



## LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

### “Plugged In: Waiting”

Ps. James Lowe - Jan. 4, 2015

#### WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- What is the longest time you have ever been without electrical power (e.g., due to a storm perhaps)? What concerns did you have at the time?
- Who is one person who has especially helped you to seek God?
- What is your main New Year's resolution? What do you need to do to follow through?

#### WORD (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at <http://www.bethelworld.org>

*I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.* (John 15:5 ESV)

When we are plugged into God, we are connected to the life, grace, and power of God. When Moses held his hands up as Israel battled their enemies, God gave them victory. As long as his hands were up as symbols of prayer, worship, and intercession, God continued to give them victory. Jesus teaches the same thing. All that is of eternal value that we can do with our lives depends on our being plugged into God through Jesus Christ.

Some will seek God for specific blessings, but won't continue to seek him after they receive them or if the blessings don't come when they want them. The highest goal, however, in seeking God is to know and please him. Blessings from God will come, but they are not the greatest purpose for seeking God.

In Luke 24 we read how the disciples were filled with doubt concerning Jesus, after having watched his arrest, torture, crucifixion, and death. They were slow to believe his resurrection. But Jesus reached out to them, calling them to believe in him, to seek God, and to receive God's presence and power in their lives in order to live for God's purposes.

#### **God's Promise**

*And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”* (Acts 1:4-5 ESV)

Being and staying plugged into God involves God's promises. God promises forgiveness and reconciliation because of what Jesus did. Jesus promises the presence and power of God's Spirit for those who believe. Receiving God's promises involves faith, spiritual hunger, and the pursuit of God.

*So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”* (Acts 1:6-8 ESV)

In terms of the analogy, we can be plugged in, but we are not in control of the power switch. In other words, God sovereignly chooses when to bless us with his presence and power. He chooses when and how to answer our prayers. God does not always respond in the way we want. The disciples wanted Jesus to throw off the oppression and injustice of the Roman occupation. But that was not the immediate plan of God. Instead, God wanted to empower the disciples to reach Jerusalem with the Gospel.

God often delays the fulfillment of his promises for our own good. Waiting necessitates our pursuit of God. Waiting produces perseverance and character in our lives.

### **Prayer**

*All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. (Acts 1:14 ESV)*

The disciples responded in the proper manner to Jesus' exhortations and promises. They sought God together in prayer. They did this for several days. This example is important for us to follow. We need to gather with like-minded people who share a common calling to pursue God earnestly in prayer.

### **Preparation**

*And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. (Acts 1:24-26 ESV)*

Part of their preparation for receiving God's promise of his presence and power was the replacement of Judas Iscariot as a witness. In a similar way, it is important for us to also pray and evaluate the relationships in our lives. Are there people we need to be close to? Are there people that we need to distance ourselves from? Who will spur us on to serve God and his purposes? Who can we spur on?

### **God's Presence & Power**

In Acts 2 we read about the result of their responding to God's promises with prayer and preparation. God filled them with his presence and power! Consequently, they were launched into God's purposes with the ability to do what God had called them to do. God will do the same for us, if we will seek him in prayer and also prepare ourselves to walk with him in his purposes.

### **PERSONAL APPLICATION (10-15 minutes)**

**Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.**

- What have you decided to do to seek God in a special way this coming week?
- Are there any relationships in your life that need to be cultivated or distanced in order to walk with God closer?
- What are your spiritual aspirations for this year? What can you do to achieve them?

### **PRAYER (10-15 minutes)**

**Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.**

- Pray that God will guide you this week in how to seek him and set yourself apart for him.
- Pray that God will reveal his will to you this week concerning any relationship adjustments that may be needed in your life.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit increases your hunger for him and your expectation on him, that he speaks to you as you seek him, and that he increases your fruit as you surrender to be used by him.