

Devotion – Week of February 20, 2022

Rev. Jeanne Simpson

I'm not known for being patient when it comes to waiting. And in today's culture, with all its instant electronic forms of communication, most of us aren't very patient either. We get really irritated when we're told that the average wait time for a representative on the phone is 20 minutes, or even 5 minutes. We prefer to microwave rather than bake. We prefer to fly rather than drive. We prefer to pay online rather than via snail mail with a check. Just text me, for heaven's sake, rather than calling me. I haven't got time for long conversations. I've got to keep my prime membership current at Amazon so I can my stuff in two days. We're obsessed with shortening wait times. But what if we cared less about that and paid more attention to what we're waiting for?

In the Bible, waiting always involves hope. The Hebrew word for hope is "tiqvah," and the root of that word, "qavah," means hope. To hope for something is always related to waiting for it to happen. A perfect example is Psalm 62:5 – "For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him." Abraham and Sarah wait for a child. The slaves in Egypt wait for freedom. The exiles in Babylon wait for God to bring them home. And they all have hope that the child, freedom, and homecoming will happen – because God will make it so. Most of what we really need (not what we really want) requires us to wait. Life isn't about instant gratification. It's about the richness of a slowly cooking stew.

Hope in the Bible isn't just wishful thinking. It's really about trust. We attach our waiting to the hope that God hears us. We believe God will set things right. We may have to wait a while, but our faith is grounded in the belief that our hope is not in vain. Isaiah 25 says this:

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines,
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.

And he will destroy on this mountain
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
the sheet that is spread over all nations;
he will swallow up death forever.

Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces,
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the Lord has spoken.

It will be said on that day,
Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that
This is the Lord for whom we have waited;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

So in these days when we wait – not just for someone to answer the phone, but for the end of COVID, for the end of war, for the end of injustice – we can be reminded that we always wait with hope. Because God WILL wipe away our tears, he WILL take away our doubts, he WILL save us. Let us be glad as we wait with that hope.

Jeanne