

Sometimes He Calms the Sea

African-American pastor and songwriter of the past century, Charles Tindley, used a common metaphor of the time to reference the trials, tribulations, dangers, and snares of the Christian life: "When the storms of life are raging, stand by me...when the world is tossing me like a ship upon the sea, thou who rulest wind and water, stand by me." [1. "Stand By Me" Charles A. Tindley]

Another song writer-poet expressed similar sentiments: "Jesus Savior, pilot me, over life's tempestuous sea, unknown waves before me roll, hiding rocks and treacherous shoal, wondrous sovereign of the sea, Jesus Savior, pilot me." [2. "Jesus, Savior Pilot Me" Edward Hopper]

Songwriter Scott Krippayne, echoed these thoughts in a song he wrote in 1995:

*All who sail the sea of faith
Find out before too long
How quickly blue skies can grow dark
And gentle winds grow strong
Suddenly fear is like white water
Pounding on the soul
Still we sail on knowing
That our Lord is in control
Sometimes He calms the storm
With a whispered peace be still
He can settle any sea
But it doesn't mean He will
Sometimes He holds us close
And lets the wind and waves go wild
Sometimes He calms the storm
And other times He calms His child"* [3. "Sometimes He Calms the Storm" Scott Krippayne]

Traveling by boat or ship, or being out on the ocean, rivers, or lakes was a dangerous thing for many centuries, since ancient times. Storms could arise without notice, and the wind, strong waves, thunder, and lightning menaced travelers, and could capsize a ship and cause many deaths. This has been symbolic of trouble in the Christian life. Storms symbolize illness and disease, financial disasters, broken relationships, and anything else in life that threatens us, either physically or emotionally. Can God not step in and save the day? Can he not send a miracle our way?

In Mark 4, the disciples on the Sea of Galilee found themselves caught in a sudden storm, helpless and in grave danger, while Jesus was asleep in the boat. They woke him, frightened out of their wits, and He stood, extended His hand, rebuked the wind, and said "peace, be still." Immediately the storm ended. Instantly. There was a "great calm." Jesus then rebuked his followers for their lack of faith. Sure, He can calm storms. He's God.

A few years later, Paul was traveling as a prisoner to Rome, on board a ship in the Mediterranean Sea. Suddenly, a Euroclydon, a powerful, cyclone-type wind arose, and for the next two weeks the ship was tossed and battered until all hope of survival was gone. But suddenly Paul appeared and said to all on board with him: "The God whose I am, and whom I serve, has appeared to me." He gave Paul the peace he needed, and the assurance that all would be well (Acts 27:23). But they had to ride out the storm and suffer shipwreck. Life's like that sometimes.

Yet another song repeats for us the same truth:

*Sometimes He calms the storm sometimes He calms me
Sometimes the storm still rages on but I feel the sweetest
peace
It's such a joy to know that my Lord knows just what I need
Sometimes He calms the storm sometimes He calms me*[4. "He

Calms me" sung by the McKameys]

Here are some lessons we can learn.

God is sovereign over every storm life brings our way. He is capable of doing the miraculous; healing, provision, removing obstacles, and certainly doesn't mind His child asking for those things. He may not do what we wish He would, but He always, always, always, will be with us, and will speak peace to our heart if we call upon Him. "Therefore, we will not fear..." (Psalm 46:2) At the end of the day, He will "get us to the other side."

Here's the point. We all face storms. God can miraculously still them, and sometimes will, but often we will have to go through them. However, even in the storm He is with us, can speak peace to our heart. The loss of our beautiful daughter-in-law two years ago – my health challenges the past few years – standing with friends and family during severe trials. I'm so glad He is there. The song by *Casting Crowns*, "Praise You in This Storm," states it beautifully:

And I'll praise you in this storm

And I will lift my hands

That you are who you are

No matter where I am

And every tear I've cried

You hold in your hand

You never left my side

And though my heart is torn

I will praise you in this storm[5. Praise You in This Storm"

Mark Hall and Bernie Herms (Casting Crowns)]

Prayer: Father, even now be with your dear children who are caught in one of life's raging storms, whatever it might be. Please calm the storm, according to your will, or please calm them, and assure them of your love and presence. In the powerful name of Christ, Amen.

The Rough Draft of Solace

In an effort to be completely transparent, this is going to be messy. I have attempted to write this article three or four times over the last few weeks and it has been a fight to get it to come together. My thoughts are scattered and confused. The end result will probably feel like a rough draft at times and I am going to have to be okay with that because no amount of effort on my part will fix certain deficiencies. One additional disclaimer before we get to the meat of the matter at hand: I'm going to be blunt. I want to be true and honest and real. I don't want to hide behind platitudes and clichés. I'll do my best.

Right now, this very moment, there are many people who are hurting. They are experiencing profound physical, emotional, or spiritual pain. Or some combination of all of them. I have friends who are dealing with frightening medical diagnoses. I have friends who are watching their marriages collapse. I have friends who have lost someone dear to them. I hate it. It's overwhelming in the most complete sense of that word. I hear these things and I have no words of comfort or wisdom to offer. I am struck mute by my lack of power. In a practical manner of speaking, there is almost nothing I can do to help any of these people.

I've watched friends deal with so much garbage, so much pain, that it makes me angry and causes my faith in a good God to take a hit. Deep down, I know those feelings are stupid so I do my best to move past them and not allow that seed of doubt to take root in my life. But if I feel this way, safely observing it all from the outside, how much more pain, doubt, and anger do the people living their own personal hell feel? I have no idea. And I really have no right to

speculate or assume to know. I can do my best to understand and empathize, but that's mostly empty rhetoric. Understanding is a long way down the road from experiencing, and I have never experienced pain and loss like so many have.

So why am I even writing this article? There are a few reasons, and none of them very flattering. First, I am not good with people. I am an introvert, awkward and uncomfortable around most people. When confronted with a damaged or hurting person, my typical reaction is avoidance or the most superficial interaction possible. And honestly, it's not because I don't care. It's because I have no idea what to say or how to act in those situations. I prefer to communicate my feelings, thoughts, and emotions in written form. Which brings me to my second reason. If you want a glimpse inside my head, I'll make it as simple as I can: My hope in writing this is that something I say here will be a help to those that are suffering. Yet even here, I ask myself why would anything I write help anyone that is experiencing life-altering pain and sorrow? I've landed on something that might answer that question. My words are impotent. My words will help no one. But if my words reflect the words of God, then they will not return void. If my words can offer even a flicker of light that points to the Great Light, then that has to be enough. It's the only reason to do this.

While I have not experienced loss like many others, my life has not been without pain and sadness. I am beyond grateful that when my family went through its most difficult time, the loss of my sister-in-law to cancer, my friends did not offer us empty platitudes and clichés. They showed up. They cried with us. They hugged us. They laughed with us as we remembered the beautiful soul we had lost. Those things meant the world as we dealt with the pain and confusion and bone-wearying grief. I want to do that now, but I know it is impractical at best. Most people have horror stories of well-intentioned people offering empty words of comfort during

times of mourning. I hope this will not be another horror story for some. Yet, if you are looking despair in the face, if your grief is so strong that you just can't cry anymore, if healing and restoration feel a million miles away, just maybe these words will help even a little.

Jesus shares your grief and weeps with you. I've always been intrigued by the events surrounding the death of Lazarus in the book of John. The sickness, the delay in travel, the death, the graveside scene, and then the triumphant and impossible resurrection. It is a fascinating vignette, one of deep truth and a few tantalizing questions. While I have heard it taught in a variety of ways, nothing has been more uncertain to me than the simple passage found in John 11:35. "Jesus wept." Did he weep because of the questions and lack of faith of Lazarus's sisters? Did he weep because he was bothered by the crowd and their weeping, however genuine? Scripture does say he was troubled by it. Or, did he weep because his friend had died? Perhaps he wept because he was moved to mourn with Mary and Martha. I choose to believe that it was all those things, yet deeper and more profound. I believe that Jesus wept because the very idea of death was so abhorrent to him. As my brother said in his beautiful article, [*Grief, Hope and Theology That Matters:*](#)

"Even more vivid is the account of Lazarus' resurrection in John 11. When confronted with the death of his own loved one, Jesus weeps alongside his family. Jesus fully participates in the grief. By verse 38, Jesus is so enraged in his grief that he does what every grieving person wishes he could do—a miracle. It is in this account that Jesus reminds his followers that He is the resurrection and the life. He is the conqueror of death. Jesus not only hates death; He hates it even more than we do."

Jesus fully participates in our grief. What an amazing and comforting thought!

At the end of *The Silver Chair*, the fourth book in C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*, after we witness the funeral of an aged King Caspian, we watch the protagonists of the story, Eustace and Jill, cry over the body of Caspian as it lays in a stream. They weep at the death of this great King and friend. The great lion Aslan weeps with them, and his grief and tears go beyond anything they feel, "each tear more precious than the Earth would be if it was a single solid diamond." And then, in an act of participatory grief, Aslan asks the children to take a thorn and plunge it deep into his paw. The blood then drips into the stream with Caspian's body and not only gives him new life but restores him to the vigor and likeness of his youth. Aslan felt the grief and loss more profoundly than the children, but then does something that we all wish we could do – he conquers death. That is the promise we can cling to in times of sorrow. Our Lord grieves with us. He hates the things that make us grieve more than we do and longs for the day when He will fully restore His creation to its rightful and intended glory.

Jesus bears your burdens and pain. The first time I read *The Lord of the Rings*, during my freshman year in college, I cried when Sam and Frodo, the two brave hobbits who had journeyed far to destroy the ring of power, reach the very doorstep of Mount Doom, the only place the ring could be destroyed, and Frodo is finally overwhelmed with exhaustion. His quest has left him a shell; broken and empty. He falls to the ground, unable to take another step; the weight of the ring, both physical and spiritual, is pulling him down, forcing him to give up. That is when Sam, Frodo's gardener and best friend, resolves to help. He realizes he cannot carry the ring; it is not his burden to bear. The ring was entrusted to Frodo to carry and to destroy. Sam knows this and in his simple and unassuming wisdom, he chooses to do something even

better. An act of such profound love and friendship, there is little in the world of literature that is its equal. Samwise Gamgee, though his body has been decimated after mile upon mile of travel, looks at his friend and cries out, "Come, Mr. Frodo! I can't carry it for you, but I can carry you."

Sam does for Frodo that which Frodo cannot do for himself. How much greater is that imbalance in our relationship with God? There are innumerable times in our lives when we find ourselves paralyzed with grief, fear, or pain. In those times, we go through the motions, yet our lives are merely a pantomime. Our steps are leaden and without aim. Our souls are frozen in time, unable to feel or move or trust again. It is in those times that we have the promises of God to cling to:

- Psalm 55:22 – "Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you."
- 2 Corinthians 12:9 – "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness."
- Psalm 37:24 – "Though they stumble, they will never fall, for the LORD holds them by the hand."

Moving beyond the written promises of Scripture, we have the very life of Jesus as a promise. He meets us exactly where we need Him. When His disciples were terrified and confused after His death, not only does He comfort them with words of peace and His presence, a few days later, he meets them on the shore of the sea and cooks them a meal. He feeds them – something so tactile and so familiar. It is just one more beautiful picture of selflessness and tender love for His disciples to cling to when they face persecution and death in the years to come. Our Lord will bear our burdens, sustain us, and He will hold us up by His hand and by His grace. As believers, we are called to do the same. Galatians 6:2 tells us to "Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ." When someone you love is hurting and bearing a burden that is too heavy, remember the words and actions of Jesus. If we are indeed His hands and feet, we can carry our

wounded friends even if we cannot carry their wounds.

Finally, **Jesus rejoices over you.** I want the words of Scripture to do most of the talking for this point. In one of the most beautiful passages in the Old Testament, we find these words of hope and encouragement: "For the LORD your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs." The creator of the universe takes delight in you with gladness. The savior of the world rejoices over you with joyful songs. Or, as the New American Standard Bible puts it, "He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy." What verbal expression can be more demonstrative and powerful than a shout of joy? Our God is so filled with love for you, that He shouts for joy. What a thought! In your time of deep pain and loneliness, it might be hard to feel this. It might be hard to hold on to this truth, but know, in the deepest part of your soul, that it is Truth. Our mighty Savior longs to calm your fears with His love. Even now, He is delighting in you. Even now, He is joyfully shouting and singing over you.

It is my hope that this doesn't just add to the noise. If nothing else, I hope that my words get out of the way and that the truth of Scripture speaks clearly in your life. For those of you that have friends that are hurting, you know what to do. Be with them. Grieve with them. Weep with them. Carry them while they cannot move. Be their champion by singing over them, rejoicing over them, and shouting over them. For those that are hurting, I hope that the people closest to you are fulfilling their roles by being Jesus in your time of need. Just know, Jesus shares your grief and weeps with you, He will gladly bear your burdens, and He rejoices over you with shouts and songs. If you can do nothing else, hold on to that.

Grief, Hope and Theology That Matters

Does theology matter? A year ago I sat on a bed in Huntsville, AL and looked at the faces of my three small children. I had to tell Isaac (five), Jude (three), and Naomi (one) that their mother was dead. It was the hardest thing I've ever done. I hope it's the hardest thing I'll ever do. I first asked Bethany on a date when she was nineteen. She married me at twenty-two. We saw the world together and dedicated our lives to serving God and others. She was dead at thirty-two. Does it actually matter what someone believes about heaven when life becomes hell?

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In this life, there is no amount of truth that will cure grief, but good doctrine can furnish us with a more robust sense of hope than many of us ever thought possible. For most of my life, I considered almost anything having to do with the afterlife or eschatology as being largely speculative. It seemed that there was so much disagreement on these matters that the best a Christian could say was that when we die our souls go to heaven. When asked about heaven, we picture clouds, angels singing, or some other seemingly spiritual or ethereal reality. It was all very vague and not very helpful or comforting. A few years before Bethany died, God began to use his Word (and people who study it seriously) to better shape my views. In retrospect, I can say with confidence that

God equipped me with a solid doctrine of hope in preparation for the pain that was to come. This is some of what I learned:

1. The Resurrection of Jesus is the basis of the Christian's hope.

This may be a basic statement of Christian belief, but centuries of weak theology have conditioned us to think that our hope is that our souls will escape our bodies at death. Centuries of weak theology have polarized the spiritual and the physical. The apostles taught otherwise. They saw Jesus' physical resurrection as the first of many. Paul argues at length in I Corinthians 15 that our bodies will be raised from the dead and glorified just like the dead body of Jesus was gloriously, physically resurrected. Jesus is the "firstfruit" of God's new creation.

The year before Bethany died, I found N.T. Wright's *Surprised by Hope* in the library of the school I taught at in Peru. I had listened to his sermons, lectures, and read a few of his books, but this book was a game changer. In keeping with Scripture, Wright establishes his understanding of Christian hope on the reality of Jesus' physical resurrection. The conclusion? Christian hope is not based on a vague platonic ideal of spiritual existence after death, but rather it is grounded—and I do mean "grounded"—in God's work of restoring his physical creation because of Jesus' resurrection.

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Does this provide comfort? I believe it does. A few weeks after Bethany died I wrote a friend, "When it's said and done, I am greatly comforted that Bethany (the physical, real life Bethany that I love so much) is going to be raised. She will

have a body that can never, ever get Cancer. She will be perfect, body and soul.”

2. Death is real, the world is real, and hope is real.

I get the feeling that the grieved are to be comforted by believing that their loved ones are in a better place, a place that is more real and significant than where we are now. Certainly, those who die in Christ are present with Him, and that is far better than being anywhere else (II Corinthians 5), but it does no one any good to downplay the reality of the world we live in. To act like the things that happen here are insignificant when compared to the things of heaven is misleading and not comforting. Yes, we should live our short life in light of eternity, but this short life has tremendous value. Jesus certainly thought so! Even the martyrs gathered in God’s presence in Revelation 6 call for justice to be done in this world!

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The world where we live now is God’s creation. A creation he cared enough about to become part of in his incarnation. Humans were created to be physical and spiritual. While the fall and the curse have thrown both of these elements of God’s creation off track, the gospel is God’s plan to restore both of these things. Christ does this through the power of the cross and the glory of the empty tomb. He will do this ultimately when he comes again.

A few years before I lost my wife, she lost her father. This death was even more sudden. It rocked our world, changed our family, and opened my eyes to some realities that I had never

thought much about. Before her father died, he talked to me and other family members about Randy Alcorn's book Heaven. After his death, this book provided comfort to many of his family member's including myself. Like Wright, Alcorn contends that our notions of the afterlife must be rooted in the biblical doctrine of Jesus' resurrection rather than ethereal notions of floating in the clouds. While some of the book is speculative, he develops his speculations out of a solid biblical theology. Because of Heaven, my hope for life after death became much more real and much more tangible than I ever thought possible. Our future is real, it is physical, it is spiritual, and it is amazing!

We take comfort in God's plans for the future, but we know that these plans are connected to his love and design for the world he created. Our lives, our bodies, and our tears are not insignificant things when seen in light of eternity; they are exactly the things that Christ came to restore to a full and vibrant relationship with the father.

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3. God hates death.

Among many things, grief is rage. It is bloodied knuckles and heartfelt curses. Grief is not just anger; grief is rage. So, who or what are we supposed to be so mad at? When we turn it on ourselves, we are crushed with guilt. When we turn it on our deceased loved one, we only feel disgusted with ourselves. Do we turn it on God? He is supposed to be in control of everything, right? And when someone tells us that God has a plan for this loss, it only gives our rage against God more ammunition. Did God want this to happen?

As I've studied the God of the Bible, I find him most clearly

displayed through Jesus Christ. In Christ, I don't see a God who rejoices in the death of our loved ones. I don't see a God who delights in our pain. Rather I see a God who is on a mission to destroy death. In I Corinthians 15, Paul describes death as an enemy that Christ will destroy. In II Timothy 1, Jesus is described as the one who has abolished death. And in the first chapter of Revelation, Jesus stands in triumph holding the keys to death and the grave.

Even more vivid is the account of Lazarus' resurrection in John 11. When confronted with the death of his own loved one, Jesus weeps alongside his family. Jesus fully participates in the grief. By verse 38, Jesus is so enraged in his grief that he does what every grieving person wishes he could do—a miracle. It is in this account that Jesus reminds his followers that He is the resurrection and the life. He is the conqueror of death. Jesus not only hates death; He hates it even more than we do.

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This resonates deeply with us for at least a couple of reasons. First, it is good theology. We know that God is the author of life and because sin separates us from God. It separates us from the source of life, God himself. Throughout the New Testament, the cross is seen as the place where Christ defeated the age old enemies of God (for example: Colossians 1:15). The cross defeats sin. The tomb defeats death. Christ is victorious, the only one worthy of all our praise, glory, and obedience.

Secondly, it is great comfort. Bad theology will lead us to believe that God is against us and that He has taken away our loved one. Good theology brings us to John 11 where Jesus is weeping beside us, where he is enraged at the loss of precious life, and where he has a plan to do something about it. It is

in John 11, where Jesus and I share the same pain, even the same rage. It is here where we take so much comfort in Him being “the Resurrection and the Life.”

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As an active follower and imitator of Jesus Christ, Bethany lived her life to glorify God, read good books, and show love to other people. The week before she died I took her suggestion and read a book she loved, Tim Keller’s Reason for God. I had no idea when I started reading what the words of this book would do for me in the months to come. Keller explains the hope found in Christ: “For the one who suffers, the Christian faith provides as a resource not just its teaching on the cross but also the fact of the resurrection. The Bible teaches that the future is not an immaterial ‘paradise’ but a new heaven and a new earth. In Revelation 21, we do not see human beings being taken out of this world into heaven, but rather heaven coming down and cleansing, renewing, and perfecting this material world. Jesus insisted that his return will be with such power that the very material world and universe will be purged of all decay and brokenness. All will be healed and all might-have-beens will be.”

This is real hope. This is theology that matters.



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“While I’m Waiting”: A Theology of Suffering And God’s Timing

“Until the time came to fulfill his dreams, the Lord tested Joseph’s character.” (Psalm 105:19, NLT)

I was 21 when I decided I was mature enough to begin dating in order to get married. I was almost 36 when my wife and I began dating. What transpired in the 15 years in between occupied over 200,000 words in a journal I kept to record my thoughts and prayers to God in this time where I tried over and over to get married and failed.

I truly believe the American church does not deal enough with what it means to wait on God. That could be said about several topics, but this one seems to go under the radar despite the fact I have talked with and counseled dozens of people who were struggling with waiting on God.

It's not just my experience, though. The Bible makes it clear that God's will is often about timing (Gen. 18:14; Hab. 2:3-4; Acts 17:26; Romans 5:6). And that means waiting when God's timing is different than ours. Abraham was told he'd have descendants like the sands of the sea or stars of the sky and then waited 25 years for one child. Joseph had a dream that went unfilled for 20 years, with 13 of them spent as a slave or in prison or both. David was promised to be king as a teenager, only to have to wait half his life to finally become king, after years of being on the run from Saul, hiding in caves, once pretending to be insane, and all manner of undignified circumstances. In Habakkuk 2:3-4 God basically admits he seems slow to us sometimes.

This is why the more than 60 lament psalms in the Bible get to me. They help understand what some of the people in the Bible felt while they waited on God. It sounds harsh when someone says, "Arouse Yourself, why do You sleep, O Lord? Awake, do not reject us forever. Why do You hide Your face and forget our affliction and our oppression?" Or "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far away when I groan for help?"

Yet, I get this. Better than just about anything else, this part of the Bible resonates with me. Those 200,000 words I wrote were dark and extremely emotional at times. **Many** times I wrote things like this:

Monday, June 3, 2013

I have said before in this very journal that my inability to get a woman that I like to also like me could be what wrecks my faith. I thought about that earlier as I was praying. At one point I just stopped because I feel like it does no good. I go back and forth, too. I think for a while that the fact I am single could be an evidence that there is no God or that he is not sovereign or that he just doesn't care. 13 years and thousands of prayers have had zero affect on him. None. Praying seems useless.

I don't know if Joseph ever felt this way. But some people in the Bible did. David wrote lament psalms. Abraham and Sara tried to force God's will 11 years into waiting. Habakkuk accused God of not listening when he cried for help. And while I don't know her words, I do know that Hannah prayed with bitterness for God to give her a son before Samuel was born.

There were times I was so disquieted all I could do was walk around my church, not being able to be still or think about anything for more than a second, feeling completely paralyzed with grief. I thought about death. I thought that anything would be preferable to the pain I was in.

But beyond the journal entries, there were times as I was waiting on God that my pain was so intense and overwhelming that my world was crushed by darkness and desperation. I want to use words like "depression" and "anxiety" to describe some days. But I don't even think those words do it justice. I can

tell you this: there were nights I was so dead inside I could not sleep. Nothing brought me even an ounce of joy. I once slept five hours total over four nights. One time stared at a wall for hours because I had no motivation to do anything else. There were times I was so disquieted all I could do was walk around my church, not being able to be still or think about anything for more than a second, feeling completely paralyzed with grief. I thought about death. I thought that anything would be preferable to the pain I was in.

And one thing I learned, again from the Bible and reality, is that when you think God is just about done making you wait, the situation may get worse. Read the first few chapters of Exodus. After waiting 430 years for God to deliver his people from Egyptian slavery as He promised, God finally sends his rescuer to save his people. And they are saved, right? No. Exodus 5 happens. Read Genesis 22. After those 25 years of waiting for one son, God asked Abraham to sacrifice him. When Hannah finally had a child, she gave him back to God. In my personal life, Kayla and I got together in March 2014 and my journal proves that February of that year gave me one of my biggest steps backwards in all the 15 years of waiting.

I'm not writing this for sympathy. I have gotten more of that than I've deserved in my life. I also confess that this isn't all righteous suffering. I contributed to a lot of it. But I'm writing this because people need to know that both the Bible and human experience prove that waiting on God can mess with your mind in disturbing ways. It can rip your soul apart. It can challenge how much you trust God. Yet for so many people, it is God's will that they wait.

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When I was at my worst, there was nothing that I could do to alleviate the pain. But there were many times I was struggling but could sense hope and purpose in what God was doing. Those times I would listen to [“While I’m Waiting”](#) by John Waller or [“You Know Better Than I”](#) from the movie *Joseph: King of Dreams*. Those songs with those lyrics communicate the truths that I want to communicate now: that no matter how bad it gets, waiting on God is essential to knowing him because without faith it is impossible to please God. He has to teach us that He is in charge, that He knows what he’s doing, that His way and His timing is much, much better than ours. And that he is worthy of our worship when we do not understand. Isn’t that the point of God’s “answer” to Job in Job 38-41?

Kayla proves that God does know better than I do. I have no regrets. And regardless if I had never gotten married, God still knows best. I used to read and meditate on Hebrews 11:38 that says some died without having received what was promised. That may be the end truth for some. I have friends who waited over a decade to be able to conceive to have children. And have friends who never had them. But the bottom line is that even though darkness causes us to feel like God may not know best, He does. One of the most important statements of the thousands I wrote in my journal was: *“What I feel and what is true may be two totally different things.”* I think God gave us the lament Psalms and Habakkuk to teach us that.

One of the most important statements of the thousands I wrote in my journal was: “What I feel and what is true may be two totally different things.” I think God gave us the lament Psalms and Habakkuk to teach us that.

I don’t talk to people in cliches. Suffering and waiting have beaten those out of me. And I try to remember that when someone is in the abyss, hearing “God knows what he’s doing” may be the right medicine at the wrong time. Today you may

need my journal entry from above. Or Psalm 88. But at some point we all need to recognize that even in our suffering that God is God and we are not. And the only thing to do while waiting is to worship Him. Because He deserves it.

I remember once while in my car waiting for a right turn, but the car ahead of me would not go. I got so mad. I was ready to lay on the horn and yell at the top of my lungs for them to get out of my way. But I soon discovered that the car was waiting because a child was in the road. A child I could not see.

God always sees. And waiting has a purpose, whether you ever learn it or not. So for the single, the childless, the suffering with no end in sight, this is for you. The church will always teach on marriage and parenting. We need more teaching on waiting on God. Because so many of his saints in the Bible had to. And so many of his saints today have to. I thank God for May 30, 2015, the day I stood at an altar and promised forever to a woman I waited for my whole adult life. But I'd be a fool not to thank him for the 15 years, 200,000 words and sleepless nights before that. They both were God's plan. And they both are a part my theology.