



St. Michael's Church  
CHARLESTON, SC

SUNDAY, MARCH 12, 2016

JAMES 5: 7-12  
JOHN: 11:17-27

PREACHER: THE REV. AL ZADIG, JR.

HELP US LORD TO BE SO CONNECTED TO YOU THAT WE MIGHT BECOME THE SERVANTS OF OTHERS.

TAKE OUR LIPS AND SPEAK THROUGH THEM,  
OUR MINDS AND THINK THROUGH THEM,  
AND TAKE OUR HEARTS, AND SET THEM ON FIRE.

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The Story is told of a little boy standing at the end of an escalator, just watching the rolling staircase over and over again.

A nearby sales lady observes this little boy for what seems like quite a long time, and finally goes up to him...

Taps him on the shoulder, and asks:

“Son are you lost? Why are you staring at the escalator?”

The boy replies:

“Ma’am,

I’m not lost,

I’m just waiting for my chewing gum to come back.”

Now that’s patience...

Today as we turn in our Preaching series to the fruit of the Spirit of Patience,

We have to admit we live in an impatient world where among other things, we want it all now! Including patience!

Think about it..we live in a world of:

- Self Checkout lines
- One weekend diets
- Overnight shipping through drones
- Speed dating
- Snap chatting
- Facebook live
- Instant answers from Siri and other speakers that can get any information you need right now..(Ask Siri about Patriots)

Patience is going the way of the corded telephone, soon to become extinct.

I love how some have defined it:

- Patience is something you admire greatly in the driver behind you,
  - but not in the one ahead of you
- Patience is letting your engine idle when you feel like tearing out the gears

- Patience is waiting without worrying
- And as the poem goes,
  - Patience is a virtue
  - Possess it if you can
  - Found seldom in a woman
  - Never in a man!

I think of the preacher pacing his office to and fro, his wife comes in and says:

What's the problem?

The preacher looks at her and says:

“I'm in a hurry and God is not!”

Could that be one of the reasons that Paul makes patience the 4<sup>th</sup> fruit of the Holy Spirit?

We've been through:

- Love, defined as unconditional love, loving even when that love isn't shown in return
- Joy,
  - defined as a state of deep contentment no matter the circumstance...
- Peace

- deepest contentment and conquest...
- And now patience..

Each fruit is supernatural, we can't manufacture it...

It's the fruit of the spirit, not the fruit of us!

- So having the fruit of the Holy Spirit of love, joy, peace, patience etc, is the outcome of being filled with the Holy Spirit.
- The fruit of the Holy Spirit is the living proof that God dwells in us.

Here's the key...

- Love, joy, peace and patience rule our life,
- When Jesus rules our souls.

So, Today..the fruit of Patience.

It's all over the Bible.

- Hebrews 6:15...Having patiently waited, he obtained the promise!
- 1 Peter 2: When you do what is right, suffer for it, and patiently endure.. this finds favor with God.

Perhaps the signature passage on patience comes from the book of James just read.

It's a 5-chapter powerhouse letter, written by James to those outside Palestine.

Therefore it's a HOW-TO on Christian living, clear and engaging. From James we get the old:

“Faith without works is dead” passage.

This How to on Christian living spends quite a bit of time on patience.

In James 5 alone, James mentions the word patient 4 times in ‘5’ verses.

It’s the call to patience chapter!

But let me break down what James means by patience here in chapter 5.

Patience here comes from 2 Greek words:

1. Hup-ome-own
2. And Mak-roe-th-umia

Hup-ome-own

Means refusing to surrender to circumstances even under trial,  
Tolerating delay without anger or being upset,

Basically, it’s restraint without complaint as regards to things.

Whereas...

And Mak-roe-th-umia

means restraint without complaint when it comes to people.

So, putting those words together we get Patience...

Simply put:

- Using restraint without complaint
  - when SOME-THING is driving us crazy...
- And Using restraint without complaint
  - when SOME-ONE is driving us crazy.

Patience therefore is impossible except when expressed by God through us.

James gives us examples of both kinds of patience..

James uses agriculture as an example of patience in things.

Be patient like the farmer who has to wait for his crops until the early and late rains have come.

Meaning there will be times in your life when like the farmer you can do nothing to speed things up!

You can't force a seed to grow!

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But then Patience regarding people.

Brothers and sisters..James says..

Remember all the prophets who were driven batty by crazy leaders!

- Think about Ezekiel who preaching against his leaders, slept in cow dung for 390 days on his left side and another 40 days on his right side!
- Job and the patience he needed to get through the pain of losing his entire family and putting up with friends who were morons!

The list of patient and impatient characters in the Bible is extraordinary!

- Abraham and Sarah, their patience in not having children until they reached 100.
- Moses, and the patience to hear from God to go back to Pharaoh...
- Old Testament Joseph, 11 years in prison for a crime he didn't commit...

- Noah and his ark...
- it took Noah '6' months to find a parking place

Consider modern day patient saints...

- William Carey, labored 7 years before the first Hindu convert came to Christ in Burma
- For the first convert to be produced in Western Africa,
  - 14 years
- New Zealand...
  - 9 years
- Tahiti
  - 16 years!

Restraint without complaint in all things

Restraint without complaint in all people who drive us nuts!

You see why it's impossible without the Holy Spirit?

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Now look at the purpose of Patience.

This isn't just a self help talk to make your life better.

The purpose of Patience comes from the first verse of James.

Be patient until the Lords Coming.

After that, be as impatient as you want!

Just kidding...but:

- Show restraint without complaint in all circumstances

- And with all people...

**So you are prepared for eternity.**

This is where patience is tied into discipleship.

Discipleship defined is that lifelong process where we are shaped by Jesus to live, look and love more like him.

It's a lifetime process of shaping and molding to be prepared for our next home...

As humans, we grow more like a tree, than anything instant.

We grow daily- not in a day. Which means:

- Jesus is not only preparing a place for us in heaven
- Jesus, **using** the fruit of Patience is **preparing us....**
- **for a place!**

Like spring training,

baseball players are training in Florida right now, for the full season.

- Likewise Patience is a trainer for heaven..

I recall the story of a young man who says to his mentor...Please pray that I would have patience.

His mentor replies, okay, I will pray you will have tribulation.

No said the student, I want patience.

The mentor quietly opens his Bible to Romans 5:3 and reads:

We rejoice in our tribulation

because tribulation produces patience,  
and patience produces character.

Sometimes God will send tribulation our way to develop our patience,

Sending tribulation to drive us to our knees so that we grab hold of Jesus and His Holy Spirit to work that patience through the heart.

Which means if we take offense at tribulation,

if we grumble and complain...

Restraint **WITH** complaint is missing the point!

Patience is trusting God even when our circumstances haven't changed yet.

The point is to shape you!

Jesus will use tribulation as a training tool!

**Remember,**

- **our character**
- **our souls**
- **ARE forged on the anvil of difficulty.**

In my house...one of the things we pray for is this:

Lord, give us long fuses with each other.

I remember during our GIC mission conference some years ago, Pastor Peter of the Ukraine, along with myself and others prayer walked around Charleston and ended by laying hands on the Rectory where we live next door.

From the inside of the house,

a shouting match could be overheard as we prayed..

This stuff is tough!

We all need long fuses to be developed into the image of Jesus for an eternity!

Short fuses bring anger, confusion and chaos.....

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Patience..Restraint without Complaint for the purpose of shaping and preparing us for eternity..

Which leads me to the opposite of patience.

The opposite of patience isn't actually impatience,  
it's judgment.

The opposite of patience is passing judgment.  
Unless we see the fruit of patience as something Jesus uses like a welding torch to shape our lives into his image,

we will live a negative impatient life of passing judgment and taking offense.

**Patience is delaying judgment** against some very important people and circumstances in your life...including..

Yourself. How many times have we been impatient and frustrated with ourselves?

I find it's always an impatience that leads to:

- frustration
- that leads to judgment
  
- that leads to self condemnation.

How could I have done that, and before long you are annihilating self.

Patience, delaying judgment against ...self

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Patience...delaying judgment against..

Spouse, child, boss and colleague.

Impatience leads to judgment,

- that leads to grumbling,
- that leads to taking offense,
- that leads to condemnation.
- Why did you do such and such,
- AND WITH the quick fuse we condemn them.

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Patience, delaying judgment against God.

Impatience toward God....

- God why did you take my child?
- How could you let my parent die in such a painful way..
- I want a spouse
  - Why am I alone God?
  - I want children...

More on shaking our fist at God in a minute...but for now...

I think of incredible men and women of God who desperately want a child,

and every baptism here reminds them of what they don't have,

As Bishop Lawrence said in his address yesterday, waiting involves both an 'a'...and an 'e'...

Waiting brings a heavy weight and only Jesus can give us relief, how....

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**Patience is only possible because Jesus is patient with us.**

2 Peter 3:9, The Lord is patient with us, not wanting anyone to perish.

**Our Lord's patience is salvation.**

Jesus was on that cross when he heard the people chanting "come down, come down."

He wouldn't do it...our Lord's patience is literally our salvation.

Jesus had and has infinite patience with us, and therefore is the source of our patience.

Jesus wants everyone to be saved, he desires not the death of sinners, but he also knows that the growth of the human heart takes time.

**It should be impossible therefore for Christians to take offense especially from each other!**

**Why?**

**Because we are all growing in to image of God together.**

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Every time we respond with a long fuse we are growing more into the image of Jesus.

Which also this means this counter-intuitive point.

Active patience is not lying down.

It's persevering when things get difficult.

Active Patience means showing up even when you're circumstances and people have you down.

It's confessing our sins as we go...

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Now I know I said patience is restraint without complaint..

But there is one we can complain to.

When overwhelmed,

Do what David did...

Over and over he shakes his fist at God.

Psalm 10:

"Why O Lord do you stand so far off?"

Psalm 13...

"HOW LONG O LORD, HOW LONG!"

That's your steam reliever....

Express your heart to God who hears our impatient suffering.

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Love, Joy, Peace, Patience...

I say it again, they are not natural...

Not your fruit, but the fruit of the spirit!

And as fruit, this fruit is meant to go through you to others.

When people see the fruit of the spirit of patience in you, when they hear your stories...it gives fuel for the fire of their own patience!

I think of missionaries to Tahiti, nearly 2 decades of preaching without seeing conversions...

That story is then to be used by the missionaries today in

- Burundi
- India
  
- Kenya
  
- For us in Charleston.
  
- For our own homes and members of our own family not converted!

Jesus is in charge,

- Patience,
- it's his fruit,
- his battle,
- his charge,
- not ours.

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**Well, I don't have to tell anyone that this fruit is the most elusive in my own life.**

**I'm a poster child of impatience!**

Jesus is still shaping me,

I'm in the refiners fire,

In fact' He's got to use extra strength fire to change me from within regarding patience.

Yet, I think I would be so much worse had it not been for three simple words uttered by Bishop Salmon over 20 years ago...

I was a senior in seminary...

And like Seniors in High School this time of year,

if you don't know where you're going by now, you begin feeling that pressure from family and friends

and if just one more person asks you where you're going you want to impatiently clock them.

So it was with my wife and me that Senior Year.

We had offers around the country but Bishop Salmon wouldn't release me out of the diocese, and I remember impatiently pushing back saying:

Bishop for good ness sakes, its March, what do I do?

Bishop Salmon, pauses, and in his Natchez Mississippi voice box says..

Al, I want you to do just one thing....

I want you to be thinkin' of

JEEEE---SSS---UUU---SS....

Dwell  
On  
Jesus.

Restraint, without complaint as He shapes us into His image.