**Fixer Upper**

**Week 3 – In The Meantime**

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| **CONNECTION (ORIENTATION)** |

1. **INTRO**: At some point everything new becomes old. As things become old it is necessary to take an inventory of what needs to be fixed. Cars need to be fixed. Homes have all sorts of repairs that must be fixed. If you’re a parent, toys must be fixed. Businesses have old models and systems that need to be fixed. And then there’s you and me. If you’re a human being something needs fixed! All of us need to be fixed. Inside all of us are hidden struggles that can lead to bigger problems if we fail to address them. This series plans to address just that.
2. **TODAY**: So today we’re going to continue our series by addressing a topic, in the meantime.
3. **CONNECTION**: Life is full of moments that are exciting. When we have the opportunity to see family, go to a ballgame, eat at our favorite restaurant or accept a new job there is an excitement about us that even a stranger can see. Then again, life is full of moments that are painful as well. When a loved one passes, we get laid off from work or our car breaks down we experience stress and pain. Whether you’re in an exciting season or in a broken season there is something they both have in common. There is always a wait.

***TRANSITION****: In both good times and bad, the wait can cause a lot of trouble for us.*

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| **TENSION (IDENTIFICATION)** |

1. **GENERAL**: It does take long within the process of waiting for us to lose focus. While we’re waiting we all face the temptation to neglect important roles, our relationships or vital responsibilities that we need to fulfill.
   1. **Exciting Seasons**- In exciting seasons, excitement itself can cause us to lose focus of what’s most important. (IE. Learning Emily was pregnant was exciting. Getting the house ready for a baby was hard to focus on in the midst of the excitement. I was distracted with taking time off to celebrate with family, doctors visits and baby showers that we waiting a little long to get everything we needed together, to pay bills, make it to work on time and so on.) The excitement of something can cause us to forget important roles we need to participate in or responsibilities that we need to fulfill.
   2. **Broken Seasons**- In broken seasons we can lose focus as well. (IE. Then Emily had a miscarriage. That time of brokenness caused us to lose focus of a lot of things as well. In that brokenness I was distracted and I forgot important roles I had to play to my wife and when I needed to participate in a specific responsibility at work.
   3. **GENERAL CONTINUED**: In exciting seasons and broken seasons we all struggle with waiting. And this especially applies spiritually.
2. **SPIRITUALLY**: Whether you’re a follower of Christ or not, all of us have a hard time waiting on God to reveal Himself to us, answer a prayer or provide us with something we need. When we’re forced to wait we typically struggle to keep our faith. Why? Because waiting for a God we can’t see, hear or touch feels as though we’re waiting for nothing. While we know this isn’t proof for or against God, it’s still hard to wait.
3. **CHALLENGE**: Waiting is inevitable. Waiting is something we can’t avoid. However, the challenge with waiting isn’t actually the wait itself. The challenge with waiting is how we prepare ourselves “in the meantime.”

***TRANSITION****: While all of us have seasons of waiting, what we do in the meantime will set us up for success or failure. So today I want to share 4 helpful steps we can be proactive in the meantime of our wait for God to reveal himself.*

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| **TRUTH (ILLUMINATION)** |

1. **CONTEXT**: Israel was in a season of transition. Elijah the prophet set Ahab to be King of Israel. Shortly after becoming King, Ahab began to worship other gods, namely the gods of baal. He replaced alters built for God and made room for the worship of baal. In the midst of God’s blessings over Israel they slap in the face by saying he’s not enough. He’s not good enough. As a result, Elijah told Ahab that it would only rain at his words.
2. **STORYLINE**: Our story picks up at the end of 3 years without rain. King Ahab was severely upset at Elijah. After 3 years of God trying to turn the heart of the people back to Him, God is ready to reveal himself as the only one true God.

**1 Kings 18:1-2**

**1After a long time, in the third year, the word of the Lord came to Elijah: “Go and present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the land.” 2So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab.**

* After 3 years of killing the prophets and attempting to kill Elijah, Elijah resurfaces. God had purposely sent Elijah to a brook and to a widow’s house to keep Elijah away from King Ahab. As you can imagine, King Ahab wasn’t thrilled see him. As a King facing a massive drought, the people were now questioning his divine leadership. With his people unhappy you can imagine how he felt about Elijah. He felt Elijah was responsible for his failure. So they meet in vs. 17.

**1 Kings 18:17-18**

**17When he saw Elijah, he said to him, “Is that you, you troubler of Israel?” 18“I have not made trouble for Israel,” Elijah replied. “But you and your father’s family have. You have abandoned the Lord’s commands and have followed the Baals.**

* Elijah goes straight to the point. He lets Ahab know that the reason they are struggling is because of his serving the fake gods of baal. Obviously Ahab doesn’t believe this, otherwise he would have given up a long time ago. So Elijah sets up a meeting to prove the one true God once and for all.
* They bring in the prophets of baal, all 450 of them. Elijah sets the stage telling them to set up a sacrifice and allow the prophets to call on the gods of baal to cause the sacrifice to burn. Of course that doesn’t happen. After some time Elijah calls their god out and says it’s his turn to call on God. Then he asks that water be dumped on his sacrifice. With a simple prayer he prays and God consumes the wet alter and offering with fire straight from heaven.
* In one moment he demonstrates that baal was not real and that Israel needed to return to the God of Israel alone. After seeing such a sight they turn to God. Then we transition again.

**1 Kings 18:41-42**

**41And Elijah said to Ahab, “Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain.” 42So Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees.**

* Three years of waiting for rain to come. Three years of being threatened by Ahab and Jezebel. Three years of waiting and now God’s revealed himself through consuming a sacrifice to prove he’s real over the gods of baal. Now rain will be further proof, but there’s one problem. There’s not a cloud in the sky. God told Elijah it would rain again, but didn’t tell him when. There’s a real excitement, yet they couldn’t see anything.
* When God moves in our life it is pretty exciting. However, even when God moves in our life there are times that what we feel and what we see don’t go hand in hand. Waiting on God to provide something we know he’s promised is hard.
* **PERSONAL STORY**: It reminds me of the year that I woke up Christmas morning before any of my family did and I opened up all of my presents without anyone watching me do so. Waiting is hard.
* However, waiting is good and what we do in the mean time is important. Elijah begins to pray. When you know God has the answer but you can’t see how, pray. This is exactly what Elijah does. Our story continues with Elijah telling his servant to go look for a cloud of rain.

**1 Kings 18:43**

**43“Go and look toward the sea,” he told his servant. And he went up and looked. “There is nothing there,” he said. Seven times Elijah said, “Go back.”**

* We get impatient doing the same thing over and over. We get frustrated and lose hope while we’re waiting, but Elijah continued to pray even though he couldn’t see the results of the prayers he made. Six times Elijah prayed only to not see his prayers answered. However, he doesn’t stop.

**1 Kings 18:44-45**

**44The seventh time the servant reported, “A cloud as small as a man’s hand is rising from the sea.” So Elijah said, “Go and tell Ahab, ‘Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.’” 45Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain started falling and Ahab rode off to Jezreel.**

* We don’t know how many minutes, hours or days Elijah prayed, but we know he prayed 7 different times. After praying and waiting God finally sends a sign of the rain to come through a small cloud. The rain was on the way.
* Here’s what I want us to understand. If Elijah would not have been in prayer while waiting for the rain he wouldn’t have heard from God to let Ahab rain was going to come. Had Elijah not waited and prayed he would not have known to address the gods of baal. Had Elijah not gone up to the mountain to pray he would not have known when to tell King Ahab to make his way back to Israel. Had Elijah not waited and prayed he would not have known how to handle the situations after. There are some things that only God will teach us when we feel stuck and can’t go anywhere. When we’re busy moving forward we may miss what God is saying.

*SUMMARY: Let me summarize this for us today…* ***What we do in the meantime matters****.*

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| **APPLICATION** |

**TRANSITION**: Here’s what this means in greater detail.

**APPLICATION**: There are 4 lessons I believe we can learn from this story that applies to us greatly! 4 Things to know in the Meantime:

1. **It’s going to require seeking God way more than you think and way more than you want.** 
   1. What are the small things are you not dealing with.
   2. The small things become big if you don’t deal with it.
2. **You’ll probably hear it before you see it.** 
   1. Your meantime will reveal what God will do. (Elijah and the rain)
   2. Your prayer during meantime seasons will reveal when and how.
   3. What are you trying to force out of a season because you heard God about a coming season, but this season is not the time for it.
   4. Being faithful in this season will lead you to the season you heard God about.
3. **What you need will appear in less significant ways than you think.**
   1. The answer you need may come in an insignificant way. (cloud)
   2. Your problem may not be solved the way you think it should.
4. **Stop being afraid of what you prayed for.**
5. **SPIRITUALLY**: If you struggle waiting on God, let me encourage you. You’re not alone. Many of us struggle to wait on God, but there is a lot of good that comes from the meantime. In the meantime we can learn a lot. In the mean time we can prepare ourselves for what’s to come. In the meantime God can prepare us for what we’re not currently prepared for. But this doesn’t happen if we just sit idle. During seasons of waiting, we need to be sure we’re working.
6. **GENERAL**: When something is broken fixing it up doesn’t usually occur fast. A house that has had water damage doesn’t fix quickly. There’s a demo process. When life is broken we have to learn to remove the damaged pieces. We have to take out some of the studs from the wall and replace them. In those instances you may need a support system to keep the rest of the house supported well. Then you have to put in electrical and drywall. All of that takes time. Then you have to mud the walls. That takes time to dry, sand and you have to repeat that step multiple times before you get it smooth. Then you can paint, but even after painting you have to wait to make sure you don’t need a second coat of paint. After painting things aren’t done. You still have to work on the floors and the decorations and such. Here’s my point. We need to work in the season we’re in, but we need to prepare for the season to come. We need to work on the project at hand while preparing for the next steps. Waiting for only one step to be finished before we begin the next will put a crew behind schedule. You have to work in steps. In the meantime there are steps you can fix other things up. Don’t miss your opportunity.

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| **LANDING (INSPIRATION)** |

Think about what life would be like if…

**Response: Prayer, Communion, Etc.**

Fixer Upper

Week 3- In the meantime

Week 4- Soul Care