revealing is that he sees himself serving in prison on God's behalf. *Dream interpretation is God's business, but I work for God. Tell me your dreams.* It is a remarkable testimony to the fact that Joseph knows God is with him and that God is using him even in prison.

-The cupbearer goes first: *There were 3 vines with grapes. I squeezed the grapes into Pharaoh's cup and put it in his hand.* Joseph's response: *that's an easy one. Pharaoh will restore you to your position as cupbearer in 3 days.*

Remember me as I have been unjustly enslaved and imprisoned. And the cupbearer replied: *You got it buddy!*

-Now the chief baker chimes in: *I love this game. I'm next. There were three baskets of bread for Pharaoh on top of my head. But birds started eating out of the baskets.* Joseph tells him: *I have bad news and bad news, which do you want first? He tells the baker that in 3 days he will be impaled on a pole and eaten by birds.* (I guess Pharaoh was going with a low carb diet. That's not a funny joke.) The baker was likely implicated in a plot to kill Pharaoh. Unless Pharaoh was trying to go gluten free. (Again, not a funny joke. Note that the tech crew is laughing.)

-3 days later, Joseph was proven right on both counts. But the narrator tells us that *the cupbearer forgot Joseph*. **But God had not forgotten Joseph.**

Chapter 41 fast-forwards 2 years. Now Pharaoh has a dream. He is standing by the Nile. 7 fat cows emerge from the water and start to graze. Then 7 lean cows emerge from the water and eat the 7 fat cows. I am not sure how, but Pharaoh goes back to sleep. He has another dream. In this dream 7 thin and withering stalks of grain devour 7 healthy and robust stalks of grain. He wakes up and is troubled. He sends for the best dream professionals in the land. They scour their dream books and nada; nothing.

Then the cupbearer finally remembers Joseph. It only took him two years. Pharaoh sends for Joseph. Let's pick up the story in Chapter 41, Verse 14.

-So Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was quickly brought from the dungeon. When he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came before Pharaoh. ¹⁵ Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it." ¹⁶ "I cannot do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."

¹⁷ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "In my dream I was standing on the bank of the Nile, ¹⁸ when out of the river there came up seven cows, fat and sleek, and they grazed among the reeds. ¹⁹ After them, seven other cows came up—scrawny and very ugly and lean. I had never seen such ugly cows in all the land of Egypt. ²⁰ The lean, ugly cows ate up the seven fat cows that came up first. ²¹ But even after they ate them, no one could tell that they had done so; they looked just as ugly as before. Then I woke up."

²⁸ "It is just as I said to Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁹ Seven years of great abundance are coming throughout the land of Egypt, ³⁰ but seven years of famine will follow them. Then all the abundance in Egypt will be forgotten, and the famine will ravage the land. ³¹ The abundance in the land will not be remembered, because the famine that follows it will be so severe. ³² The reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by God, and God will do it soon.

³³ "And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt. ³⁴ Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven

years of abundance. ³⁵ They should collect all the food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh, to be kept in the cities for food. ³⁶ This food should be held in reserve for the country, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine.”

³⁷ The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials. ³⁸ So Pharaoh asked them, “Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?” ³⁹ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. ⁴⁰ You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.” (Genesis 41:14-21,28-40)

The Comeback Story

-Imagine going from a prison cell to standing before the President and being asked to do him or her a favor. It had to be disorienting for Joseph. But Joseph doesn't seem to miss a beat. Pharaoh explains the situation and says that he heard Joseph might be able to interpret his dreams. Joseph tells Pharaoh: *I can't do it but I work for someone who can.* This would have been a natural opportunity to toot his own horn, but Joseph deflects all the praise to God.

-Pharaoh explains his dreams. Joseph says: *That's easy. God is giving you a heads up to what is coming. Egypt will experience 7 years of abundant crops followed by 7 years of famine.* This would be akin to having 7 years of incredible economic growth and an exploding stock market, followed by 7 years of the great depression.

Joseph then goes from dream interpreter to advisor, even though he wasn't asked to do so. It was a risky move. He was a Hebrew slave imprisoned for attempted rape standing before the most powerful man in the world. But Joseph didn't care about any of that. Joseph *knows* the LORD is with him. Joseph provides Pharaoh with wise advice. He tells Pharaoh to look for a wise and discerning leader who would store away grain during the years of abundance so that Egypt and surrounding countries would be able to survive the years of famine.

-Pharaoh asked the obvious question: *How about you? I am surrounded by fools. You seem like a wise and discerning young man.* I don't think Joseph

was angling for this in any way. As much as Joseph trusted that God was using his trouble for training, he could not in his wildest dreams imagine that God was using his training to prepare him for this. Pharaoh also made the remarkable observation that he had not met anyone who evidenced the presence of the Spirit of God like Joseph.

Pharaoh sees God in Joseph. That's because Joseph wouldn't shut up about God. Joseph references God four times in his conversation with Pharaoh. Then, just like Potiphar's house, and just like in prison, Pharaoh elevates Joseph to be over the entire Kingdom. *As we learn to be faithful in small things God will often provide us with greater opportunities.* The only one above him is Pharaoh.

-The story goes on to tell us that Pharaoh gave Joseph his signet ring. This meant Joseph spoke with the authority of Pharaoh. Joseph was given fine clothes, a huge house, whatever food and beverage he wanted, and a chariot. Joseph got married and had children and led the nation with wisdom and discernment. At age 30, he was on top of the world. Most importantly, God had prepared him to save Egypt and save his family, which keeps the hope of a Savior alive and well.

-So far in our story, Joseph has endured broken promises, betrayals, hatred, abduction, abuse, slavery, sexual assault, and imprisonment. In God's hands, intended evil became eventual good again and again. The LORD never left Joseph's side. God uses this trouble for training.

Remember our Proverb from last week? *A righteous man falls 7 times but always rises again.* This is the greatest comeback story of all time. The rising Phoenix had nothing on Joseph. What is true of Joseph is true of you and true of me.

This world is God's waiting room.

-Embedded in these somewhat odd scenes of dreams about wine and bread and cows eating cows is an important spiritual truth. These scenes, and really the entire story of Joseph, remind us of the *value* and *necessity* of waiting. You probably don't want to hear it. I definitely don't want to hear it because we hate to wait.

-Waiting was certainly a hallmark of Joseph's life. We can read the account of Joseph's life in Genesis in less than an hour. That gives us the false impression

of a rapidly moving story. In reality, the 13 chapters in Genesis encompass several decades.

Joseph sat in that cistern for days, baking in the hot sun, crying out for relief and only getting the mocking laughter of his brothers as a response. Joseph waited. We are told in one brief line that Joseph was sold into slavery and taken down to Egypt. Joseph walked those *750 miles* with shackles around his throat and his wrists and his feet. Joseph waited. Then more days and weeks passed as he sat on the auction block with people poking at him like he was nothing more than an animal. Joseph waited.

Finally, he is sold to Potiphar and thrown into the field. In one brief paragraph we are told he was eventually elevated. This did not happen overnight. It took years of ridicule and abuse and faithfulness and learning Egyptian. Joseph waited. Joseph sat for years in a prison cell for something he didn't do. Joseph waited.

We are told Joseph was 30 when he was elevated by Pharaoh. This means it was 13 years between the pit and becoming Prime Minister. **13 years**. We see that acutely in our story today. The cupbearer promised to remember Joseph. We can envision Joseph going back to his cell and packing his meager belongings and telling his fellow inmates - *I'm getting early release*. And then a day passed, then two days, then a month, then two years. 24 months of waiting in prison. That's over 2,190 prison meals. That's 104 weeks - 730 days - 17,520 hours of waiting. I would have gotten bitter and given up. I would have thought God had abandoned me. Not Joseph. **Joseph was an expert at waiting. It seems that most of God's faithful servants are experts at waiting.**

-As I illustrated at the top of the message, we spend most of our life in a posture of waiting. This has always been true of God's people. **Abraham and Sarah** had to wait until they were old and gray to hold their promised boy. **Noah** spent time waiting for a flood after he had built a boat in the desert. He then waited for the flood to disappear. **Moses** spent 40 years in the desert shepherding sheep until God called him to set his people free. **Jacob** waited for Rachel. Then **Rachel** waited for children. **David** was anointed as King and then waited 15 years for it to happen. He spent most of that time running for his life from Saul. That period produced many of our laments in the Psalter. The **Babylonian exiles** waited 70 years. **Jeremiah** and **most of the prophets** waited for God's people to repent.

Simeon and **Anna** waited for baby Jesus. The **man by the pool** and the **bleeding woman** waited decades to be healed. The **disciples** waited for the Spirit. **Paul** had his dramatic conversion on the Damascus road and then spent 10 years back in his hometown making tents before he planted his first church. **Israel** waited for her Messiah. The **church** waits for the return of Jesus and Kingdom come. **Creation itself** is said to be waiting in eager expectation for redemption. ***In Scripture there is no fast pass.***

-On average, we spend 32 minutes in waiting rooms, waiting for our medical professionals to see us. Almost all of us know what it is like to sit in a waiting room. Sometimes we are sitting in that waiting room in pain, eager to see the doctor so we can get some relief. Sometimes we are sitting in that waiting room anticipating the results of a key test that will forever shape our lives. Sometimes we are sitting in the waiting room waiting for word on someone we dearly love. Will they be o.k.? Will they make it? Waiting rooms can be challenging places. Max proposes that this world is God's waiting room.

-We don't like to wait. We are the giddyup generation. We weave through traffic, looking for the faster lane. We frown at the person who takes eleven items into the ten-item express checkout. We drum our fingers while the song downloads or the microwave heats our coffee. "Come on, come on." We want six-pack abs in ten minutes and minute rice in thirty seconds. We don't like to wait. Not on the doctor, the traffic, or the pizza.

*Not on God? Take a moment and look around you. Do you realize where we sit? This planet is **God's waiting room**. The young couple in the corner? Waiting to get pregnant. The fellow with the briefcase? He has résumés all over the country, waiting on work. The elderly woman with the cane? A widow. Been waiting a year for one tearless day.*

Waiting. Waiting on God to give, help, heal. Waiting on God to come. We indwell the land betwixt prayer offered and prayer answered. The land of waiting. If anyone knew the furniture of God's waiting room, Joseph did. (Max Lucado, You'll Get Through This)

Life Lessons

Waiting is not wasted time. It is sacred space.

-In this life, waiting is our primary posture. We spend most of our lives, and most of our spiritual journey, waiting. And we hate it.

The Houston airport had a lot of complaints about how long people had to wait for baggage. They cut the wait to 8 minutes, which is the national average, but people still complained. Administrators dug deeper into the details and discovered that most customers had a one-minute walk to baggage claim and then spent the vast majority of their wait standing idle beside the luggage carousel. Then someone had a brilliant idea.

They moved the arrival gates away from the main terminal and routed all the luggage to the outermost carousel, which meant that a one-minute walk turned into a much longer journey. By the time people walked all that way, their luggage was waiting for them. The complaints disappeared.

We would rather journey 4 times the distance than wait. That's how much we hate waiting. We generally hate to wait because we think waiting is wasted time. But the story of Joseph is meant to change our minds about waiting. Through the story of Joseph, we learn that ***waiting is not wasted time. It is sacred space.***

-Waiting is a huge theme in Scripture. There is no one word in Hebrew or Greek for *wait*. Multiple words are used to express the idea. In Scripture, the ideas of *waiting* and *hoping* are intertwined. They are used interchangeably. To wait is to hope. To hope is to wait. Hope is the act of waiting. With that in mind we could have called our church New Wait but New Hope had a better ring to it. I define ***waiting*** as ***hoping in something or someone***. In Scripture, waiting is almost always waiting on *someone*. **That someone is God.**

-We learn from the story of Joseph, and from the testimony of Scripture, that waiting is a not a curse. **Waiting is a gift.** Because it is a gift, we are commanded in numerous places to *wait on the LORD*. It is commanded because most of us hate waiting. We think it is wasted time. But Scripture tells us it is not wasted time. It is sacred space.

Scripture is filled with this concept of waiting on the LORD as a gift: Psalm 25:3, 27:14, 37:9, 39:7, 40:1, 62, 130:5-8; Lam. 3:22-26; Micah 7:7; Isaiah 8:17, 30:18, 33:2, 40.

*-I **wait** for the LORD, my whole being **waits**, and in his word I put my **hope**. ⁶ I **wait** for the Lord more than watchmen **wait** for the morning, more than watchmen **wait** for the morning. Israel, put your **hope** in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. ⁸ He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.*
(Psalm 130:5-8)

This fusion of *waiting* and *hope* is carried over into the English language as well. Our word for *wait* comes from the Old English word for *watch* or *watchmen*, clearly reflecting the psalmist's prayer.

-We hate to wait. We think it is wasted time. But the story of Joseph and the chorus of Scripture are clear that waiting time is not wasted time. It is sacred space. How is waiting sacred space?

While we wait, God is at work in us.

-*While we wait God is at work in us.* We hate waiting because we think nothing is happening and nothing is getting done. This is simply not true. While we wait God, is at work in us. Some of God's best work in us happens while we are waiting.

-When I am in a waiting room, I often take time to look around and see what is on the walls. Waiting rooms often have calming pictures of nature or some encouraging sayings, displayed because most people are anxious and restless. In God's waiting room, we look around and see His promises displayed on the wall. They are reminders that waiting is a sacred space where God is at work in us. Our eyes look up and are met with this promise from the prophet Isaiah.

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. ²⁹ He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. ³⁰ Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; ³¹ but those 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.
(Isaiah 40:28-31, NRSV)

We think that when we are at the end of our rope, when we are in a pit, in chains on the way to Egypt, unjustly thrown in prison, when we are in the waiting room, that it is a waste of time. We think God is nowhere to be found

and can't possibly be working on our behalf. The truth is that God is at work within us. When we wait for the LORD, we are strengthened; we are trained and developed, God transforms evil and suffering into good.

-We turn our heads in the other direction and we see this promise on the walls of God's waiting room - *be still, and know that I am God...*(Psalm 46:10a) In its most native form, the Hebrew verb translated as **be still** means to **relax your grip**. Most of us navigate our days gripping the steering wheel of our lives. The Psalmist is telling us - *loosen your grip, let go, relax, be still*. Our natural response is - If I do that, then nothing will happen. *The story of Joseph reminds us that when we are in the waiting room, when we are put in the position of waiting, God is at work in us. Waiting is not wasted time. It is sacred space.*

-As we wait, we are forced to look outside of ourselves. As we wait, we more readily acknowledge and embrace the redemptive presence of God that dogs our every step. As we wait, we are reminded that we are really not in control, nor should we be. As we wait, we recognize that God is the master junk-artist working overtime to use our trouble to train us and to transform the evil and suffering we experience into eventual good.

-We see this on full display in the life of Joseph. In 13 years, he was transformed from a narcissistic spoiled brat to a God-fearing man of character. He went from being a whinny teenager playing video games all day to being the 2nd most powerful man in the world. He went from errand boy to the man who would save the world. Over those 13 years of transformation, Joseph was waiting on the LORD almost the entire time. *While we wait God is at work in us.*

-Are you in God's waiting room today? Are you presently in a position where you are stuck and don't know what to do? Are you in a pit, on the way to Egypt, sitting in a prison cell? Take heart. It is not wasted time. It is sacred space. God is at work in you. When we are in the waiting room we often ask God "Why?" God doesn't answer many *why* questions. Instead of asking *why?*, ask *what?* **God, what are you going to do in and through me during this season of waiting?** Instead of always asking God to change our circumstances, let's ask him to change us. The next time you are forced to stop and wait, see it as a gift. Instead of hating it, embrace it, knowing God is at work in you.

Closing

We are not meant to wait passively.

-One of the great misconceptions about waiting is that waiting means ***passivity***. That is not Biblical waiting. **We are not meant to wait passively.** We see that in Joseph. He didn't sit around in Potiphar's house licking his wounds and feeling sorry for himself. As he waited on the LORD, he worked in confident expectation that God would get him through this and that God was preparing him for what was next.

We saw the same thing in Anthony Ray Hinton last week. He didn't sit around on death row feeling sorry for himself. He became the prison chaplain and started book clubs for the KKK. While he waited on the LORD, he worked in confident expectation that God would get him through this and that God was preparing him for what was next.

-Someone once asked Anthony what he would like to ask God. He didn't miss a beat. He said he would ask God, "*What took you so long?*" It is a humorous, heartfelt, and wholly Biblical response. We see this question on the lips of Psalmists and Prophets and finally on the lips of the chorus of the martyred in Revelation - "*How long, O LORD?*" It is a worthy question.

-As we wait for the LORD, as we wait for Kingdom come and for all things to be made right, as we wait for our own hearts to be made fully right, we pray and we live in confident expectation of that inevitable day. Come, LORD Jesus.

Benediction

-Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. ²³ They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ²⁴ I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore, I will wait for him. (Lamentations 3:22-24)