

## GROWING WHILE YOU WAIT!

Scripture used: [Isaiah 40:31 \(NKJV\)](#)

### OVERVIEW

This week we had a special guest sermon by our Director of Life Groups, Jesse Cottonham. He shared a powerful testimony about how he learned the value of waiting on God. 30 years ago, the Lord told Jesse "I need you to care for my children." This led him to becoming the first man to lead his church's youth ministry, which became very successful. 10 years later God again spoke to him, this time saying "it's time for you to leave this place." Jesse found a new church quickly, and it seemed like the perfect fit. But God didn't release him for another 2 years. Jesse had to grow into the next role. He wasn't yet the man that God needed him to be. Since then, Jesse has experienced other seasons of waiting and noticed powerful patterns that we can use. His inspiring story will help us all understand that it's greater later, so we can wait on the Lord, thanking Him for the opportunity to grow. Or, as one saying goes: "Until God opens the next door, praise Him in the hallway!"

### KEY POINTS

- 1) **God builds our character by asking us to wait on Him.** The Bible is full of stories with people waiting. Abraham waited for years to become the father of many nations. Joseph waited for decades to rule over his brothers. And there were over 400 years of waiting between the end of the book of Malachi and the arrival of Jesus as told in the Gospels!
- 2) **God develops us during seasons of waiting.** Waiting is important. It provides the opportunity to become more Christlike. Jesse called out three ways that he developed as a Jesus follower, and the scriptures that helped him along the way.
  - a. **Patience.** Many of us struggle with being impatient, especially in today's world of instant gratification through technology. Jesse was inspired by [Ecclesiastes 7:8 \(NIV\)](#), which reminded him that "patience is better than pride." It's our pride that makes us do things that we know we shouldn't. Patience is the antidote.
  - b. **Perseverance.** [James 1:2-3 \(NIV\)](#) explains the value of holding on during tough times. When we go through trials and tribulations, our faith is being tested. This is uncomfortable at the time but ultimately produces the strength we need to follow Jesus.
  - c. **Trust.** Jesse took comfort in [Psalms 62:8 \(NIV\)](#) because it gave him permission to "pour out [his] heart" to God. He learned over time that he could say anything to God.
- 3) **Waiting on God requires us to do specific things.** Jesse relied heavily on all three of these during his long season of waiting. They were critical parts of his development.
  - a. **Pray.** [Philippians 4:6-7 \(NIV\)](#) tells us to take everything to God with thanksgiving. When we do, we will receive God's peace.
  - b. **Praise.** The final [Psalm, 150:6 \(NIV\)](#), says to praise God as long as you breath. This means being exactly who God built us to be. That is true praise.
  - c. **Don't move...until God tells us to!** [Exodus 13:21-22 \(NIV\)](#) explains how God led the Israelites through the wilderness. God never left His "in front of the people," so we should make sure we don't we get in trouble by running ahead of the Lord.

### DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Jesse asked us to identify a specific area of life where we want God to move. Where are you asking God for hope, healing, happiness, or guidance?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - In the testimony that Jesse shared, he needed to grow as a person before being released to the next season of life. God needed him to become someone else - someone better - before it was time to go. Who does God want you to be so you can move on to the next season of life?
- 3) **DO** - We have two important events coming up as a church: our Be Rich service and our Christmas celebrations. If you haven't already, please sign up to serve on Sunday December 8th at either [Santee Elementary](#) or [Garfield Elementary](#). Two weeks after that, invite family and friends to our [Christmas Celebrations](#), which includes candlelight gatherings on Saturday December 21st at 5:00 PM and 7:00 PM, plus our regular services on Sunday December 22nd at 8:30 AM, 10:15 AM, and 12:00 PM.