

Doing The Hard Things When God Says "Wait!"

*"You Can Do **Hard Things**" Series- Part 02*

Share/Connect time: *Have you ever given anyone a surprise party? What was your best memory of that party?*

It's all in God's timing:

I came across this little story about man's perspective versus God's perspective:

A man walked to the top of a hill to talk to God. The man asked, "God, what's a million years to you?" and God said, "A minute." Then the man asked, "Well, what's a million dollars to you?" and God said, "A penny."

Then the man asked, "God...can I have a penny?" and God said, "Sure...in a minute."

I know it this is a goofy story; yet I think it speaks to our frustration and our lack of patience when we are asked to wait for anything. We don't like long lines, waiting rooms, delays, or unexpected cancelations. The above story reminds me that our distain for waiting can and may also be applied to God's timing in our lives.

In our study today, we will look at an "*astonishing*" event in the life of a very important, influential, busy, and hard-driving missionary who was told, "WAIT!"

Book: Acts 23:10-11 and Acts 24:22-27

God's plans for Paul...

Act 23:10 As the conflict grew more violent, the commander was afraid they would tear Paul apart. So he ordered his soldiers to go and rescue him by force and take him back to the fortress.

Act 23:11 That night the Lord appeared to Paul and said, "**Be encouraged, Paul. Just as you have been a witness to Me here in Jerusalem, you must preach the Good News in Rome as well.**"

God's timing for His plans for Paul...

Act 24:22 At that point Felix, who was quite familiar with the Way, adjourned the hearing and said, "Wait until Lysias, the garrison commander, arrives. Then I will decide the case."

Act 24:23 He ordered an officer to keep Paul in custody but to give him some freedom and allow his friends to visit him and take care of his needs.

Act 24:24 A few days later Felix came back with his wife, Drusilla, who was Jewish. Sending for Paul, they listened as he told them about faith in Christ Jesus.

Act 24:25 As he reasoned with them about righteousness and self-control and the coming day of judgment, Felix became frightened. "Go away for now," he replied. "When it is more convenient, I'll call for you again."

Act 24:26 He also hoped that Paul would bribe him, so he sent for him quite often and talked with him.

Act 24:27 After two years went by in this way, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And because Felix wanted to gain favor with the Jewish people, he left Paul in prison.

Let's get into the Word:

Let connect the above two passages:

In Acts 23:10-11, what do you understand is the Lord's plan for Paul's missionary journeys?

Read Paul's letter to the Romans (Rom 15:22-25). At the time of his writing this letter, what did he hope to accomplish in his future ministry? Did this align with what God wanted for him?

When we move into the chronological account of Paul's ministry in Acts 24:22-27, give a synopsis of the events that occurred while Paul was in Jerusalem:

Lessons from the "waiting room" or "house arrest":

Wow!...Paul had to wait at least **2 YEARS** before the Lord's promised plan for him would move forward! Discuss the following questions:

How does one go about submitting our agenda to God's timing?

What do you do to help you to trust in God, and not in your circumstances?

What thought processes has helped you to not complain and grumble while waiting on God?

What do you suppose that Paul did while waiting upon God to free him from Caesarea? (the following chapters in Acts are helpful in answering!)

How can we know whether we're supposed to wait for God to act or take action ourselves?

How can I apply this lesson to my life:

David wrote, "I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the Lord" (Ps. 27:13-14).

How does this passage of scripture speak to your heart?