

Living in the in-between

What are you waiting for today? Is it the weekend? Exam marks? Your graduation? That one special person to show up? God to take that one sin out of your life? Or simply a better future?

Waiting can be painful. It is a state that we find ourselves in when we transition between the various important stages in life. We often don't know what will happen at the end of this wait, if this wait will end at all. Waiting can make us anxious, afraid, impatient, desperate, and lonely. To ease these negative emotions, we like to distract ourselves with funny YouTube videos, hanging out with friends, or the "100 ways for stress relief". But you and I both know that sometimes, nothing helps to distract our desperate hearts. Prayer is another option for us Christians. But I sometimes find myself frustrated when God doesn't give me an answer, or any sort of sign. I would ask, "are you really listening God?"

My vision is living in the in-between. In our world now, we often find ourselves in an endless pursuit for things. Who has the time to wait, when there's so many other things to get still? In Hosea 2:14, God says

"Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her"

God wants to allure us away from the noise of our comfortable world, into a wilderness that will make us feel insecure and afraid. But while we are desperate and anxious, we are alone with Christ. When everything has quieted down, we can hear Him speaking tenderly to us. It's when we realize how truly powerless we are, that we can wholeheartedly surrender to His grace and mercy. Let God take the burden of uncertainty and doubt, because that burden is too much for us to carry alone. Then slowly but surely, God will use his tender voice to comfort us, and give us peace.

We are all living in the in-between, waiting for God to bring us to heaven one day. Waiting for a day when sin will no longer be present. But while we are here, I hope that we can all learn to wait on the Lord, and quiet our hearts for His voice to get to us. Waiting on the Lord isn't passive, but actively seeking His voice. Seeking His voice through fellowship, prayers, scripture, and the constant push for vulnerability with one another. As a fellowship, let us help each other surrender to God, and give up the burdens of our heart to Him.

As a male devotional leader, I hope to create an environment where fellow men can be vulnerable with each other with our struggles in life. From my experiences being a guy, I know that we often try to look tough or pretend we don't care, while actually struggling to stand under the various burdens in life. Let us pray and support each other when we feel lonely or despair, so we won't be alone carrying that burden. Open up ourselves to each other so we will not lose sight of His goodness in each of us. Discuss what the scripture has said about our struggles. Help each other in patience so we won't be desperate in our waiting. Prepare each other so that we will be quietly listening when God speaks to us tenderly, and when He teaches us what it means to be a man in Christ. Because it is written:

¹⁰ *This is what the LORD says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹² Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me when*

you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile." Jeremiah 29:10-14

In addition, I hope that this message of waiting will expand out of men's group into the other people in large group. I see my vision as a very personal conviction, so it would require a certain level of intimacy for this message to pass on to more people. Hence, I believe men's group is a good environment to cultivate this vision. I hope that when we are in our darkest moments, we would not be desperate to get out, or ignore it, but as God to quiet ourselves down and listen to His tender and comforting voice. We are all living in the in-between, waiting for God to bring us to heaven one day. While we are still here, let us not be distracted by its flashing lights, and miss out on God's beautiful plan for us.