

## “Click”

March 29, 2009

First Presbyterian Church of Kingwood

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The movie was called “Click.” Maybe you saw it. It came out a few years ago and starred Adam Sandler who’s a funny guy. And the movie had some funny moments in it, but it also had a premise worth some thought.

You see the movie was about a character named Michael Newman. He’s a family man who’s about to realize a lifelong dream. He believes in the next few months he’ll be promoted to partner in his firm. And he believes his promotion will finally give him the authority at work to set his own schedule and spend more time doing the things he’d like to do.

The tough part of the dream though is waiting for it to happen. It’s wearing Michael down, and the stress is showing in his marriage and his family life. So one night, after an argument with his wife, he goes downstairs. He tries to turn on the television, but the remote control is broken. So he puts on his coat and drives out into the night to find a replacement.

He ends up walking into a store called “Bed, Bath and Beyond” where he meets an clerk named Morty. Turns out Morty is more than just a clerk for he shows Michael a truly universal remote control. It literally controls everything.

It has a “pause” button that stops time, a “rewind” button that moves people into the past to let them do something over, and it has a “fast forward” button. The “fast forward” button will let anyone jump into the future and for Michael that means jumping ahead in his life to the place where his promotion and happiness are waiting for him.

Before he presses the “fast forward” button though Morty asks Michael a question, “Have you considered the consequences of what you’re about to do?” “Yeah,” Michael answers. “Why, you think I shouldn’t do it?” “It’s your life,” Morty says, “what you do with the remote is your life ...” “Exactly,” Michael interrupts, “so what am I going to miss – thirty arguments and a haircut?”

Turns out he misses a lot more than that. But what I'd like us to think about this morning at least for a few moments is the idea. What if there really was a way to "fast forward" your life from where you are now to where you dream you will be. Would you push the button? Would you?

And while you're thinking about your answer, how do you think David would have answered that question? Because I have a sense from reading 2 Samuel 2 that it would have seemed very appealing to him.

Remember Saul was dead. It had taken years but it had finally happened. Saul was dead. And now at last David's destiny can begin to take shape. He inquires of the Lord, "Should I move back to Judah?" "Yes," God says. So he moves back to Hebron, where the text says "the men of Judah anointed David king over the house of Judah."

But Judah was only one of twelve tribes. And the eleven others were under the control of Abner, the commander of Saul's army and Saul's son Ish-bosheth. So the score at this point is 11 to 1 in favor of the House of Saul.

The remarkable thing though about the whole situation is the response of David. You may have noticed. There isn't one! In fact, after he thanks the men of Jabesh-Gilead and invites them to be part of his kingdom, the name of David is notably absent from the rest of the chapter. But the dialogue going on inside David's head, well I'm sure you can imagine what it must have sounded like.

Samuel had clearly anointed him as God's king over all Israel. There was no question about it. David knew it was his destiny and it had begun to take shape. Saul was dead. David had been crowned king by the men of Judah. Things were moving in the right direction. The goal was in sight. But then ... it wasn't. The destiny of David stalled out in Hebron. And it stayed stalled out the Scripture says "seven years and six months."

That's a long time to have your dreams deferred. So if you had offered David a chance to take a universal remote and control his future, do you think he would have done it? It was his destiny to be king, so why wait? Why wait?

I read an interesting article the other day in a Christian magazine in which a Christian psychologist named Kim Hall was asked that question. An interviewer asked Kim how long her clients were typically willing to wait for God to work healing in their lives. And her response, I thought, was revealing. Here's what she said.

“The people I see increasingly seem to believe that they have a right to be happy immediately. ‘I want what I want, and I want it now.’ They don’t want to wait. Waiting is interpreted as pain. And pain is something to alleviate, preferably as soon as possible.

“If an oak tree blows down in your yard in a wind storm,” Kim said, “you can go out in America today and buy a 50-foot oak, have it planted the next day and make it look as though it had always been there. So why on earth would anyone want to wait for God to work healing for them or restore a relationship in their lives? To convince a client to do that is a struggle, a constant struggle.”

And the same kind of struggle must be going on inside David’s soul, don’t you think? I’m sure that’s why he doesn’t speak or do anything, because he’s pondering the question. Why wait? Why wait? I could push the fast forward button right now. I could lead my troops into battle with the house of Judah on my side. It’s my destiny to win the throne. I can feel it. I can almost taste it. So why wait? Why wait?

Do you like waiting for something to happen in your life? I don’t, but maybe that’s just me. Maybe you do. Let’s see, shall we? I’ll walk you through an imaginary scenario and you can kind of take your pulse on this issue.

Here's the scenario. You’re at a tollbooth. The driver of the car in front of you is having a friendly extended conversation with the operator of the tollbooth. Now in that situation which one of these responses seems more like you?

A: You smile because deep down it gives you joy to watch two human beings forming community. You think about joining the conversation, maybe inviting the driver and the tollbooth operator to join your Life Group at church.

B: You take a deep breath and decide to take this wonderful unforeseen opportunity to meditate. You turn off your radio, close your eyes, take a cleansing breath and begin to hum your favorite hymn.

C: You grab the steering wheel with both hands, shout “C’mon” as loud as you can, and attempt to position your front bumper against the back bumper of the car ahead of you so you can push them through the tollbooth.

Which of these responses seems more like you? Well the truth is the answer may be “D. None of the above” because most of us just put up with situations like this one that require us to wait. But there are other kinds of waiting, aren’t there, other kinds of waiting that are harder to just put up with.

Like the waiting of a single over thirty who wants to be married, but can't find a partner. Or the waiting of a childless couple who want to start a family, but month after month their prayers go unanswered. Or a father of four who needs to find work, but can't find a job.

Lew Smedes a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary once put it like this: "Waiting is our destiny. As creatures who can't always by themselves bring about what they hope for, we wait in the darkness for a flame we can't light. We wait in fear for a happy ending that we can't write. We wait for a 'not yet' that feels like a 'not ever.'" And we do, don't we? I know I've been there. How about you? But what do you do when that happens, when you wait and wait for an unrealized hope, an unrealized expectation, a dream that seems always just out of reach? What do you do?

Are you tempted to take control? Do you want to find a fast forward button for life and just push it? I know I do sometimes and so do many of the people I talk to and counsel with, so I suspect David probably wanted to do that too here in 2 Samuel 2.

But something held him back. What was it? I doubt it was fear. Maybe it was just fatigue. Or maybe, maybe it was a memory. A memory of what had happened to Saul when he pushed the fast forward button in 1 Samuel 15 and heard Samuel tell him that the kingdom would be torn from his hand and given to someone else. Maybe David remembered what happened to Saul. Maybe David remembered that he was the "someone else." Maybe; I don't know.

What I do know, though, is that something holds David back in 2 Samuel. Something stops him from pushing the fast forward button and, as a result, he learns, I believe the answer to the question we all ask; "Why? Why wait?" Because, in truth, there are only two answers to that question that I know. And here's the first. When you're facing a problem in your life; the first reason to wait is because it gives God time to act on your behalf.

Will you do something for me? Will you reach in front of you and take the blue Bible that you find there and turn with me to Psalm 37. And I want you to notice before we start reading the notation that's over this psalm, "A Psalm of David." So this is a psalm that David wrote. He's the author and the words of this psalm are spoken from his heart. Actually I believe they emerged directly out of the story that we read today and the stories that follow it in 2 Samuel 2. For I believe Psalm 37 reflects David's desire to talk to answer for his contemporaries and for us the question, "Why wait? When you're at a crucial juncture in your life, when the stakes are high and the consequences are, why wait? Why wait and give God time to act?"

Will you follow along with me now as I read for us the first nine verses of Psalm 37 ...? “For evil men will be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land.” That’s the lesson David wants to share with you and me this morning because that was his experience.

You see instead of pushing the fast forward button in 2 Samuel, David waits. And after David’s decision to wait, God goes to work. He acts through a variety of people. He acts through a variety of circumstances. He acts over a period of seven years and six months. You can read about all the ways that God acts in 2 Samuel 2 and 3 and 4.

And after you do you will eventually get to 2 Samuel 5 where you will read that all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and acknowledged that the Lord had given David the mandate to rule over all Israel. And David’s destiny was fulfilled. But it wasn’t fulfilled by David pushing the fast forward button and going to war against Israel in 2 Samuel 2. It was fulfilled by David’s faith that waited and gave God time to act.

In the little book of the prophet Habakkuk, there’s a large promise from God to each one of us and we need to know it. It’s found in Habakkuk 2:3 and this in part is what it says, “the vision awaits its time; but it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come to pass.”

So when you and I are confronted by a vision that refuses to materialize in our lives, our first inclination ought to be to do what David did. Instead of asking “Why should I wait?” or feeling like “I’ve got to do something.” Instead of trying to find a way to forge ahead on our own, we need to learn to wait. We need to learn how to give God time to act for us. Because He will, He will. He did in David’s life and He will in ours.

But there’s a second reason why we need to learn to wait. And here it is. Waiting not only gives God time to act, it gives us time to realize what God is doing and co-operate with it. Think about the story of David. In 2 Samuel, after the verses we read this morning, the remainder of the chapter is taken up with stories about minor battles between men who served the house of David and men who served the house of Saul. So why take up the pages of Scripture with details about minor battles?

Because God’s at work! And in the opening verse of chapter 3 that fact becomes clear. The verse says, “The battles between the house of Saul and the house of David lasted a long time. But the house of David grew stronger and stronger while the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker.”

In other words, it became apparent to everyone that although the odds started out overwhelmingly in favor of the house of Saul, it was the house of David that was beating the odds time and time again. What was humanly impossible was happening with regularity. And it didn't take David, or the writer of 2 Samuel, or even the house of Saul very long to understand why. God was with David and he was acting for him.

And when David realized this, the Bible says he began to co-operate with what God was doing. But if he had pushed the fast forward button in the beginning of chapter 2, he never would have had the chance. David never would have had the chance to see what God wanted to do because he would have been too busy trying to figure out what David wanted to do.

And that's our problem, isn't it? When we face a tough wait in our lives, we think we need to find a way out of it. We think everything depends on us. But it doesn't. Everything depends, my friends, on our willingness to wait on the promise and the power of God. And our task is not to figure out how we should act. Our task is to figure out how God is already acting for us and try to co-operate with Him.

It was October of 2003. It was Game Six of the NLCS and the Chicago Cubs were at home playing against the Florida Marlins. It was the top of the eighth inning and the Cubs were five outs away from winning the game and moving into the World Series for the first time since 1945.

A young man named Steve Bartman was at the game. He was sitting in the box seats along the left field line and he was waiting. He was waiting, like all true Cubs fan, for the Cubs to win the game and end their 100 years of frustration, because the Cubs haven't been to the World series in more than a century!

And then, in the top of the ninth inning, a foul ball headed down the left field line. Bartman said later, "I had my eyes glued on the ball the entire time. I was so caught up in the moment and the possibility of catching that ball that I didn't even see Alou running towards me (Moises Alou was the Cubs left-fielder). Had I seen him for one second, I would have done whatever I could to get out of the way and give him a chance to make the catch."

But he didn't see. So he leaped to his feet and reached out for the ball. And Moises Alou didn't make the catch. And the Florida Marlins went on to score seven runs in the ninth, and win the game and prevent the Cubs from going to the World series. All because Steve Bartman didn't see.

And we don't either, because just like Steve, we get "dialed in" on what we think we is happening and how we need to react and what need to do instead of looking to see what God is already doing. And because we don't look for Him, we don't see him and we miss the chance to co-operate with Him.

But David didn't miss the chance, did he? He didn't push the fast forward button. He didn't leap to his feet and try to catch the ball. He didn't try to solve his problem by himself. No, he waited. He waited. He waited and gave God time to go to work. He watched and gave himself the chance to see what God was doing in his life. Then he co-operated with it. And we can learn to do the same thing.

Let's pray ...