



The Agony and the Ecstasy

Have you ever waited for something or someone, a dream or a promise that has not yet come to pass? Are there times it is so vivid that you feel as if you could reach out and touch it? Has it been so long now that you feel perhaps you may not have heard from God, somehow missed it or have been mistaken?

Welcome to the world of the perpetual waiting room. You've had this dream, this destiny growing inside you just waiting to be born. You pray over it, talk to it, feed it and in my case even sing over it. Yet there it remains in the womb of your spirit unborn still and you ask God when, when will it be born? You grow tired and frustrated, perhaps even angry over the agony of waiting. For some of you the waiting has been many, many years. Can I get an amen?

This questioning and waiting reminds me of a movie called *The Agony and the Ecstasy* with Charlton Heston and Rex Harrison. Heston plays Michelangelo

who has been commissioned by Pope Julius II (Harrison) to paint the Sistine Chapel. This relationship turns into a battle of wills between the Pope and Michelangelo as to how and when the ceiling will be completed. The Pope's impatience boils down to the same question over and over. "When will you be finished?" the Pope cries. "When I'm done," Michelangelo replies in defiance. I have often had this exact conversation with God.

Michelangelo felt there was something very specific to put on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. He would begin his work and get a fair amount of it accomplished only to cover it over with plaster and begin again. His agony was trying to figure out this work of art. He was a sculptor by trade and had already produced several works of art at this point. Why had he been given this task and not a painter? What exactly was it to look like and communicate for centuries to come? The Sistine Chapel became Michelangelo's passion as he used the Old Testament for inspiration. The agony of the Pope was waiting for a finished chapel, a masterpiece that took four years to create.

Sometimes God puts a dream in our hearts that takes us out of our comfort zone and can only be accomplished through Him. When the Holy Spirit implants the destiny in your spirit, the excitement and expectation grows into an ecstasy that your heart yearns to possess. Over time the ecstasy wanes and turns into an agony as it becomes a hope delayed. I will quote a famous comedian who spoke these words of wisdom: "Success will take you where character cannot support you." God is using all this time of waiting to work His character into us. We need the level of spiritual and emotional maturity to handle the dream and the destiny. So if your destiny is big then it will take longer to prepare.

See God doesn't want you to settle for Ishmael when He wants to give you Isaac. One decision to take control of the situation and "speed up" the promise of God is a mistake we are still paying for to this day. Your decision may not affect the whole world but it will rock your world if you get ahead of God. Don't let the vision loom larger than God or it will become an idol. So surrender it at the feet of Jesus and leave it there. You are God's masterpiece and He is the artist. He wants to create His beauty in you so that at the appointed time it will shine through you.

This scripture has become my mantra. "Record the vision and inscribe it on tablets that the one who reads it may run. For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay." (Hab. 2:2-3) I pray it will become yours today.