

An old Italian gentleman lived alone in New Jersey and he wanted to plant his annual tomato gardens, but it was difficult work as the ground was hard.

His oldest son Vincent who used to help him was in prison.

The old man wrote a letter to his son and described his predicament.

Dear Vincent, I'm feeling pretty sad, because it looks like I won't be able to plant my tomato garden this year. I'm just getting to old to be digging up the garden plot. I know if you were here my troubles would be over. I know you would be happy to dig the plot up for me like in the old days.

Love Papa

A few days later he received a letter from his son.

Dear Papa,

Don't dig up that garden that's where the bodies are buried.

Love Vinnie.

At 4am the next morning FBI and the local police arrived.

They dug up the entire area without finding any body. They apologized to the old man and left.

That same day the old man received another letter from his son.

Dear Papa,

Go ahead and plant the tomatoes now, that's the best I could do under the circumstances.

Love Vinnie.

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What do you do when it seems like your dream is put on hold, or worse yet never coming to pass? When your in that waiting season?

Let's be honest, most of us don't like the wait. We live in

a fast pace I want it now culture. We have microwave dinners, instant coffee, breakfast, and instant messages. Facebook posts seen in the moment seem so much better than waiting for that piece of mail with the postal service. Even fast food wasn't fast enough. Now you can get the app order your food from there drive up and pick up.

Patience isn't as much a virtue any longer.

And yet sometimes God delays what He has for us, hoping that we learn to trust him more. Hoping we will understand what He has for us is better than what we thought we wanted.

Proverbs 13:12 (NIV): Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.

We can understand the first part of that verse it's easy to relate to. We have all had those times that were difficult, seemingly hopeless. And at times has led us to some discouragement or discontent.

And in those moments we feel the heart ache, pain, the frustration of having the prayer answer delayed, that dream delayed, that longing delayed.

But the second part of that verse when you are in the midst of it all seems so far reaching, like there is no light at the end of the tunnel.

And we begin to think, will I ever see my longing fulfilled? Will that dream ever come to pass? Will the answer ever find it's way to my place?

And the truth is the the higher the expectation we have the harder it is to wait.

Romans 8:24–25 (TPT): For this is the hope of our salvation. But hope means that we must trust and wait for what is still unseen. For why would we need to hope for something we already have? 25 So because our hope is set on what is yet to be seen, we patiently keep on waiting for its fulfillment.

Here's the thing church, God's plan for us is so much better than your plan.

But what happens so many times is that since we don't get what we want, how we want, when we want. We decide to help God out a bit and do what we can to get the desires of our heart quicker or even now.

We do it our way instead of His way.

Abram and Sarai who will later have their names changed to Abraham and Sarah struggled with the waiting.

Genesis 12:1–4 (NIV): The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. 2 “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

4 So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set

out from Harran.

This is the first time God tells Abram I will make you into a great nation. He tells Abram to pack his bags go to a land that God will show him. And the earth will be blessed through you.

Wow what a promise. And how old was Abram. . .75

And again in Genesis 15 God tells Abraham that he was going to be the father of many nations.

Genesis 15:2–6 (NIV): But Abram said, “Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” 3 And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.” 4 Then the word of the Lord came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.” 5 He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” 6 Abram believed

the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

Abram believed the Lord. . . say that with me

Yet what happened?

Next chapter Chapter 16, look what takes place.

Genesis 16:1–2 (NIV): Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; 2 so she said to Abram, "The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said.

Didn't we just hear him say that he believed the Lord?

He tried to help God out a bit and Hagar becomes pregnant and Ishmael is born. But this was not the promised child. According to verse 16 he was 86 years old when Ishmael was born.

But God wasn't finished with Abram quite yet. . .

Genesis 17:1–6 (NIV): When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless. 2 Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.” 3 Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, 4 “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. 5 No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. 6 I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you.

Let's skip down to verse 15. . .

Genesis 17:15–19 (NIV): God also said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. 16 I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.” 17 Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself,



“Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?” 18 And Abraham said to God, “If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!” 19 Then God said, “Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.

Remember chapter 15 Abram believed the Lord now just a couple chapters later and he laughs

Chapter 18 another visit and Sarah overhears and she too laughs.

It's been 25 years from when the promise was given, no wonder they laughed. Hope was deferred.

But then after the waiting, after the longing was fulfilled a tree of life springs forth and Isaac the promised miracle comes unto the scene.

Just as Solomon had told us in Proverbs.

Imagine the immense gratitude, awe, and pleasure that he had after the waiting, after the fulfillment of the dream.

But then something strange takes place. No advance warning, no dream in the middle of the night. God just says during a time of prayer that Abraham is having. . .

Genesis 22:2 (NIV): Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.

Once again God tells Abraham to pack up and go someplace that He will show him after he is obedient.

Now I don’t know about you but I would be like what? I surely couldn’t have heard that right. And need to go call somebody and get their opinion on this. He is my promised miracle, he’s the one I waited 25 years for. You can’t be serious.

I think sometimes we forget. We know that because it is written and we know the rest of the story, Abraham didn't have that luxury. He had no clue.

Verse one tells us, Some time later God tested Abraham. . .

And truth is we go through tests ourselves and you never know it is a test until you reach the other side.

Another thing we don't know is how old Isaac was when this all took place. It just says sometime later. We do know he was old enough to ask about the sacrifice and carry a bundle of wood up a mountain. So I think its safe to say that Isaac is a young man at this point in the story.

And the surprise comes by how Abraham responded? I must be honest it's not the way I think I would respond most of the time when asked to give up something that meant the world to me.

Look how he responded. . .

Genesis 22:3 (NIV): Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about.

He didn't log into Facebook and ask the opinion of those who were his friends. He didn't tweet out asking for advice.

He didn't even resist God, even though God didn't give a reason.

Why is it we need to know every detail until we will be obedient?

Scripture says early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded the donkey.

And in the moment when hope seemed gone, and there was no chance of God changing His mind Abraham raises the knife to kill his son when he is interrupted by an angel

and the Lord provides another sacrifice.

Church, that happened because in the midst of not understanding the request Abraham said I trust you still.

Do you trust Him that much. He longs for you too.

- Joseph went from the pit to the palace.
- Three Hebrew teens went from a furnace without even smelling like smoke to having a decree that no one can say anything against their God.
- Daniel in a lions den came out without a scratch
- Paul was freed from prison because of his worship
- David trusted God enough to defeat the giant
- Mary trusted that she was to be the one who would give birth to Jesus even though she was a virgin
- Joshua knew they could take Jericho
- Nehemiah knew they could rebuild the walls
- Noah built a boat nowhere near water

Time and time again we have example after example of those that just trusted. They may not have had all the

information that they would have liked, but they still trusted. Many of them had setbacks, others mocking, most had no clue had it was going to come to pass. They just trusted.

Listen church, there will be times that God asks us to trust Him even when we may not fully understand all that He is asking us to do.

Proverbs 3:5–6 (NIV): Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Jeremiah 17:7–8 (NIV): But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. 8 They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”

Don't let your heart be troubled, trust Him with everything God knows what's best, He sees beyond the disappointment, disease, discontent, discouragement, and

discomfort.

And if you will just wait, trust in Him in the waiting you will be a tree of life because He will do more than you could ever ask or think.

Your circumstance, your situation isn't too big for God to work out, but you need to trust Him in the process.

Abraham went, with no explanation, he just went. That's faith. That's obedience. That's trust.

Let say one more thing about Abraham. Isaac the promised child, from whom this great nation was to come from found a wife through prayer. How did he know it was this the right woman in which God gave him.

Because they found her by praying that the Lord would send someone that would give their camels drink. (Talk about that - 10 camels. . . 1 camel 15 to 20 gallons in 15 minutes)

Anyway the bible says that Rebekah was barren. So the promised kid who was to help in building a great nation was with a wife that couldn't even have kids.

Just so you know Abraham taught him how to trust God as well and he prayed and God open her womb.

That's trust.

And let with this and let it be our closing prayer. . .

Romans 15:13 (TPT): Now may God, the inspiration and fountain of hope, fill you to overflowing with uncontainable joy and perfect peace as you trust in him. And may the power of the Holy Spirit continually surround your life with his super-abundance until you radiate with hope!

And the church said, Amen.