

Altars

THE PLACE OF BLESSING & SACRIFICE

Altars Part 2—Delayed Blessing

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USING THIS SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

We have provided all the Scriptures references in the sermon and some discussion questions for you to use to facilitate a discussion.

This Sermon Discussion Guide is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. For most groups, there are too many questions to answer in one session together.

While the questions are important, remember your group's goal is not to get through the questions, but to create an atmosphere that will foster true friendships. Use the discussion questions as you see fit but emphasize the relationships.

- **The Altar is the place where the Divine meets with humanity.**
- **The Altar is the place of covenant and promise.**
- **The Altar is the place where the activity of heaven touches earth.**
- **The Altar is the place where the fire of God can be found.**

[Genesis 12:1-4, NLT]

The Lord had said to Abram, “Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father’s family, and go to the land that I will show you. 2 I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. 3 I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.” 4 So Abram departed as the Lord had instructed, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran.

[Genesis 12:8, ESV]

8 From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord.

Bethel = “house of God”

Ai = “heap of ruins”

-Daniel waited 3 weeks before the angel told him God had heard his prayers.

-Elijah waited in 3 years of drought before God allowed him to pray for rain, and then he prayed seven times before he saw a single cloud.

-David waited about 15 years between being anointed king and sitting on a throne.

-Moses waited 40 years before looking upon the promised land.

-Joseph waited 10 years in prison before being pardoned.

-Abraham waited 25 years before the birth of his promised son Isaac.

-Jesus waited 3 days in death before the Holy Spirit raised Him to life.

Often, where we see the delay, God is working on things behind the scenes; where we see delay, God sees advancement.

[Exodus 23:29-30, AMP]

29 *I will not drive them out before you in a single year, so that the land does not become desolate [due to lack of attention] and the [wild] animals of the field do not become too numerous for you. 30 I will drive them out before you little by little, until you have increased and are strong enough to take possession of the land.*

Your blessing might be delayed, but His favor is right here and right now.

[Romans 4:18, TPT]

18 *Against all odds, when it looked hopeless, Abraham believed the promise and expected God to fulfill it. He took God at his word, and as a result he became the father of many nations. God's declaration over him came to pass:*

"Your descendants will be so many that they will be impossible to count!"

[Genesis 12:8, ESV]

8 *...And there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord.*

[Isaiah 41:8, NIV]

8 *"But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend..."*

[John 15:13, 15, TPT]

13 *"For the greatest love of all is a love that sacrifices all. And this great love is demonstrated when a person sacrifices his life for his friends...15 I have never called you 'servants,' because a master doesn't confide in his servants, and servants don't always*

understand what the master is doing. But I call you my most intimate friends, for I reveal to you everything that I've heard from my Father."

FOR MONDAY—

1. Submit your life to the process of God working on your character.
2. Approach time in the Bible and prayer with a perspective of interacting with a Friend.

TALK IT THROUGH

1. What are some major things you personally have had to wait for in life? What are you still waiting and believing for?
2. Which delays have strengthened you as a person? How did God shape your character through those times?
3. "Where we see delay, God sees advancement." How does this statement change your perspective and how does this encourage you?
4. Of the bible narratives Pastor Rich referred to, which ones do you relate the most to and why: Daniel, Elijah, David, Moses, Joseph, Abraham, and Jesus?
5. How can we, like Abraham, remain faithful in the delay? What does it look like to walk in the promises of God in the reality of waiting?
6. How do you understand Pastor Rich's statement that "God desires friendship with you."?
7. Where and when have you built altars (literal or symbolic) to declare your trust in God? When is the best timing to go there?