

09.02.20 – A Re-Imagining Church Weekly Word for Covenant Church

Title: Hurry Up and Wait

Scripture Reading: [Luke 2:22-32](#)

Reflection: Pastor Amy Schenkel

Leonard Sweet, in his book *Nudge*, recounts a conversation he had with Ross Perot's 1992 running mate, James Stockdale, a war hero and vice admiral, about his time in a Vietnamese POW camp:

"I never lost faith in the end of the story," Stockdale said. "I never doubted not only that I would get out, but also that I would prevail in the end and turn the experience into the defining event of my life, which, in retrospect, I would not trade." Collins then asked about those who didn't survive. Stockdale replied, "Oh, that's easy, the optimists. They were the ones who said, 'We're going to be out by Christmas.' And Christmas would come, and Christmas would go. Then they'd say, 'We're going to be out by Easter.' And Easter would come, and Easter would go. And then Thanksgiving, and then it would be Christmas again. One by one, they died of a broken heart."

Many folks lose heart because they start out with certain expectations of God. When their expectations are not met, they finally give up. They are seeking a nudge from a Jesus of their own making... When we have expectations of God, we're expecting God to come through on our terms; and if God doesn't come through on our terms, we deem God to have failed. When we live expectantly, we are living with the hope and the expectation that Christ will come through, but we've left the terms open. Living expectantly means always being aware of Christ in us, yet waiting for the how, when, where, and why to come from the nudge or series of nudges.

What are the 'terms' you're expecting God to meet in this time of waiting?

Luke 2 does not tell us how old Simeon was when the Holy Spirit revealed to him that he would not die before seeing God's anointed King, but most people assume that by the time he held baby Jesus in the temple he was quite old. I wonder what expectations Simeon had of God during the time that he was waiting for this promise to be fulfilled? I wonder if he was tempted to set his own terms for how old he wanted to live, or what the Savior would look like. Yet, it seems that Simeon did not let his own terms of God get in the way of listening for and being nudged by the Spirit to go to the temple that day. When he saw the Savior as a newborn baby, he didn't think that God had made a mistake because it didn't meet his expectations.

Simeon sets a good example for us, as people who are waiting for the fulfillment of God's promises. We might be tempted to set terms based on our own timing or the way that we would fix things. Instead, like Simeon, we are called to wait with holy expectation to be shown what God is doing among us now.

This requires that our eyes are wide open to *whatever* God is doing among us right now, instead of looking for only what we want to see. Can you let go of the terms you've set for God in this season in order to be attentive to nudges from the Holy Spirit?

Prayer:

Everlasting God, sometimes we forget that you are God, and we are not. Forgive us for thinking that we have a better plan or better timing than you do. Give us patience as we wait. Open us up to be attentive to your Spirit. Reveal to us what you are calling us to do and be in this season of waiting. Amen.

Song: [Everlasting God \(Chris Tomlin\)](#)