

A. THE PIT

- Waiting On God is a demanding call. We can land in The Pit of wrong thinking and painful emotions when our waiting is very intense or lasts for an extended time.
- The Pit of waiting can also be described as “the gap,” “lag time,” “the doldrums,” or “the middle ground” between what God has said and His appointed end point.
- The Scripture contains several instances of The Pit. One of the most instructive is found in the writings of Jeremiah: Lam 3:18 – 26 AMP -- I say, Perished is my strength and my expectation from the Lord. ¹⁹ [O Lord] remember [earnestly] my affliction and my misery, my wandering *and* my outcast state, the wormwood and the gall. ²⁰ My soul has them continually in remembrance and is bowed down within me. ²¹ But this I recall and therefore have I hope *and* expectation: ²² It is because of the Lord’s mercy *and* loving-kindness that we are not consumed, because His [tender] compassions fail not. ²³ They are new every morning; great *and* abundant is Your stability *and* faithfulness. ²⁴ The Lord is my portion *or* share, says my living being (my inner self); therefore, will I hope in Him *and* wait expectantly for Him. ²⁵ The Lord is good to those who wait hopefully *and* expectantly for Him, to those who seek Him [inquire of and for Him and require Him by right of necessity and on the authority of God’s word]. ²⁶ It is good that one should hope in *and* wait quietly for the salvation (the safety and ease) of the Lord.
- Jeremiah wrote 2 books of the OT, both of which deal with the destruction of Jerusalem. The book of Jeremiah predicts it, and Lamentations looks back on it.
- God promised restoration to His children, but it would take place 70 years in the future. (Jer 29:10) They lost their homeland and they would remain in Babylon for life.
- These people were WOG for a promise that most would never see come true. Jeremiah writes to acknowledge that loss and show them the way out of The Pit.
- Insights:

B. THE PITFALLS

- In the space between God’s promise and its fulfillment, there are particular pitfalls that are common to those called to endure the twisting and tension of a long wait.
- Jeremiah, the “Weeping Prophet,” is transparent when describing the depth of his emotions saying he is in misery and is literally and figuratively an outcast.
- He also mentions wormwood and gall – not words we use today – which both generally mean bitter, poisonous, or venomous. (Strong’s H3939 & H7743)
- This toxicity of soul leaves us in The Pit and causes our internal well-being to suffer greatly as the waiting drags on. Mark Vroegop of TGC has identified this pattern:

ANXIETY → ANGER → APATHY

- Anxiety:
 - The progression often begins with a sense of uncertainty and fear of the future.
 - Even when we believe for a good outcome due to God’s promises, we harbor dread, apprehension, or foreboding about what’s in the middle.
 - We can become mired in analyzing and overthinking instead of “living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” (Deuteronomy 8:3)

- Anger:
 - It doesn't take long for us to become frustrated with delays, unmet expectations, and lack of forward movement. We feel powerless and stuck.
 - Anger is a typical byproduct of loss. During a long wait we feel the loss of control, lost time and lost opportunity. Toxic emotions replace peace, joy, and hope.
 - Our anger can go undetected, a slow burn, until something happens (or doesn't happen). This triggers an overreaction that leaks out on God and others.
 - Knowing that anger is likely when WOG will help us to be on the lookout for it and to deal with it quickly: Eph 4:26-27 NLT -- "Don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.
- Apathy:
 - Prolonged periods of emotional pain and distress often lead to self-protection. We long to escape the feelings so we numb them out.
 - We detach ourselves from negative emotions and from the relationships that are connected to them. Distance grows between us and God or us and our people.
 - It becomes increasingly challenging to reconnect with the relationships and things that are lifegiving to us. The isolation takes us deeper into The Pit: Ps 69:3 NLT -- I am weary with my crying; my throat is dry; my eyes fail while I wait for my God.
- This downward spiral is to be avoided at all costs. Jeremiah regains his perished hope by rehearsing what he knew to be true about God and so can we! (vv. 21-22)
- LISTENING EXERCISE:

Lord, I want to hold onto hope in my painful place(s) of waiting. Please show me if any of these toxic emotions have slipped into my soul:

-- Where has anxiety crept in?

-- What thoughts or questions replay in my mind leaving no room for Your truth?

-- Would You identify any anger that I am harboring against You or someone else?

-- What is the fear or frustration that is perpetuating anger inside of me?

-- Where have I numbed my emotions to avoid the pain of waiting?

-- Will You help me to see how distancing myself has cost me in my relationships?

-- Will You reassure me that I am safe to hope instead of hiding in The Pit?

C. THE PRESENT

- Jeremiah employs an incredible strategy for getting out and staying out of The Pit. He plants his feet firmly in today vs. being preoccupied with the past or the future.
- Even though exiled to Egypt, Jeremiah was able to overcome his toxic emotions and prosper in the waiting by living in the here and now that God had chosen for him.
- By staying in the present moment, our hope and expectation of God grow stronger: 2 Cor 6:2b NLT – Today is the day of salvation!
- Jeremiah teaches us to remember these character traits of the Lord and to bring the truth of Who He is into each one of our todays:
 - Mercy: Is 33:2 NLT -- Lord, be merciful to us, for we have waited for you. Be our strong arm each day and our salvation in times of trouble.
 - Lovingkindness: Ps 32:10 NAS -- Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but he who trusts in the Lord, lovingkindness shall surround him.
 - Compassions: Ps 103:4 NIV – (He) redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion
 - Newness: Isaiah 43:18-19 NIV -- Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland".
 - Stability: Ps 16:8 NLT -- I know the Lord is always with me. I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me.
 - Faithfulness: Ps 33:4 NIV -- For the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.
 - Goodness: Ps 100:5 -- For the LORD *is* good; His mercy *is* everlasting, and His truth *endures* to all generations.
 - Salvation/safety/ease: Ps 37:39 -- The salvation of the righteous *is* from the LORD; *He is* their strength in the time of trouble
- These things are still true of God even when we're in The Pit! Jeremiah spoke these truths to his bowed down soul and found new hope for the day ahead.
- His inner man flourished in the wait by seeking the presence of God ("inquire of and for Him and require Him by right of necessity and on the authority of God's word" v.25 AMP).
- Let's invite the Lord's presence into our present moment. We will discover new expressions of His beauty and goodness: Ps 27:4-5 NAS -- One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD and to meditate in His temple. ⁵ For in the day of trouble He will conceal me in His tabernacle; in the secret place of His tent He will hide me; He will lift me up on a rock.
- Insights:

D. TESTIMONY

E. PERSONAL APPLICATION

- ONE THING

- The One Thing that I'd like to take away from today's class and believe God to accomplish in my life is:

- PONDER THE TRUTH

Which verse or principle stood out to you this week? Write it below taking some time to review it often. Be still in God's presence, alert for new insights. Record them here.

- PROCESSING THE TRUTH

Prayerfully consider the Listening Exercises from this lesson. Ask the Spirit to guide you into a deeper understanding of the truth and to reveal any specific faith steps He is calling you to take. Write down your insights.

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