

PULPIT COMPANION

GUARD KEEP AND WATCH THE SEED

HEBREW 10:23

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This powerful message takes us into Stage Four of our harvest journey—the waiting season.

Drawing from Hebrews 10:23 and James 5:7, we're reminded that waiting is not passive but rather a season of patient protection until God's timing brings the harvest. The Hebrew word 'shamar' teaches us three essential principles for this season: to guard, to keep, and to watch. Like a farmer who doesn't simply plant seeds and walk away, we must actively protect what God has planted in our lives.

The story of Joseph becomes our blueprint—a young man who guarded his heart through betrayal, false accusations, and imprisonment, never compromising his integrity. His declaration, 'How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?' reveals the secret: our integrity is the key to our destiny. We're challenged to examine what we're guarding—are we protecting our hearts like safe deposit boxes, or have we given away the keys and combinations to people, jobs, and addictions that drain us? The waiting season calls us to stay planted, to resist the temptation to dig up what God told us to plant.

Whether it's relationships, businesses, ministries, or prayers for our children, we must remember that every seed has its season, every vision has its process, and every calling has its calendar. What we protect today will produce tomorrow.





SCRIPTURES FROM PULPIT AI

- Hebrews 10:23 - "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful."
- James 5:7 - "Be patient then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains."
- Proverbs 4:23 - "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."
- Genesis 39:9 - Joseph's response: "How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?"
- Hebrews 11:1 - "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."
- Luke 2:25 - "Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel and the Holy Spirit was on him."
- Matthew 24:42 - "Therefore keep watch because you do not know on what day your Lord will come."
- Matthew 25:10 - "But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet and the door was shut."





DEVOTIONAL

Day 1: Guarding Your Heart in the Waiting

Reading: Proverbs 4:23; Genesis 39:7-12

Devotional: Your heart is the battleground where faith either flourishes or fails. Like Joseph, who refused Potiphar's wife by recognizing that his integrity was tied to his destiny, you must guard what God has planted within you. The waiting season is not passive—it requires active protection against predators of doubt, fear, and temptation. Your heart holds your faith, hope, and integrity—treasures too valuable to leave unguarded.

Stop giving the keys to your heart to everyone who asks. Change your combination. Protect your inner life with the same vigilance a farmer uses to protect vulnerable seedlings. What you guard today determines what blooms tomorrow. If you lose your integrity, you lose the key to your destiny.

Day 2: Staying Planted When Nothing Seems to Grow

Reading: Hebrews 10:23-25; Psalm 1:1-3

Devotional: The worst thing you can do is dig up what God told you to plant. In our impatient culture, we uproot relationships, callings, and promises before their season arrives. But seeds buried in darkness are not dead—they're germinating. The bamboo tree cultivates for five years underground before breaking through soil. Your waiting is not wasted; it's training. Hold unswervingly to hope because He who promised is faithful.

Don't abandon covenant for convenience. Don't mistake stillness for stagnation. Stay planted in the relationship, the calling, the faith community where God positioned you. You cannot bloom if you keep moving your roots. Trees planted by rivers of living water will not be moved. Your breakthrough is coming—stay in the ground.





DEVOTIONAL

Day 3: Keeping Faith Through Years of Silence

Reading: Luke 2:25-32; Hebrews 11:1-6

Devotional: Simeon teaches us that faithful waiting is never wasted waiting. For years—perhaps decades—he showed up at the temple, clinging to an ancient promise with fresh faith. No prophet spoke. No revival came. No visible confirmation appeared. Yet he kept showing up because God said it. Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. It's the bridge between what is and what shall be. When others stopped believing, Simeon stayed faithful.

One day, what he carried in his heart came wrapped in swaddling cloths. The consolation of Israel arrived. Your answered prayer may not come on your timeline, but it will come on God's. Keep showing up. Keep believing. What you've been praying for is closer than you think.

Day 4: Watching With Your Lamp Filled

Reading: Matthew 25:1-13; Matthew 24:42-44

Devotional: To watch means to live with expectant readiness, not anxious worry. The five wise virgins weren't lucky—they were prepared. They kept oil in their lamps because they understood that the bridegroom could arrive at any moment. Watching doesn't mean sitting idle; it means working while waiting, preparing while believing. In these dark times, the question isn't whether darkness will come, but whether you have oil when it does. Your lamp is your life—guard it, fuel it, keep it burning. Opportunity and eternity don't always give second chances. When grace opens a door, it doesn't stay open forever.

Stay ready so you don't have to get ready. Check your spiritual boarding time. Keep your passport of faith in hand. Listen for the signs of His coming. Are you ready if He called your name today?





DEVOTIONAL

Day 5: The Harvest is Coming—Hold On

Reading: James 5:7-11; Galatians 6:9

Devotional: The farmer waits patiently for the land to yield its valuable crop, trusting the autumn and spring rains. He doesn't dig up seeds to check their progress. He guards, keeps, and watches—practicing shamar. This is your Cairo moment, your appointed time. What you protect today will produce tomorrow. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Joseph guarded his faith for twenty-one years before his turnaround. Simeon kept believing through decades of silence. The wise virgins stayed ready through the long night. Your waiting season is actually your preparation season.

Guard your heart from predators. Keep your faith planted deep. Watch with expectation. The harvest is coming. Your breakthrough is germinating beneath the surface. Hold unwaveringly to hope—He who promised is faithful.





SMALL GROUP GUIDE:

"Feed What You Want to Flourish"

Opening Prayer:

Begin by asking God to speak to your group during this time and to give wisdom for the waiting seasons each person is experiencing.

Key Scripture:

Hebrews 10:23 & James 5:7

Icebreaker Question

Share about a time you had to wait for something important (a job, relationship, answer to prayer, etc.). How did that waiting period change you?

Main Takeaways

1. The Three Principles of Shamar (Guard, Keep, Watch)

- The waiting season requires active participation through:
 - Guarding - Protecting from threats
 - Keeping - Preserving faithfully until the right time
 - Watching - Staying alert and ready

2. Guard Your Heart

- "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." (Proverbs 4:23)

3. Keep Your Faith (Stay Planted)

- Don't dig up what God told you to plant. Faith that bends too easily breaks under pressure.

4. Watch and Be Ready

- Keep your lamp filled with oil. The waiting season is not passive—it's active preparation.





SMALL GROUP GUIDE:

"Feed What You Want to Flourish"

Discussion Questions:

Section 1: Guarding Your Heart

- What are the "predators" that threaten your spiritual growth during waiting seasons? (doubt, fear, temptation, comparison, etc.)
- The sermon mentioned that "if you lose your integrity, you lose the key to your destiny." What does this mean practically in your life right now?
- How is Joseph's response in Genesis 39:9 ("How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?") a model for guarding our hearts? Share a time when you had to make a similar choice.
- The pastor said, "Stop giving the keys to your heart away." What relationships, jobs, or situations have you given too much access to your heart? How can you change your "combination"?

Section 2: Keeping Your Faith (Stay Planted)

- Where are you tempted to "dig up" what God has planted in your life? (A relationship, career path, ministry calling, healing process, etc.)
- Read Hebrews 11:1. How does this definition of faith help you during seasons when you "can't see it yet"?
- The sermon lists several areas to "stay planted" in:
 - Your degree/education
 - Your relationships
 - Your vision
 - Your faith community
 - Your calling
 - Your healing
 - Your purpose
- Which of these resonates most with your current season? Why?
- Simeon waited years (possibly decades) for the promise of the Messiah. What kept him faithful? What can we learn from his example about patient waiting?





SMALL GROUP GUIDE: "Feed What You Want to Flourish"

Discussion Questions:

Section 3: Watch and Be Ready

- What does it mean to "keep your lamp filled with oil" in today's context? What is your "oil"?
- The sermon warns about different ways each generation falls asleep:
 - Getting weary/tired
 - Getting distracted by busyness
 - Getting disillusioned
 - Getting overstimulated
- Which of these is your biggest challenge? How can you stay awake and alert?
- Matthew 25 teaches that "the door was shut"—not as punishment, but as reality. How does this motivate you to stay ready?
- Who are the people in your life who help you "guard your growth, encourage you to keep your faith, and watch with you in hope"? How can you be that person for others?

Personal Reflection Questions

(Take 3-5 minutes of silence for individual reflection)

- What is God asking you to guard right now?
- What have you been tempted to "dig up" that God wants you to keep planted?
- Are you watching expectantly for God's movement, or have you fallen asleep spiritually?
- Is your lamp filled with oil? What do you need to do to prepare?





Practical Applications:

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Guard

- Identify one "predator" threatening your spiritual growth
- Create a specific plan to protect yourself from it
- Share your plan with an accountability partner

Option 2: Keep (Stay Planted)

- Write down one thing God has planted in your life that you're tempted to abandon
- List three reasons to stay planted
- Pray daily over this commitment

Option 3: Watch

- Do a "lamp check" - evaluate your spiritual readiness
- Identify one area where your "oil" is running low
- Take concrete steps to refill (prayer, Scripture, worship, community)

Option 4: Community Guard

- Reach out to someone in your group who is in a difficult waiting season
- Commit to praying for them daily this week
- Send them an encouraging text or call mid-week





Group Prayer Focus

Pray for:

- Wisdom to guard hearts against predators of doubt, fear, and temptation
- Strength to stay planted when we're tempted to uproot what God has sown
- Spiritual alertness to watch and be ready for God's movement
- Each person's specific waiting season

Prayer Method: Go around the circle and have each person share one word about their waiting season (patience, hope, endurance, breakthrough, etc.). Then have someone pray over all the words shared.

Scripture Memory Verse

Hebrews 10:23 - "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful."

Challenge: Memorize this verse together and text it to each other throughout the week.

Closing Thought

"What you guard today will produce tomorrow. The harvest is coming. This waiting season is actually a Kairos season—God's appointed time. Guard your hearts. Keep your faith. And watch."





Next Steps

- Share your "one thing" application with the group via text/email
- Check in mid-week with your accountability partner
- Come prepared next week to share how God met you in your waiting season

Additional Resources

- Journal about your waiting season daily
- Read the story of Joseph (Genesis 37-50) noting how he guarded, kept, and watched
- Study other "waiting season" figures: Abraham, Hannah, David, Anna (Luke 2)

