



This Advent season, Trellis Church will be exploring the Carmelite themes of *waiting*, *accepting*, *journeying*, and *birthing*. The focus of this week is on *Waiting*. By reflecting on Mary's encounter with Gabriel in Luke 1:26–38, we are reminded that waiting is woven deeply into God's story. From Genesis to the prophets, Israel held onto God's promises through war, exile, failure, and restoration. In joining our New Testament friends, our curiosity and affection are stirred for the miracle of Jesus' birth—God entering the world through a virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are still a waiting people, longing for the promised return of King Jesus, a reality that should lead us to worship with reverence and anticipation.

The sermon from Sunday highlighted three key ways the Holy Spirit sanctifies us as we wait. First, waiting teaches us contentment, modeled by Mary's humble response: "I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." Even though she likely experienced initial confusion or fear, Mary demonstrated a settled trust in God's purposes. Second, waiting builds endurance—just as pregnancy requires perseverance physically, emotionally, and spiritually, so too our spiritual waiting shapes strength in us that cannot be formed quickly. Finally, waiting trains us to place our hope not in temporary, manufactured substitutes—money, success, relationships—but in the eternal hope that God alone provides.

As Christ followers, we are called to wait with purpose. Rather than drifting through the Advent season, we are encouraged to embrace waiting as a spiritual practice that deepens understanding, stirs affection for Christ, drives us to worship, and forms contentment, endurance, and hope. What if our waiting this year fueled meaningful prayer, greater dependence on God, and a renewed commitment to kingdom living? Advent is an opportunity not to waste the days leading to Christmas but to engage them intentionally, trusting that God does profound work in seasons of waiting.

Discussion Questions

1. Which of the three Advent "waitings" (Israel's long wait, the miracle of Jesus' birth, or the future return of Christ) feels most meaningful to you right now—and why?
2. Mary responds, "Let it be to me according to your word." What would it look like for you to adopt that posture of contentment and surrender in an area of your life where you are currently waiting?
3. Where do you feel God using waiting to build endurance in you? Are there specific challenges or pressures that you sense He is strengthening you through?
4. In what ways are you tempted to manufacture hope through temporary things? How does Advent invite you to rest in a deeper, eternal hope instead?
5. What would "waiting with purpose" look like for you this Advent season? Are there spiritual practices—prayer, Scripture, worship, service—you feel prompted to lean into more intentionally?
6. How might purposeful waiting change our community? What could it look like for us, as a group or church, to embody contentment, endurance, and hope in tangible ways this month?