

Staff Work

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## The Line

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## The Line

### Abstract

"All too often I long for the Savior to come quickly in my life, to fix my frustrations and to give me exactly what I want and think I need at that very moment."

Posting about the difficulty of waiting from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/the-line/>

### Keywords

In All Things, Advent, waiting, expectation, Christmas

### Disciplines

Christianity

### Comments

*In All Things* is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

# The Line

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 [inallthings.org/the-line/](http://allthings.org/the-line/)

Liz Moss

Forty minutes. Our son waited in line for forty minutes to sit on the lap of the visiting Santa Claus. For a kid [who loathes waiting](#), this was a tremendous feat. The live band played Christmas tunes on the other side of the room as loud, overly excited kids shoved up against him.

Slowly the line moved.

One by one each child before him climbed on the man dressed in red's lap. They whispered in his ear, sharing their hopes of what they would like to find on Christmas morning. Pictures were taken. And a gift was placed in their arms. One by one the line moved forward.

My husband and I kept checking with our son, sure he would change his mind and retreat back to a place not as hot and not as loud—a safe place—but he insisted on waiting. He was determined to work as hard as he could to sit on Santa's lap like the rest of the kids in the room. So, we coached him as he took little steps forward. "Now, when you get to the front of the line, he might ask you your name and how old you are," we said. "Do you know what you want for Christmas?" we asked him. His head nodded with affirmation, slowly saying, "I want a Wii U game for my brother." "Do you want anything for yourself?" we wondered. "I want a Wii U game for David." (Don't be too thrown by what appears to be selfless asking on his part. His top favorite thing to do is watch other people play video games.)

The line slowly moved forward.

He took a step up on the white stool and climbed on his lap. Solemnly he whispered in the man's ear. Like the other children before him, the photographer snapped the picture, a candy cane was pushed in his hand, and a gift was placed in his arms. He stepped off the step stool and the next kid was placed on Santa's lap. The line moved forward.

As we made our way home, joy filled our son's face. He had worked so hard and now he had a gift in his arms. "I hit the present pot," he exclaimed. He was beyond thrilled.

Then it happened. The wrapping paper was torn and the gift inside was revealed. And, the joy on his face turned to pure disbelief. "This is the wrong present," he said. "We must go back and get the right one. I asked for a WiiU game and not a truck!" He was devastated. Santa had let him down for clearly not hearing what he requested. And, we, apparently, let him down for not clearly explaining the "sitting on Santa's lap protocol." He had to *actually* wait for the gift he told Santa he wanted for Christmas. And, the Wii U game was *only* a suggestion for Santa's list—he might not actually get it. His trust in Santa had vanished. And, his expectations were destroyed.

I wonder how often we set our expectation too high in our own life. We wait for what-seems-like forever for life to happen in the way we believe it should turn out and in the end, after all the waiting is over, it doesn't look one bit like what we started waiting for. Our trust in others can quickly vanish when our expectations look different than reality. Our expectations are all too often destroyed.

*O God, forgive us.*

The prophet Isaiah writes: "Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,

and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for her sins.

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."<sup>1</sup>

All too often I long for the Savior to come quickly in my life, to fix my frustrations and to give me exactly what I want and think I need at that very moment. *We want drive through peace and instant hope.*<sup>2</sup> Far beyond 40 minutes, we wait and *groan* for comfort and peace. We want our paths straight immediately, the uneven ground leveled instantly, and the glory of the Lord to be revealed promptly. And furthermore, we put ourselves in a box, designing our own expectations and timeline for what the presence of Christ should look like in our small world.

*O God, forgive us.*

In all reality, however high or low we set our expectation for Christmas or the return of our Savior, the Emmanuel's presence will far meet any desire we hold. In fact, the coming of the Savior gives us life—a new life in abundance. Every time and in every way, God with us changes us, breaks us, and heals. And, although the outcome may look different from what we originally expected, in an overwhelming way God's power, majesty, and peace reigns and rules.

*Come quickly, Lord Jesus.*

*In this season of Advent, in what ways could your personal expectations be shifted? How has God's presence in your life changed your reality far beyond what you ever expected?*

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## Footnotes

1. Isaiah 40:1-4 ↩

2. A lyric from "O God, Forgive Us" by For King and Country (Word Entertainment). ↩