



TIME OF GRACE®

Help Me Have More: Patience

Study Notes

Summary

Patience is the ability to endure a painful situation without losing it, a virtue that is vital for the Christian faith. In a world where pain happens, sometimes because of our connection to Jesus, we must learn how to handle our struggles without giving up on our Savior. This is one of the many reasons why we Gather for worship, giving us examples of people who are going through the same situations, yet still praying, singing, and declaring that Jesus is worth it.

- Be patient with _____.
- **Proverbs 14:29** — Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.
- **Proverbs 25:15a** — Through patience a ruler can be persuaded.
- Be patient with _____.
- **Psalm 27:14** — Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.
- _____ is patient with _____.
- **I Timothy 1:16** — But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.

Points to Ponder

1. Study James 5:7 and list at least three things you learn about patience from this verse.
2. Evaluate: Patience is a requirement for finding (and keeping) a true community of Christian friends.
3. Some people say, "Generosity is like a seed." What might they mean by that? What connection(s) do you see with a generous lifestyle and today's message.
4. Do you consider yourself a patient evangelist (aka a person who shares the good news about Jesus)? Why or why not?

Homework for Next Week

Read Proverbs 16: 32

Time of Grace Ministry
Help Me Have More: Patience
Proverbs 14:29; Proverbs 25:15; Psalm 27:14; I Timothy 1:16
August 28, 2022

Pastor Mike Novotny

I was, I am, the worst of sinners. I don't know anyone's sins better than I know my own, and maybe you feel the same way. But what does Jesus do? He displays his immense mercy. Oh, I love that adjective. He is immensely patient, and merciful, and loving to jacked-up, sinful people like us.

To phone or not to phone? That's the question. God has blessed me and my wife, Kim, with two daughters who are about those teenage middle school years, and so we have been forced to answer the question that every modern parent has to ask and to answer. To phone or not to phone? Is this the year? Is this the birthday? Is this the Christmas? Is this the time when we finally break down and give our precious daughters screens, or do we hold off? Do we wait? And to be honest with you, it hasn't been an easy decision. If you're younger here, your parents probably had to make that decision, I bet it wasn't easy for them either. And it's not because me and Kim are Amish. We remember the days of pulling out of your wallet or your purse with that little phone card, you remember those? And typing in the 72 numbers into the payphone outside the gas station just to find out where your friends were at. We don't miss paper maps, we have phones, we use phones, we love phones, we have no plans of giving up our phones.

But out of the many things that concern me about giving my daughters phones, here's the first one...me. And here's the second one...you. Have you noticed what phones have done to us? I have a sneaking suspicion that ever since smartphones ended up in almost all of our pockets, we have become, in general, as a people, a little less patient. And I've studied enough about this to know really what's happening. Our brains crave variety, a rush of dopamine floods when we see something new. And because the phone always has something new, always a new post to scroll, always a new email update, always a new app to check, our brains get excited, they itch, almost like they would with a drug. And the end result of that is it's harder for us to wait, to be patient, to leave the phone alone.

Maybe that's my way of saying, "Kids, not this Christmas." Here's though, why I really take that seriously, because I know that patient people are people-people. I know that whatever relationship we're talking about, whether you're dating someone, whether you're a part of a church family, whether it's a workplace thing, I know that patient people are the kind of people that we want to do life with. People who are quick-tempered, people who are easily angered, it's tough to be a people person unless you're a patient person. And the fact is that, even though the machines have sped up our brains and our culture, what they have not sped up are the way that people are.

Recently, a Facebook executive said that on average, a person spends 1.7 seconds looking at a piece of content, like, professionally, graphically designed, marketing approved content. You get, next, next, next, next. And did you know that you old people are the only reason it's 1.7 seconds? Because Facebook also says that teenagers will scroll 2.5 times faster than that. Next, next, next, next, next, next, next, next, next, next, next, next. Interest me, interest me, interest me, interest me, interest me. And then, do you know what happens? You put down your phone and you look at a real human being, and they don't function like the machines.

Or one last example, how about parenting? Parents of young kids, is there anything that produces patience in us quite like the little monsters? I sometimes think that God lets kids just mess with us, right? It's like, you're trying to get to church, you want to be there this week for the first songs. You've been trying, you haven't made it in three to four weeks, and you finally get Junior strapped into the car, and just as you pull that last strap and it tightens around his shoulders, what happens? That pressure just pushes it right out of him, right? The blow -- the blowout diaper happens. You -- you think, "Noooo! No, no, no, no, no." And you keep your streak of arriving late to church. Like, kids do that to us, they move slowly, they don't want help tying their shoes. But I tell you what, when you were growing up, it was a huge difference having an angry father or a patient father. Moms and dads are big and strong, they move quickly, they have decades of experience, little kids do not. And when you have a mom or dad who is patient, who slows down their big strides to take small steps as they hold your hand, like, that's the kind of home we want to grow up in, right?

And so, you and I live in this 5G, fast paced, smartphone world, but at the end of the day, patient people are our kind of people. And that's why today, I want to open this book, the Bible, and share with you a bunch of what God has to say about the fruit of patience. Because you're going to find out pretty quickly that patience is a huge blessing in earthly relationships, but the most important relationship is the one with God. And God is going to make you an amazing promise in this book that can give you joy and peace. But if you're not patient enough to wait for it, your relationship with God is going to be strained, and filled with doubt, questions, and accusations of why he hasn't fixed it just yet.

And so, what a beautiful thing today as we can open these words and pursue the fruit of patience with the help of an amazing Father. So, here's what I did for you. I've skimmed through a great Bible search engine every single time the words patient, patience, wait, and waiting have showed up in this book. If you're a Bible nerd, you might be interested to know that the two books of the scriptures where 'patience' shows up the most are the Book of Proverbs and the Book of Revelation, which makes sense, right? Proverbs is the book of how wise, smart, spiritual people live. Revelation is about suffering until Jesus comes back. Those are the two greatest times that I want to share with you just a few of those passages and teach you really three big ideas. Three ideas, one topic, the topic of patience.

So, if you're interested in that, grab a pen because I'm going to give you the first big idea right now. In all these passages, God says this, number one, "Be patient with people." If you're filling in the blanks, that's the first one, "Be patient with people."

There's a bunch of passages on this. Let me give you just one. The book of Proverbs 14 says, "Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly." You can be an angry driver, but your Father will look down from heaven and say, "Why?" You can ride that dude's bumper, you can smash on the horn, you can be that dude who's zipping from lane to lane, and God would say, "What are you getting out of this?"

Or you could be the angry parent, right? You're bigger, you're stronger, you have the authority in the house, you can stamp, you can raise your voice, you can shut the kids up quick, and God would say, "What's the win?" I mean, you can force them to obey you, but if you're an angry parent, they will soon run away from you. You can make them cower in fear when they're small, but some of you know this because this is your story, once you get old enough and can make your own decisions, you're gone. God in love would say to us, "What's the point?" Someone can tick you off on social media and you could turn the caps lock on and fire back, you could click on their little profile, find their weakness and go on blast, and God would say, "Why?" You could be the parent in the stands who's yelling at the ref, complaining about the coach, and God would say, "That's so stupid. It's a game. Games are supposed to be fun. That's so dumb." And if that seems like strong language, I'm just jacking it from the Proverbs, "Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly." Impatience is like punching yourself in the face, it just doesn't make sense.

So let me ask some of you a hard question. Are you an angry person? Is there someone sitting next to you right now who's trying to avoid eye contact? And you're furious just thinking about them trying to avoid eye contact? Maybe this is the moment for some of you to get help. Anger leads to all kinds of ugly things, and God would say, "If you need help from a pastor, from a church, from a counselor, from a friend, don't blow up the blessings of God, family, life. You're driving 70 miles an hour in a machine that controls the climate. You are so blessed. Get rid of anger, get rid of rage," God says, "Because one who is patient has great understanding."

Friends, I want you to fight against that because of this next passage. Anger backfires on you but look what Proverbs 25 says. It says, "Through patience a ruler can be persuaded." Some of you know that around here, we talk about the phrase "You first" as the foundation for a great marriage. When a husband and wife are both thinking, "You first, you first, you first," we are so, so blessed. When we turn inward and think of ourselves, things blow up really fast. I'll tell you this though, "you first" will not do you much good if you only do it the first time. I meet with tons of couples who are kind of struggling, "Give us some advice," and almost always, my advice is, "Okay, Jesus forgives you for that. Now, put her first." And three weeks later the guy comes, and he says, "I tried, I did it. And two days ago, we got in another fight. It's like, we're right back where we started." To which my response is, "That was three weeks ago, it's going to take some time. If she thinks you're only loving her because you're trying to change her, you're not going to change her." But I'll tell you what, if it's the morning after a bad argument and you put her first, that's persuasive. But when she wakes up regretting some of the words that she spoke, or he feels bad about some of the things that he said, how he raised his voice, and the very next day when they know they don't deserve it, you serve them, you put them first, and you do what makes them feel loved, man, that breathes hope and life into a relationship.

And so, God in love is saying, "Be patient, be patient, be patient." Before we move on to point number two, let me leave you with a tip that's been helpful for me, it's a Bible passage that says, "Love is patient." And whenever I feel kind of annoyed with whatever, I just repeat those words in my head - Love is patient. Love is patient. I just want to hit the gas and slam right in the side of this woman, but love is patient, right? I'm like, this is kind of annoying me right now and I could say this, I can think of a bunch of things to say, but love is patient. Some things, most things, you just have to let go. Love is patient, love is patient, and patient people are persuasive. So, that's the first thing I learned on my study of patience.

Grab your pen because here's the second thing I learned. Point number two is not to be patient with people, but to patient with God. I think king David's words are the best here, from Psalm 27:14. He wrote about 3,000 years ago, "Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord." In 1 Samuel 17 is an epic long story of David and Goliath. Have you kids heard that before? That David, full of faith, courage, he fights the giant, he chops off his head, he wins the victory, he saves all of Israel. But by the end of 1 Samuel 17, David is still not the king, he had to wait for the Lord. And then you read 1 Samuel 18 where Saul became insecure, jealous, and tried to murder David. David ran away and he survived, but by the end of the chapter he was still not the king. And in chapter 19, and chapter 20, chapter 21, and 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, we make it all the way through 30, 31, where Saul kills himself. Finally, King Saul is dead, and you flip the page to 2 Samuel 1, and David is still not the king. He hears the news that Saul is dead, he actually becomes the king in chapter two, over Judah, just that little southern part of Israel. But then Saul's children want to fight against him. So, a civil war breaks out and it happens in chapter two, and chapter three, and chapter four, until we finally get to 2 Samuel 5, where the waiting was over. Twenty chapters of the Bible it took for God's promise to come true. Over a decade of waiting for that promise to happen, and I just have to be honest with you, that's normally how it goes in the Bible.

Remember the story of Abraham? God says to this old man, "You're going to have a son, you're going to be the father of many nations," and God kept that promise. And you forget about it because it's just a couple of pages later in the Bible, but do you know how long God took? Twenty-five years. Onto the prophet Isaiah, God gave these amazing promises of a Savior to come, the virgin will be with child, behold a son is born to us, he will be pierced for our transgressions. God kept that promise when Jesus came, and was born, and died on a cross. But do you know the difference between Isaiah and Jesus? Seven hundred years. After the first sin happened to Adam and Eve, they snatched the forbidden fruit. God had said in his grace and mercy, "One will be born of a woman who will crush the devil's head." Do you know how long it took between Adam and Eve, and Jesus? A bit.

The Bible tells us that God is faithful. If he says it, he does it, but he might not do it today. But David, looking back at the end of his life, says these words to us, "Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord."

I remember years ago, I was listening to a podcast from this pastor. He was like the 'Lombardi time' kind of guy, right? We have to be at every event five minutes early, or we're late. And he married a woman who was not like that, right? She valued experiences with people. You think of

how other cultures sometimes function in that way, and so, he used to stew, right? He'd be stomping around the kitchen, waiting for her to go, checking his watch, it stressed her out, made him angry, until finally, he had this light bulb moment. He said when he was ready to go, he'd get in the car where he'd keep a good book, and as he waited for his wife to get into the passenger's seat, he would stop saying, "I'm waiting for my late wife," and he would start saying, "I'm reading a good book." And he and his wife would finally arrive, looking beautiful, happy, not stressed, all because he was patient. He realized, "My wife is worth waiting for."

I love that, because that's like God. Some of you been waiting on a blessing from God, you're waiting to feel better, you're waiting for your anxiety to turn a corner, you're waiting to get out of debt, you're waiting and you're struggling. It's like you're sitting behind a wheel, honking the horn, "God, where are you?" He might be a bit. But I can tell you this, when he shows up, you will say, "God, you were worth waiting for." When like, Isaiah in glory, like Jesus on the third day risen from the dead, like Adam and Eve when their salvation was won, you will never ever look at the face of God and say, "Meh." No, you will say what angels say in heaven, "Worthy, worthy, it was worth it. I'm so glad that I waited!" So, brothers and sisters, be patient with people. Even more importantly, number two, be patient with God.

And the last thing I want to say to you today is by far the most important, that God is patient with you. Let me show you these words from 1 Timothy 1: "But for that very reason I was shown mercy, so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life." Some of you came here today and you feel stuck, numb, you're struggling, and you've been struggling for a long time. Some of you are watching online or on TV, and you don't even want to come to a church because you don't feel worthy after your divorce, after your incarceration, but God is immensely patient. He is the kind of father, who with his almighty power should take giant strides, and instead, he slows down and shuffles to hold the hands of his kids. He is so good, and he is so loving, and I'm standing up here like the Apostle Paul as an example that you too can believe in Jesus and receive eternal life.

In fact, if you're not a Christian here today, did you know that the world is still spinning because God is patient? You might have been living your whole life, years, just doing you, thinking of your goals, ignoring the word of God. The Bible says in 2 Peter 3 that God is not slow in carrying out his final promise to end this world because he's patient, and he wants you to come to repentance. There are a billion things I love about our Father in heaven but maybe this is near the top of the list, he is so patient with people like us. And so, if you want to grow in your patience with others, with God, maybe this is the best place to start. The patience that God has towards you, he waits. He waits while you slowly change, while you come back to him, while you feel what you should feel, and do what you should do. He waits, and he waits, and he waits, because he knows that through patience, even you can be persuaded.

My prayer today for our church, for your family, and for your very soul is that God would produce in you much patience, because patience is not just a virtue, patience is supremely beautiful. Makes me think of the story of Luke. I recently read about this high schooler, about this teenage boy named Luke who had some pretty significant cognitive, and intellectual, and

physical challenges. He loved to play basketball but compared to the other boys his age, he wasn't very good at it. But the coach at his school agreed to allow Luke to be on the team, to have the uniform, to sit on the bench, but he never got to play. And to be honest, he wasn't missing much, because the team that year was terrible. Like, every game, they lost, and especially the last game of the season, they really, really lost. It was one of those games where at the end of the first quarter everyone knew it was going to be a massacre. And so, the team held on, falling further and further behind, until the fourth quarter, one of the kids on the team had an idea. He said to his coach, "What if we tried to let Luke score?" The coach was persuaded so he put Luke in and he told him the play. He took a timeout, gathered the team together, and said, "Luke, you stand on the free throw line, you don't move, we'll pass you the ball, you shoot," and so they did. Luke found his position, his team got the ball, they ran the play, they passed it to Luke, he shot, and he missed. Other team grabs the rebound, zips down the court, two points. They bring it up the court, they pass a little bit, then pass to Luke, he shoots, and he misses. Other team grabs the rebound, zips down the court, two more points. They bring it up, they pass to Luke, he shoots, and he missed again, except this time, the other team, to their credit, they kind of realized what was happening.

And so, when they grab the rebound, they pass it to Luke, and he shoots, and he misses. Now it didn't matter who was grabbing the rebound, everyone grabbed it, passed it, Luke shot it, and he missed it. And now the coach is watching because the time is ticking down in the fourth quarter. There's a minute, then there's 30 seconds, then 15, then ten, then there's only five, they pass it to Luke, his last shot, he shoots, phew! And he makes it. And Luke's arms go up. He says, "I won, I won." And the crowd is cheering, and everyone is picking him up, and Luke said, "I won." But he wasn't the only one. Patience blesses people. And on the last day when a patient God finally gets you home and keeps his final promise to you, when angels lift you up on their wings, you'll say, just like Luke, "I won, he was worth it."

Friends, be patient because God is so patient with you. Let's pray.

Our dear God, thank you so much for immense patience. I would have given up on me a long time ago and I think the whole world would too, but not you. You know all of me, you know my failures, you know that I am the worst of sinners, and yet, God, you wait. You wait as the gospel and your spirit slowly changes my heart and that's not just for me God, it's for us. Thank you that you are so patient with your sons and daughters. Thank you that you are so patient with people who don't yet believe in Jesus. You are a father of great patience and it's one of the many reasons that we adore you, and we worship you as the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

God, this world is broken, and there are probably 22 things before this day is done that will annoy us, and could easily anger us. Give us your Holy Spirit when those times come, that we would take a deep breath, not bubble over with anger, but just to remind ourselves that love is patient, and you are patient with us. May the Gospel change us from the inside out as you continue to produce what we truly need, the fruit of patience. We ask all this boldly because we know what kind of Father in heaven you are. And we pray today, in Jesus' name, and God's people said, Amen.