

Cling to This Familiar Bible Passage During COVID-19 Panic

“Can you wait a minute?”

Most Americans can't stand to hear that phrase. We want things fast.

In fact, we want things *now*. (And if we can't get it for free, we want a bargain; that, however, is an article for another day.) Thankfully, we are on the edge of a 5G world. Under normal circumstances, nearly everything in our lives is working at lightning speed.

Of course, we are not living under normal circumstances at present. Out of nowhere, an enemy arrived—COVID-19—and just like a pilot first learning to land a plane, our world came to a startling, jerky, violent stop. In the blink of an eye, schools, churches, restaurants—our lives—have come to a standstill. We are stuck waiting on an indefinite pause while we refresh our timelines for updated news, a plan or further instructions.

The question now is not, “Can you wait a minute?” but rather, “How will you wait: passively or actively?”

During this time of great frustration, I am reminded of what the prophet Isaiah proclaimed: “But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint” (Isa. 40:31. They build their strength. They take flight. They keep training, stay at the ready.

Isaiah didn't say that those who wait on the Lord will sit and do nothing, standing by for something to happen. He didn't say that when nothing happens for long stretches they declare, “Well, it must not have been what God wanted” and move on to

the next thing, something that will bring more instantaneous gratification. No, that kind of passive attitude is unproductive and does not benefit the body of Christ.

Isaiah was describing anticipated, active waiting. When we wait on the Lord, we may not be moving forward, but we are not at a standstill. Even when things have ground to a screeching halt, we are ready and faithful to respond to whatever comes our way.

Truthfully, I learned active waiting from years of traveling and observing people whose profession is literally waiting: servers at restaurants. To be successful, they cannot be passive.

They must constantly be at attention, anticipating customers' needs, always moving and helping make sure guests have a great experience. If you've ever had really good service, you know the value of active waiting. If you've ever had really bad service, you have experienced firsthand the catastrophic consequences of waiting passively, of being checked out.

During these days when everything has come to a halt, are you passively waiting, or are you being active in this delay? You may not know what to do right now, but as always, the answer is at His feet. God told us if we ask for wisdom, He will give it to us (see James 1:5). So while you wait on the Lord, ask for His wisdom. Ask that He turn for good this curse and death the devil has meant for evil.

Remember, it only took one night for Him to deliver the children of Israel out of centuries of bondage; it took one night for Him to birth an exodus that eventually revealed the cross and salvation of the world. What great things is God preparing in this season of waiting? Perhaps it is an extraordinary awakening that will bring thousands, perhaps millions, into His kingdom.

Right now, I am actively waiting, still preparing for the next

few outreaches in Russia, even though at this point I do not know how it's all going to happen. In the meantime, I am thanking God for the great country I live in; and I am praying for the president, the Senate, Congress, the Supreme Court, health care workers and all leaders. I am keeping myself at attention, just as Isaiah described.

If you are discouraged and unsure of what to do, lift up your head, because your redemption draws near (see Luke 21:28). Spend time in God's Word, pray and listen for His voice. Encourage someone who is struggling. Help someone who needs assistance. Choose blessing and abundant life even during this intermission, because by the blood of the Lamb, you will always be victorious.

You're beautiful. I see Jesus in you.

Have a great week!

Mikel French *has challenged spiritual awakening all across America, where many celebrations extended into multiple weeks, and has conducted celebrations in France, Sweden, Russia, Romania, Poland, Ukraine, Moldova, Serbia, Germany, South Africa, Malawi, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Haiti, Japan, Singapore, India and Thailand. He conducted an outreach celebration in Manila, Philippines, reaching 200,000 teenagers with the book of hope. Through the generous support of partners, he has presented the message of Jesus Christ to millions of people in the nation of Russia through televised citywide soul-winning celebrations. Mikel considers it an honor to assist in conducting the annual pastor's conference, where thousands of pastors from Russia's 11 time zones come for training, teaching and equipping. Mikel and his wife, Marsha, reside in Tulsa, Oklahoma.*