

# OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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**SERMON TITLE**

Design in the Delays

**SERIES****DATE**

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**KEY SCRIPTURE**

Various scriptures

**SYNOPSIS**

Waiting is no fun, but God has purpose in what we perceive as delays.

**HIGHLIGHTS**



## ☞ Design in the Delays

☞ **(family picture)** *California trip – Jake and Christina are buying and moving into a newer home, but needed some remodeling done before they could completely move out of their rental. We went for a long weekend to help with some of the projects, and the whole thing was a series of delays.*

*Airline delays – originally, we were flying out on Thursday at 10am, with a connection in Vegas, and arriving in Oakland at 2:20pm. As we were getting around that morning, we received notice that our flight had changed and we would be leaving at 1:30pm, connecting in Denver and arriving in Oakland at 8pm. While in Denver, there were a number of delays with planes being moved around and substituted. I kept texting Jake with a new arrival time. It seemed like as soon as I updated him, we would get another delay notice. We finally arrived at 9:45pm and got to the house around 10:30pm. So, the plan to scope out the project and buy materials Thursday afternoon was a complete bust. But that's not all...*

*Worker delays – the plumber was a week late, then was working the day we needed to be in that particular room, so we did other projects which were lower on the priority list. The electrician never did connect, so Jake called in a favor from a retiree who came to the rescue, but was in no kind of hurry on the second day we needed to be in that same room. But wait, there's more!*

*Project details delayed – plumber wasn't able to completely finish his work, so we had to add shut-off valves ourselves and plumb the sink drain. Then, after consulting his expert friend, the ceramic tile floor installation turned out to be much more than Jake bargained for, so we opted for peel and stick tiles, but still had to level and smooth the existing concrete in a tight space – something neither of us had ever done.*

*We worked long and hard, getting some things done which weren't on the priority list, but not quite finishing the main things. Delays, delays, delays!*

So, let's talk about something we all struggle with: waiting. We're used to speed, aren't we? We microwave our food. We stream our movies. We want overnight shipping, and if that doesn't work, we'll take same-day delivery. We've gotten so used to everything being quick and instant, that when God takes His time it frustrates us.

But God's not in a hurry. He's not Amazon Prime. He's not interested in doing things fast; He's interested in doing things right. And sometimes that means delays. And let's be honest, delays feel like rejection. Like God forgot us. Or, like He's saying "no."



☞ But we need to remember... **God's delay is not God's denial; it's often His divine design.** He's not stalling. He's *shaping*. And, he's not late; he's right on time, *working behind the scenes* in ways you can't see. In God's perfect plan, delays have a divine purpose. There is Design in the Delays.

### ☞ 1. DELAYS REVEAL WHAT'S REALLY IN US

Delays test us. Will we still worship when the doors stay closed? Will we still obey when the answer is "not yet?" Will we still believe when we don't *feel* blessed?

Have you ever been driving, and had to take an unexpected detour, lengthening your trip? But then you found out there was construction... or an accident... and the long way was the *safe* way. Delays are often protection in disguise.

Deuteronomy 8:2 (NLT)

"Remember how the Lord your God led you through the wilderness for these forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find out whether or not you would obey him."

God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, but it took 40 years to get Egypt out of them. He could've taken them straight to the Promised Land (it was only an 11-day journey) but He didn't. Why? Because the **☞ journey wasn't just about reaching the destination, it was about developing their dependence on God.**

Delays expose impatience, fear, pride, or lack of trust. But delays also cultivate perseverance, humility, and gratitude. So, when things take longer than you hoped, don't ask "Why me?" but "What is God trying to show me?"

### ☞ 2. DELAYS PREPARE US FOR THE PROMISE

Psalms 105:19 (NLT)

"Until the time came to fulfill his dreams, the Lord tested Joseph's character."

God gave Joseph a dream as a teenager that his family would one day bow down to him. But initially, instead of promotion, he got betrayal. He was thrown in a pit, sold as a slave, falsely accused, and left to rot in prison. Twenty-two years passed between the dream and the fulfillment, 13 of which Joseph spent as a slave or in prison. Can you imagine how confusing that was for him?



But here's the truth: The dream was real, but Joseph wasn't ready. The position was promised, but the process was necessary. Sometimes, **there's a promise we can embrace, but there's also a process we must endure**. God had to grow Joseph in obscurity before He could trust him with authority. There was a delay, but the promise was still fulfilled.

1 Kings 8:56

"Praise be to the LORD, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave..."

Here's a good reminder: Like Joseph, if God gave us the promise too early, we might ruin it, or it might ruin us. He loves you too much to bless you before you're ready. So, He says, "I'm not just preparing the promise for you; I'm preparing *you* for the promise."

### ☞ 3. DELAYS TEACH US TO TRUST

Isaiah 40:31 (NKJV)

"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength..."

There's something powerful about learning to wait well. Waiting is not weakness. Waiting is not passive. Waiting is *trusting*. When we don't see the answer, when nothing seems to be changing, faith says, "God, I still trust you."

Delays drive us to seek God more deeply. When things don't happen on our timeline, we're forced to turn to God for comfort, guidance, and strength. Back to the Israelites wandering 40 years in the wilderness... That delay wasn't just about reaching the Promised Land, it was about learning to depend on God daily. In our own lives, delays push us to lean on God. When answers don't come quickly, we're invited to pray more, seek God more, and trust that He is working behind the scenes.

☞ Delays are God's training ground for faith. **When we're forced to wait, we learn to trust God's timing over our own**. Think of Abraham and Sarah, who waited decades for their promised son, Isaac (Genesis 21:1-2). Their delay wasn't punishment; it was preparation. God was strengthening their faith and teaching them to rely on His promises, not their circumstances. Delays refine our faith, making it stronger and more resilient.

☞ **God isn't building fast faith, He's building deep faith...** The kind of faith that holds on when feelings fade. The kind of faith that trusts when timelines collapse. The kind of faith that still says, "God is good," even when nothing looks good. Delays teach us patience and equip us for the calling God has placed





on our lives. Psalm 27:14 says, "Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord." In the waiting, God is shaping us.

There's a type of grass in China called bamboo. Some species of bamboo take several years after planting to develop a strong underground root system. During that time, above-ground growth may be minimal. But once the root system is established, the bamboo can send up new shoots that grow astonishingly fast - up to 3 feet per day - reaching 90 feet tall in just a few weeks. Though the initial growth was delayed and minimal, it was still working underground, growing those roots so that when the fast growth came, it would be able to support it. Some of you are in a "root season." Don't despise it. God is preparing something big.

#### ☞ 4. DELAYS SET THE STAGE FOR GREATER GLORY

John 11:4-6 (Jesus hears that Lazarus is sick)

"When He heard this, Jesus said, 'This sickness will not end in death... it is for God's glory.' ...So when He heard that Lazarus was sick, He stayed where He was two more days."

Now let me ask you: if your best friend is sick and dying, and you have the cure, do you wait? ...But Jesus *deliberately* delayed. By the time Jesus arrived, Lazarus had died. It seemed too late, but Jesus had a greater purpose. He didn't just want to *heal* Lazarus, He wanted to *resurrect* him, revealing God's glory ☞ in a way that a simple healing would not have done. **Sometimes God delays things so the miracle is unmistakable, so that when it happens, everyone knows it was God.** Jesus promised that the sickness would not end in death, but was for God's glory. The Lord always keeps his promises.

Numbers 23:19

God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?

Like Lazarus and his family, some of you are facing dead situations, dead dreams, dead relationships, dead finances; and you're asking, "God, why did You wait?" But you don't realize He's setting up a resurrection, not just a recovery. Sometimes the delay is part of the setup. The pain is part of the plan. And the miracle will come with greater glory than you imagined.

Delays reveal what's in us; delays prepare us for the promise; delays teach us to trust; delays set the stage for greater glory. So, what do we do while we wait? What do we do in the delay? We worship. We ☞ trust. We prepare. **Don't waste the waiting room.** That's where God does His best work. He's making you a better person.



☞ Hebrews 10:36 (NLT)

"Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised."

If you're in a delay right now don't lose heart. God sees you. God hears you. God hasn't forgotten you.

☞ His timing is not our timing. But **His timing is always perfect.**

☞ Remember this today: **God's delays are not denials. They are divine. They are deliberate. And they are developing for your good.** Keep praying. Keep trusting. Keep waiting... Because the promise is still on schedule.

☞ Habakkuk 2:3

"the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay."

In God's perfect plan, there really is no such thing as a delay. His plan is right on time. What we perceive as delays have a divine purpose. If you're feeling like you or your promises are being delayed, remember, there is Design in the Delays.