

TC Welcomes

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Open in Prayer.

Read Habakkuk 3:2-4

When plans don't go as expected we have detours. We tend to react in certain ways because we think He has forgotten us, and these detours lead to delays, doubts, and despair.



We need to come to terms with our longing for the “now” and rest on His “appointed time.” We are saturated in a culture that celebrates and longs for immediacy. We love “fast food,” microwave ovens, “fastest route to our destination,” and we become frustrated when our videos take time to download.

We do the same with God. We want His response now. We don't like to wait on Him.

Detours create delays. Delays make us panic and doubt. Then we despair as our plans aren't working out the way we had planned. We think God's detours are His denials when they are actually His plans.

Joel said: “When we experience detours in our life, we need to reject the reaction to believe this is God's denial. It's not a denial, it's a divine redirection that is wrapped up in a peculiar package of grace.”

- Why do we struggle so much when God's timing is not our timing?
- Describe a time when you were impatient or disappointed in God's timing.
- Some detours are “self-whooping.” What did Joel mean by this?

Habakkuk 2:3 For still the vision awaits its appointed time;
it hastens to the end—it will not lie.
If it seems slow, wait for it;
it will surely come; it will not delay.

Habakkuk is writing with the promise to Abraham in mind. The promise/vision to make all nations (ethnos) love God. The people of God are being persecuted and they are wondering: "Where are you, God?" "How long do we have to wait?"

Note that God is not mad at Habakkuk and His people. In the midst of our doubt and fear, we can come to Him.

1. There is an appointed time: God has a purpose and He is working it out throughout human history. God did not create the heavens and the earth and all of humanity and then walk away and say: "Good luck". He is intimately active within the course of humanity's plight. Evidence of this is the fact that he has appointed specific moments for our good and ultimately for God's glory.

- Knowing God has His "appointed time" for all we go through, how does this comfort you?
- Why do we get impatient with God?
- His appointed timing is perfect and "it will not lie." How does this truth give us comfort in the midst of "detours?"

Joel said, "It is within our desperation that we truly and deeply long for a deliverer." Our deliverer is going to be either God or an idol we construct for ourselves. One never fails and the other will fail us.

- How do His detours and delays point us back to Himself and reveal our idols that fail us?

Waiting is hard! We can see God's purposes for waiting in the story of Joseph. From a human perspective, it seems hard and long. In Genesis 37, we read about Joseph's dream that his family will bow down to him even though he is a brat and thrown into a pit. He goes to Egypt and is imprisoned and wants immediate rescue. But God has another plan to sanctify Joseph until He releases him from prison. From there God positions Joseph as second in command in Egypt. Joseph's position saves God's people and his family bows down to him. His dream came true through detours and delays.

God was working His plan out for Joseph in the midst of detours and delays.

- Can you see God's hand and His timing in this story?
- When have you seen God's hand in your story despite delays and doubts?

2. History moves forward according to God's timing: God's purposes do not stall out. We are not in fear of it failing.

- How does this truth give us peace and hope?

Read Acts 17:24-28 and review what happened to Paul on his way to Damascus in Act 7 and 8 with Saul (Paul) and Stephen.

We learn that the detour to Damascus was a means of Divine Discipline and Grace. It is often in the midst of these detours that God is working out His good discipline for His children. God's discipline is His Grace. And His Grace is always good.

- Paul gets a "divine redirection." What was it?
- When has God taken you on a detour which was really Divine Discipline and Grace?

What seems like a detour to us is God executing His perfect timing. We don't have to fear the delay because the delay is related to our expectations. But when we reorient our expectations around the reality of God's will, we are set free from the entrapments of our doubts. "God is with us." This is the promise we can cling to.

"This is not simply a back then promise, it is a right now comfort - God is with us."

Share with your Group something that you're going to take away from Joel's message.

Soul-tattoo: Recall God's goodness in the midst of your past detours and thank God for His faithfulness.