

9-17-23

Sermon: Seeking Patience

Scripture: James 5:7-12, CTW Psalm 43

Hymns: 157, 208, 234

Theme: What kind of pressure or trial, stress, or problem are you facing in which you need to exercise patience and perseverance? How are you responding to it? Are you willing to wait? Are you acting when God is saying "Wait"? Are you demonstrating patient perseverance in the midst of your problem?

I. Today James talks about patience.

A. This is one of those virtues that doesn't come easily to any of us. Everything about our life seems to be designed to test our patience, doesn't it? Think about the kinds of things that try your patience: long lines at the grocery store, having someone pull out in front of you on the highway and then drive extremely slowly, waiting for hours at the doctor's office, slow service at McDonald's.

Long winded preachers who talk way too long – all of this tries our patience, doesn't it?

II. Patience- We all know we need it, but none of us want to go through the process required to obtain it.

A. There is nothing about our culture that helps us to develop this quality. Everything about our culture is oriented toward that which is fast. Fast is good. Slow is bad.

We have fast food, quick print shops, faster and faster computers, express oil changes, expressways, one-hour photos, instant messaging, instant cocoa, instant coffee, microwaves, overnight delivery, & e-mail.

We think the faster life goes the better it is for us. I don't think God has that same mindset. He wants us to learn to practice patience. That's the problem, isn't it? I'm in a hurry but God isn't.

The problem with developing patience is that it is not instant. There's nothing "instant" about patience. It is one of those character traits that grows over time rather than being given to us overnight.

We eat fast food and then want instant diet plans. I even read about a church that advertises a 30-minute church service. The Church at Rock Creek in Little Rock Arkansas is advertising its 30-minute church service "designed with you in mind".

Remember the time when church services were designed with God in mind? There is even a church in Florida that advertises 22-minute services. Go there and they promise that in 22 minutes it will all be over, and you'll be out of there. The sermons are only 8 minutes long..." **And our society applauds it!**

"That's the right way to do it -- do it fast and get on to something else." This is called a day of rest -- a day to rest in the Lord -- **not a day of "hurry up"**. Sunday is supposed to be a day when we step out of the rat race and find rest for our souls.

B. James says, be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. (James 5:7)

The NIV doesn't do a great job with the translation here. Most translations have the word "therefore" (NIV uses "then" - "so then") "So then -- in light of the persecution and suffering you are experiencing - In light of the difficulty and problems you are experiencing, be patient."

Now we must understand what the word patience actually means. The word patience comes from two Greek words Makro-thumia- (**makros**) which means "far away" or "large" or "long" and (**thumos**) which means "anger, heat or rage." It literally means - "long anger" or long-tempered---"**Slow anger.**"

Being a patient person has a great deal to do with controlling your temper. Having a long fuse, not a short one.

It is the ability to face difficult circumstances and wrongs done to you without losing your gentleness and humility. You don't blow up, you don't have a short fuse, you don't lose it.

The Bible says "God is slow to anger, full of compassion."

We're to be the same. By the way I'm glad that God doesn't have a short-fuse, Amen? **I'm glad he is patient with me.**

Now again, you have to put what James is saying into the context of what is actually happening. These guys are working and not getting paid. They are doing a full day's work but not getting a full day's wage. Not only that, but if you look at verse six some of them have been killed and murdered.

With all that in mind, James says to them, "Be patient -- don't get angry -- don't retaliate. You've been mistreated and cheated and taken advantage of --you are suffering greatly but be patient, God has you in His sights!"

C. Now here's my question: Does that even sound doable? We've all experienced the hurt of mistreatment and misunderstandings from time to time, but I don't think any of us have faced anything this severe.

Is this the counsel you would have given to them in light of the suffering they were experiencing? We might have had difficult work situations. What is our first response?

Our natural tendency is to retaliate, to return evil for evil, to get even, or to hold a grudge and become bitter. But there is a better way to respond to such hurtful circumstances and James as pastor of the church of Jerusalem reveals this to his congregation. Here's what he is saying: we are to overcome our natural reaction with a supernatural response.

Whatever the trial, whatever the problem, you must be patient. That's the standard. Why? James gives us the motivation for exercising patience in the same verse.

"Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the **Lord's coming**. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the **Lord's coming** is near. (James 5:7,8)

III. James points out that the incentive for patience is "the coming of the Lord".

A. Our incentive for patience is to be in anticipation of the return of the Lord. The word used here for "coming" is (parousia), which actually is the Greek word for "presence" or "advent." we look forward to His Second Advent, an **event** that became known simply as "The Parousia." It's his arrival.

The first advent celebrates his arrival in Bethlehem as a babe in a manger. The second advent looks forward with anticipation to his arrival as Conquering King, returning with all the saints who have gone before us and He will usher us into a new era of His kingdom reign.

B. James is really talking about a path that leads to emotional freedom here. We don't throw self-control out the window -- we don't give ourselves license to retaliate and strike back. We don't let anger enslave us.

When Paul writes to **Titus in Chapter 2:11-13**, he calls the return of Christ our "blessed hope." **That's what we are to be fixed upon.** That's what shapes our perspective on our world. This is what should mediate our response when we suffer injustice and wrongs in our life.

C. James reminds us, "It won't always be this way." A time is coming when there will be no more sorrow, no more trouble, no more crying, no more death, no more pain, no more tears.

If you're going to endure whatever suffering comes, you've got to have your eyes on the return and the arrival of Jesus Christ.

James doesn't go into any discussion here. He doesn't give us a chart. He doesn't give us any kind of insight into specifics.

He simply says "don't judge the Lord by his unfinished work. Be patient till he unveils the perfect pattern in glory." God has made a promise that the work He started in you will be completed. That work is finished when you enter heaven or Jesus returns to take the church home. Simple as that!

D. Patience Requires That We Trust God For The Issues That Are Beyond Our Control.

He says: "See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains."
(James 5:7)

What's the key concept in this verse? The issue of waiting. The farmer waits, that's how it is if you're a farmer, you plant and then you wait.

And that conveys the idea of looking expectantly for something he can't control himself. He looks for that crop to come in. The harvest frankly depends on the providence of God.

What does the farmer do when he doesn't have enough rain to water his crops? Sit around his house and grumble and complain? Would that help any at all? All that would do is increase his anxiety.

The farmer goes out to his field and does what he can and he learns to leave the rest with the Lord.

Learn to trust God for the issues that you can't control in life.

IV. So, How Can I Develop Patience In My Life?

A. In John 13:15, Jesus provides a great example...look at the prophets. Jesus said "I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you."

Imitate the conduct of the prophets, he says, they suffered and they were patient. What makes you think that you are any different? Do you think you have it more difficult than they did?

B. Determine to Persevere Through Your Difficulties.

As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. We say prayers like : "Lord, give me the patience of Job."

What's the primary thought here? God blesses people who endure -- who patiently persevere through the difficulty they are facing. I might not understand it -- I might not have chosen this for myself -- but I am going to practice patience as best I can.

C. So therefore our patient perseverance is a statement of our faith in God.

The word "patience" doesn't even appear in the book of Job. Yet when people talk about Job they constantly refer to "the patience of Job."

What reveals Job's patience? **It was his perseverance through his trial, wasn't it?** Patience is revealed in perseverance through difficult situations.

By the way -- that perseverance in the midst of your problem is a measurement of your maturity.

Look back at all we have covered in James so far, and you will see that patience is a theme that runs through the entire book.

You'll remember that James said maturity Is measured By perseverance. "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. **(This line is World Famous! To be practiced by all Christians!)**

So, your concluding thought for the day is to **ask yourselves this question:**

What kind of pressure or trial or stress or problem are you facing in which you need to exercise patience and perseverance? How are you responding to it? Are you willing to wait? Give James a try!

Let us all pray for strength! Amen?