

The Old Paths

Volume 13, Issue 8

April 23, 2006

“Patience! Wait! Be Longsuffering!”

Jarrod Jacobs

Humans are not very patient, as a rule. Regardless of culture, it seems there are certain things we want, and want “now”! Certain ones have told me how much they despise waiting in lines. They want to be “doing” something else, and don’t have time to wait. Others talk about how they hate to wait for orders in the mail, or hate to wait on the internet, etc. Our culture has a problem with waiting, and so, we are treated to “fast” food, buying items “online” to avoid shopping mall lines, credit cards for fast “purchasing power” and the like. We often use abbreviations (asap, NASA, laser, NASDAQ, etc.) because it takes less time to say it that way. Furthermore, we have “condensed” novels, speed-readers, and the like because we don’t want to “waste time” in our reading! I am reminded of the episode of “Andy Griffith” where the businessman came to town with car trouble, and was in such a hurry, while the rest of the town was being lazy on a Sunday afternoon. This man represented about 99% of our culture then, as well as today! We have much to do today and we expect results “yesterday”.

When it comes to the subject of patience or longsuffering, I see yet another area in which I need to grow! Take note of the continued admonitions for patience, waiting, longsuffering, and the like in the Scriptures. The words

“patient”/ “patience” are found 46 times in the KJV. The word “wait” (and its various forms) is found 154 times in the Bible. “Longsuffering” is found 17 times. When I see the numerous references to patience, longsuffering, and waiting within the Scriptures, that tells me something! God is a God of patience (Rom. 15:5) and He wants us to be like Him. Therefore let us take heed to the many references to patience in the Scriptures and be patient ourselves!

The Old Testament Teaches Us Patience.

One good description of patience comes from the Psalms. In one of the psalms, David wrote, “*Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD*” (Ps. 27:14). When God spoke to the people through Isaiah, we see Him telling folks, “*They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint*” (Isa. 40:31). David’s son wrote about patience and said, “*Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit*” (Ecc. 7:8). These and other passages emphasize the great need for patience in our lives. Let us learn the lesson given to us by God (Rom. 15:4).

The New Testament Teaches Us Patience.

In studying the New Testament,

we see that the need for patience, longsuffering, and “waiting” has not gone away. When Jesus described the “good ground” that had been sown, He said, “*But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience*” (Lk. 8:15). To the Roman Christians, eternal life was promised to those “*who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality*” (Rom. 2:7). In this book, we also see the need for Christians to be “*patient in tribulation*” (Rom. 12:12). In fact, “*the servant of the Lord must be ... patient*” (II Tim. 2:24). It is a command given to Christians that we “*be patient toward all men*” (I Thess. 5:14).

In addition to patience, we also see the word “longsuffering” being used. It is interesting to note that of the 17 times the word “longsuffering” is used in the KJV, 9 of those passages refer to God’s longsuffering with man! For example, it is God’s longsuffering that leads folks to repentance (Rom. 2:4; II Pet. 3:9, 15). Also, our God is “*a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth*” (Ps. 86:15). When studying about longsuffering, we see the fruit of the spirit includes longsuffering (Gal. 5:22). Just as God is described as “longsuffering,” so also must the Christian be longsuffering (Col. 3:12)! Paul himself stated that Timothy knew of his longsuffering with the brethren (II Tim. 3:10). So, if we are to follow Paul as he followed Christ (I Cor. 11:1), then we must also be longsuffering toward men.

Living As Patient, Longsuffering People.

It naturally follows that once we study about patience and longsuffering, we must then apply these lessons to

ourselves if the study is going to do any good.

Sadly, some folks learn the “hard way” that we encounter many problems in our lives when we are not patient or longsuffering! If you do not believe this, talk to Sarah about what happens when you’re not patient (Gen. 16). Her impatience with the Lord’s promise for a son (Gen. 15:4) brought about her insistence that Abraham have a child with Hagar. Abraham’s submission to her impatience brought about many problems in this world, some of which we are still facing today with the Muslims!! (They claim Ishmael was included in the promises with Abraham and Isaac.)

Impatience is seen in other ways, for the Bible condemns men who are “hasty.” For example, Solomon wrote about haste, saying, *“He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly”* (Prov. 14:29; Ecc. 7:9). He later wrote, *“Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him”* (Prov. 29:20).

Specific Areas Where We Need Patience.

Seeing that patience, or “waiting” is needed in the life of a Christian, let us look at some areas where more of it is needed.

More patience is needed in preaching the gospel. Paul said, *“I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase”* (I Cor. 3:6). No farmer expects a harvest the day after planting! Yet, how many of us expect a “harvest of souls” within minutes or days of someone hearing the gospel for the first time? Yes, there are open and receptive hearts out there, but many folks are not receptive at first, and it takes “planting” and watering” for the seed to germinate and take root.

Are we as patient as we ought to be when it comes to spreading the gospel? Often times, we are not!

Paul told Timothy, *“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine”* (II Tim. 4:2). Notice please that “all longsuffering and doctrine (teaching)” is to characterize our work, whether we are “reproving,” “rebuking”, or “exhorting” a person! Be honest; are we really as patient with people as we ought to be? I am afraid that often times, we are expecting “immediate” results from seed sown in a field that first needs the weeds pulled (See: Matt. 13; Lk. 8)!

Yes, about 3000 were saved when Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection was preached for the first time on Pentecost (Acts 2:41). But, do we not also realize that ***before*** this event in Acts 2 took place, Christ had been preaching to some of these folks for the past three years; John before that; and also God had been longsuffering with the nation as a whole for some 2500 years before that?!? Let us learn from the example of God and be patient with folks, teach them what they need to do to be saved (Mk. 16:16), “water” the seed, and remember that you were once lost too, as you “pull weeds”!

More patience is needed when dealing with those who do not want us to serve God. By doing a little

study on “patience”, “longsuffering”, “waiting” and similar words, we find God’s encouragement to folks to keep on with what they are doing. It is sad to say, but if you have lovingly submitted to Christ’s plan for salvation (Acts 2:38), not everyone is happy that you are a Christian! Satan is at the top of the list! Therefore, we read that those who are godly *“shall suffer persecution”* (II Tim. 3:12); but in this persecution, God reminds us to “wait” on Him (Ps. 27:14)! James reminds us of those in Old Testament days, saying, *“Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience”* (Jas. 5:10). The churches of Asia were good examples of patience as well (Rev. 2:19, 3:10, etc.). Included in our study ought to be the inspired words of Peter, who reminds Christians that we ought to “take patiently” the occasions when we do well, but suffer for it (I Pet. 2:20).

Conclusion

We could all stand a good dose of patience or longsuffering, couldn’t we? Through our study, we see that it is more than being patient in a long line, or waiting on some gift. Rather, this patience ought to be a part of us every day of our lives. We need to learn to wait upon God, and to “suffer long” if need be, so that we can see a home in Heaven when this life ends.

Our Website For Bible Studies:
www.southside-churchofchrist.com



I want the truth, give me book, chapter, and verse!

Come and meet with the church at Southside.

Our address: 2920 New Hartford Rd. Owensboro, KY 42303

Meeting Times:

Sunday Morning Bible Study _____ 9:30 a.m.

Sunday Morning Worship _____ 10:20 a.m.

Sunday Evening Worship _____ 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday Evening Bible Study _____ 7:00 p.m.

“What Is Written”: Sunday (12:30 p.m.) on 94.7 & 100.5 FM.

Call: 683-9246 (WBIO) with your Bible questions.

“The Ancient Landmark”: airs Monday (9 p.m.), Wednesday (5 p.m.), & Thursday (11 p.m.) on channel 52.

Website: www.southside-churchofchrist.com (Updated weekly!)

Preacher/Editor: Jarrod Jacobs Elders: Paul Dubois & Jeff Lankford

Phone: (270) 683-5386