

Advent: Hope

Day 1

Be Patient

As we look at hope, we come to understand that it is a confidence in the expectation of something good. Because of this, we learn that hope without patience is torture. Just like children are in a kind of torture waiting for Christmas to arrive because they are confident it will arrive with blessings, as Christians our hope can be a kind of torture if it is not combined with patience. How do we begin to put more patience into our lives? Check out this excellent article to find out:

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/patience-will-be-painful>

Verses: 2 Peter 3:9, 1 Thessalonians 5:14, Galatians 5:22–23

Prayer Topics: Joy, Anticipation, Peace

Day 2

Digging Deeper

How do we make the most out of hope? Have patience! We started our look at patience yesterday, and to continue our journey let's dig deeper today with this great article:

<https://renew.org/what-is-patience-in-the-bible/>

Verses: Proverbs 19:11, Ecclesiastes 7:13, Exodus 34:6-7

Prayer Topics: Steadfastness, Attention, Intentions

Day 3

Patience & Power

I have never punched a wall, but I completely understand the impulse. I have thrown parts of a line trimmer over a fence, and I have certainly thrown a number of other things across a room when I ran out of patience. Most of the time, we look at patience as a passive endeavor, and to some extent it is. Although we often see patience as the opposite of exercising power, we must be open to the idea that we have not assessed the situation accurately. In fact, one of the most powerful forces we can wield is patience. How is this so? Patience is often the ability to let power work, the confidence that given time, the power that is already in play will be enough to complete the task before us. To give an example, I once took a white river rafting trip down the Colorado river. As we were taken through enormous canyons by the flow of the river, we couldn't help but be impressed by the sheer scale of the rock

walls that towered above us on each side of the river. Many times, we enjoyed the shade that came from the towering cliffs that surrounded us. Our guide was a bit of a geologist, and spent time teaching us about the rock formations and processes that were at work to carve the amazing landscape we were traveling through. The power of water is immense, but that power unfolds over centuries, and what held us spellbound was a landscape that took thousands of years to produce. On any given day, the water that flowed through that river did very little to change the landscape, but the change was inevitable over time. There was a great power at work, a power that was certain to do its job if patience was added to the mix. Scripture tells us that the God that began a good work in us is faithful to complete that work. Do we have the patience to wield that power? Can we let that power do its work over years and decades? Many times, our impatience leads to reversing or stopping a work that is ongoing, such as when I throw a tool because I have lost my cool. Now effort must be spent and time wasted to fix the problem my impatience has caused, meaning even more patience will be required. God is at work in you, your family, and your friends. The gospel is growing seeds all around you. Can you let God do his work? Will you work with that power, let it work in you, or will you impede it? Embrace the patience that is true power, and trust that God is faithful to complete his work.

Verses: 2 Timothy 1:7, Acts 1:8, Luke 10:19

Prayer Topics: Influence, Willpower, Repetition

Day 4

Connections

We have spent a good amount of time this week looking into the importance of patience, and it should be evident at this point that patience and hope are intertwined to a larger degree than most people think. In order to live with patience, it is necessary to have a strong hope in a better future. We can endure setbacks, deal patiently with others, and get through suffering without bitterness because we hope for something better. The strength of our hope directly impacts the ability to wait patiently while things get made right. We believe that God is working in the world to bring about a state where the whole world reflects his glory and lives in the blessing of his goodness. We believe that those around us will be transformed, that God will finish his work of glorifying them, so we deal with them patiently, knowing that this too shall pass. We work through our disappointments and setbacks, and even our suffering patiently because we know that God uses these things, and all things to our benefit, working through these difficulties to help our character, attitude, and virtue to grow into Christlike glory. Without hope, patience becomes nothing more than passivity. With hope, patience is a power that participates with God in transforming the world. Hope is a necessity for patience, but patience is a necessity for hope. We wait patiently for these things we hope for to be made a reality, and we do not grow weary or despair. God is making all things new, but this is a process, not an instant transformation. Why do you think God uses a process instead of an instant transformation? How can you grow in your hope and your patience? What things can you do today to help hope and patience work together in your life to help bring about God's kingdom in you and in the world around you? Do not

delay, because patience is not passivity but the active participation with God in bringing his kingdom to earth!

Verses: 2 Peter 3:9, Romans 5:3-4, Romans 2:4

Prayer Topics: Expectations, Transformation, Generosity

Day 5

Thanks to Sylvester Warsaw, Jr for our devotional today

In Genesis 49 God gives us a very important lesson about the need to be in relationship with Him so He can speak life through His children into the lives of their children. When we're in relationship with God, He has expectations as to how to raise children. As a rule, Jews, believe that God is the only One who blesses and we find here in Genesis 49 Jacob blessing his sons by speaking a prophetic word to them from God's heart. Genesis 49:8-12 tells us this about Judah, "Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise: your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's children shall bow down before you. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up, he bows down, he lies down as a lion; and as a lion, who shall rouse him? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people. Binding his donkey to the vine, He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes. His eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than

milk.”

This is a prophetic word given by God through Jacob about Judah and the importance of Judah before the law given by God which came through Moses. Shilo is another name for Messiah and lion's whelp is another name for the offspring of certain animals. As children of God we're His offspring because of Christ Jesus who has brought many sons and daughters into the kingdom of heaven, Hebrews 2:9-18. This passage also talks about obedience because it's in our response of obedience we experience the depth of God's love and the benefits that only come from Him which we call blessings.

This passage also deals with redemption, Christ Jesus's suffering because of His blood He sheds for the sins of humanity. As children of God, the life God has called and ordained us to live is one of redemptive suffering, meaning we are speaking life into people by leading them to the cross and teaching them so they can grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ Jesus. Redemptive suffering and obedience goes hand and hand in order to experience the fullness of God, His essence gifts that this world order we live under can't give nor qualified to give because every good and perfect gift comes from God and it starts with being in relationship with Him in and through Christ Jesus. Peace, joy and hope just to name a few are gifts rooted in and experienced through His love.