

Making Way for the King

Something Greater, Week Two

Last week, Sam and Melissa Gibby started this series with a message about how God hears our longing and plans on stepping into the middle of it

One of the reasons it's extra hard is that we were all trained to do ministry in normal, peaceful, prosperous America when things are going decently well. Therefore, our scorecard for what successful ministry looks like is all about how many people are coming to church, how many people are getting into small groups, etc.

I keep telling pastors, *Imagine if you were pastoring a church in London in the fall of 1940...*

On September 7, 1940, 300 Nazi bombers raided the city.
The raids continued for 57 consecutive nights.

In moments like that, you're not concerned at all with growing a church. You're just trying to minister to people and care for them like a good shepherd.

When will God deliver us?

When will this all end?

ADVENT is all about

waiting **patiently**,

waiting **actively**, and

waiting **hopefully**.

In other words,

Our hope is not in a quick deliverance.

Our hope is in a long development.

How does God want you and I to GROW while we wait for God to fix it all?

God once sent an important message of hope and encouragement to his people during a time when they were living in exile and waiting for God to bring them home...

Isaiah 40:1-2, 6-8, 10-11 NRSV

[1] Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. [2] Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins...

[6] A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. [7] The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. [8] **The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.** ...

[10] **See, the Lord GOD comes with might,** and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. [11] He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

While you wait for deliverance, develop your faith.

- See that God is bigger than you've ever imagined.
- Believe that his word - what he has revealed - is always trustworthy.
- Understand that his perspective isn't your perspective.

Fast-forwarding hundreds of years to the New Testament time period, when the time came for the Messiah to begin his ministry, God first sent a man to prepare the way...

Mark 1:1-8 NRSV

[1] The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. [2] As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; [3] the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: '**Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.**'"

[4] John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of **repentance for the forgiveness of sins.** [5] And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

[6] Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. [7] He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. [8] I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

While you wait for deliverance, repent of sin and receive God's grace.

- Now is the best time to root out sin in your life.
- When we've turned from our sin, we declare that turning through baptism.
- We also receive the promised Holy Spirit that Jesus has now sent.

And finally, to the persecuted, scattered church, God inspired a letter through the Apostle Peter that give us some instructions about our current season of waiting...

2 Peter 3:8-15 NRSV

[8] But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. [9] The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.

[10] But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

[11] Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, **what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness**, [12] waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? [13] But, in accordance with his promise, **we wait** for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

[14] Therefore, beloved, **while you are waiting** for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; [15] and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

While you wait for deliverance, become the person God destined you to be.

- Set your affection on the future version of what God has in store for the world.
- Set your ambition on the future version of yourself God knows you can become.
- Make it your goal to use every moment to grow while you wait.

While you wait for God's deliverance, what kind of person do you want to become?