



November 30, 2018

"Waiting for God" {Excerpted from the writings of Henri Nouwen}

These words by Henri Nouwen are among the Advent devotionals I return to year after year, and I wanted to share with you – Pastor Deb

Waiting is not a very popular attitude. Waiting is not something people think about with great sympathy. In fact, most people consider waiting a waste of time. Perhaps this is because the culture in which we live is basically saying, "Get going! Do something! Show you are able to make a difference! Don't just sit there and wait!" For many people, waiting is an awful desert between where they are and where they want to go. And people do not like such a place. They want to get out of it by doing something.

In our particular historical situation, waiting is even more difficult because we are so fearful. One of the most pervasive emotions in the atmosphere around us is fear. People are afraid – afraid of inner feelings, afraid of other people, and also afraid of the future. Fearful people have a hard time waiting, because when we are afraid we want to get away from where we are. But if we cannot flee, we may fight instead. Many of our destructive acts come from the fear that something harmful will be done to us.

And, if we take a broader perspective – that not only individuals but whole communities and nations might be afraid of being harmed – we can understand how hard it is to wait and how tempting it is to act. Here are the roots of a "first strike" approach to others. People who live in a world of fear are more likely to make aggressive, hostile, destructive responses than people who are not so frightened. The more afraid we are, the harder waiting becomes. That is why waiting is such an unpopular attitude for many people.

It impresses me, therefore, that all the figures who appear on the first pages of Luke's Gospel are waiting. Zechariah and Elizabeth are waiting. Mary is waiting. Simeon and Anna, who were there at the temple when Jesus was brought in, are waiting. The whole opening scene of the good news is filled with waiting people.

And right at the beginning all those people in some way or another hear the words, "Do not be afraid. I have something good to say to you." These words set the tone and the context. Now Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary, Simeon and Anna are waiting for something new and good to happen to them.

{I hope you will join us in worship these next six weeks as we journey through Advent and Christmas with these people of faith. First up will be Zechariah. Then will be Mary and Elizabeth. Then will come others who speak anew during this precious and awe inspiring season.}

In Christ's grace,
Pastor Deb