



**DATE** December 6, 2015

**SPEAKER** David Smith

**TITLE** What kind of person am I becoming?

**SERIES** Ask anyone what Christmas is about and they'll tell you it's about the coming of Jesus! That is true, but it's only part of the story. Would it surprise you to know that Christmas is really about waiting? It's about living in the "not yet" and waiting for the now. What are you waiting for?

Christmas is about waiting. This study examines "What kind of person am I becoming while I wait?"

### **INTRODUCTION/GET TO KNOW YOU**

1. Share a time you had to wait in line recently. (Maybe it was in traffic or for a parking space, or waiting online for a page to load, or on hold for customer service.)
2. After waiting in line somewhere, have you ever suggested how they could fix the system so people wouldn't have to waste so much time?
3. Waiting isn't usually seen as an enriching experience. We are usually looking forward to the thing we are waiting for, not valuing what is happening in the meantime. However, in ancient Israel, pilgrims would often sing songs as they journeyed toward Jerusalem. (Psalms 120 through 134 are some of these songs.) Do you sing while waiting (in other words, do you have your own internal "on hold" music)? Can you think of some benefits from singing the Psalms of Ascent, or other spiritual song while you wait?
4. There's an often quoted idea: "life is what happens while we are making other plans." What do you think of this quote? Agree or not?
5. There's the big story that's all about waiting. Then there are all the small stories that happen beforehand. Share some small Christmas story that has happened to you.

### **INTO THE BIBLE**

6. From a secular point of view a lot of the "wonder of Christmas" is in wondering "What is in those wrapped gifts under tree?" But this expectation eventually disappoints. What do we learn in the following scriptures about waiting for the One who never disappoints? (Isaiah 26:3-4; Isaiah 64:1-4; Micah 7:1-7; Luke 5:35-40; Romans 8:18-25; Jude 1:17-22).
7. How do these insights represent the 'not yet' as we wait for Jesus? Discuss the idea of the "not yet." Why does "not yet" often feel like "never?"
8. Waiting tests our faith and hope. It can discourage us, tempt us to give up, to stop believing. Someone once observed, "Do not doubt in the dark what God has shown you in the light." Discuss how God's word helps in our waiting? How has God's word helped you in a time of waiting?
9. Read Ps 43:5, James 1:5 and Prov 3:5-6. What additional information do these verses give you on the subject of waiting and becoming?

## APPLICATION

### Priming the pump

10. What was one thing about waiting and peace that God revealed to you or changed your mind about through the preaching of His word? Explain.

### Connecting

11. What are you allowing or who are you enabling, to rob you of the peace Christ has for you because of your impatience? Elaborate. What is preventing you from surrendering your impatience to the Lord?

### Digging Deeper

12. Mary and Joseph's week-long (and difficult) trek to Jerusalem is a display of loving obedience to God. As they were there presenting Jesus at the Temple, they were blessed with words from God through Simeon and Anna. Describe a time when obedience to the Lord brought you a blessing (e.g., peace). (Remind the group that obedience does not make us right with God, but it is a measure of our faith and trust in God.)
13. David Smith asked this question, "How can you become the right kind of person while you wait?" The word "become" assumes that our spiritual life is not static, but always changing. Hopefully we are changing for the better, but sometimes we fall backward. David's question also suggests that effort is required to become the right kind of person. Consider, is your spiritual life becoming what you want? (Remind the group that our effort is not a means of salvation, which is by grace, but it is a means for growth. James 2:14-26).
14. David Smith listed 8 things that **waiting is...**
  - ...trusting that God is working – Luke 1:2
  - ...allowing for humility – Ecclesiastes 7:8
  - ...evidence of the Holy Spirit – Galatians 5:22
  - ...an ingredient of love – 1 Corinthians 13:4
  - ...a trait of leadership – 2 Timothy 2:24
  - ...how we see God's power – Isaiah 64:4
  - ...part of faith – Isaiah 26:8
  - ...how God strengthens us – Isaiah 40:31

Choose 2 or 3 from the above list. After reading the scripture, discuss how this aspect of waiting brings benefits and how it brings peace. Which aspect of waiting do you need right now in your faith journey? **Spend time praying for each other about your growth needs.**