

The Patience of God – Reproduced in Us

1. Overview & Review
 - a. Over the past 3 weeks we have been talking about the Patience of God and what an incredible wonder His patience is.
 - i. We have come to understand that God’s patience is that which restrains His wrath from consuming all that is contrary to His nature.
 - ii. We learned that God has the right, the ability, the power and the means to destroy anyone of us or all of us for just a single violation of His divine law, but His patience restrains Him because He looks toward the goal He desires to have with each of us...which is that we would turn from our self-directed, self-oriented lives and turn toward Him.
 - iii. We have learned that God’s patience is ultimately His power of control over Himself, literally His power of self-restraint.
2. I want to illuminate one more aspect of God’s patience before I delve into how God intends to reproduce His patience in us.
 - a. Romans 3:23-25 says, *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance (tolerance - anoche) of God He passed over the sins previously committed”*
 - i. This passage tells us that we all sin and are all made right with God as a gift of His grace which comes through what Jesus did on the cross.
 - ii. In verse 25 we are told that **God displayed Jesus as a public sacrifice for our sins to “demonstrate His righteousness.”**
 1. Most of you probably thought that Jesus died for our sins as a “demonstration of God’s love” didn’t you?
 2. That was the secondary result – the primary reason that Jesus was a public sacrifice for our sins was to show us the utter holiness and righteousness of God – and the costliness and ugliness and horror of sin – even as the penalty for those sins was poured out on Jesus, God’s only Son.
 - iii. Why did God do it?
 1. Because the passage says *“in the tolerance of God, He passed over the sins previously committed.”*
 - b. As we examine the truth of God’s patience with us, one thing that ought to SHOUT off the pages of our bibles is the incredible tolerance God demonstrates by BEARING our offences and sins as He waits for us to turn to Him.
 - i. Old Testament believers were forgiven based upon the animal sacrifice that they offered.
 - ii. But during the Old Testament period God’s justice was not served
 1. This is because of a curious and key word – Propitiation.
 2. The word “propitiation” found in this passage is never found in the Old Testament – because propitiation means “to fully satisfy the wrath and judgment of God.”
 3. It is only in the New Testament that we find this concept – and it is only in the context of a person (Jesus) that it is found – *“He (Jesus) is the propitiation...”* (1 John 2:2)
 4. Propitiation is the work of Christ on the Cross in which He met the demands of the righteousness of God against sin, satisfying the requirements of God’s justice and **canceling** the guilt of man’s sin!

- iii. As we look across the horizon of history we see a demonstration of the tolerance and patience of God:
 - 1. God didn't just forgive sin and forget about the punishment it deserved during the Old Testament period.
 - 2. **Instead**, He had forgiven sins and stored up His righteous wrath against those sins for a time in the future, a special time.
 - 3. That special time was "in the fullness of time," at the Cross, where the full fury of His stored up wrath against sin was unleashed against Jesus, His Son!
 - 4. The sacrifices of the OT were the demonstration of God's toleration of sin and patience as God bore our offense and waited. They were a tool to teach them the costliness of sin and the need for a substitute to bear their sin.
- c. *in the forbearance (tolerance - anoche) of God He passed over the sins previously committed*
 - i. In this passage, it says God bypassed or "passed over" the sins formerly committed.
 - 1. Bypassing here does not mean the sins were forgotten.
 - 2. Instead, the term for "Passed over" (Paresis) is temporary in its connotation.
 - a. **God passed over the sins of the people because of their animal sacrifices, with this passing over the sins resulting in a temporary suspension of His wrath toward both sin and sinner.**
 - b. These sins weren't remitted (wiped away), in the old Testament.
 - c. God did not forgive or take away the sins of Old Testament saints until Jesus died on the cross. T
 - d. The blood of the animal sacrifices of all the OT sacrifices only covered them temporarily.
 - e. God did not exact a full penalty for sin until Jesus died.
 - f. And then Jesus bore the full penalty at one moment in eternity and time.
 - ii. Thomas Constable explains that...*It is as though the Old Testament believers who offered the sacrifices for the expiation of sin that the Mosaic Law required paid for those sins with a credit card. God accepted those sacrifices as a temporary payment. However the bill came due later, and Jesus Christ paid that off entirely.*

3. How does this tie into our subject of God reproducing His patience in us?

- a. First of all, **unless you have experienced God's patience, you will never be able to exercise patience.**
 - i. Most of us have a milk-toast, warm and cozy definition of patience.
 - ii. We think of patience as being able to not lose our cool during traffic, to be able to keep calm when our circumstances blow out of control.
 - iii. But patience as it is described in the bible is far more meaty than that.
 - iv. **The patience God desires to reproduce within us has to do with bearing with endurance an injury or offense with the goal of obtaining a promise.**
- b. I want to draw your attention to Matthew 18:21-35 21
 - i. *Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. 23 "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. 24 "When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. 25 "But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. 26 "So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have **patience** with me and I will repay you everything.' 27 "And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. 28 "But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him,*

saying, 'Pay back what you owe.' (Robertson: What thou owest (ei ti opeileiv). Literally, "if thou owest anything," however little. He did not even know how much it was, only that he owed him something. "The 'if' is simply the expression of a pitiless logic") 29 *"So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, 'Have **patience** with me and I will repay you.'* 30 *"But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. 31 "So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. 32 "Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 'Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' 34 "And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. 35 "My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."*

- ii. This parable is often explained simply as a parable of forgiveness. At its root that is what it is.
 - iii. But there is a deeper theme that runs through this passage that underscores the REASONS why the master forgave the debt of the first slave and why the first slave did not forgive the debt of his fellow slave.
 1. That reason is that **the first slave took his master's patience lightly**.
 2. Woe to us when we take God's patience lightly or abuse it!
4. Do you recall that in our definitions and explanations of God's patience that we spoke about at the root of patience lies God's capacity to bear up under being wronged so that His goal with us might be accomplished?
- a. God bears with our rejection, our refusal to worship Him, to submit to Him, to follow Him, to surrender to the One who is the ruler of the universe. He bears with our wrong.
 - i. Why? Because He desires that each of us come to repentance so that we will not perish.
 - b. In the parable above, the master (who represents God) was **asked** to have PATIENCE with his debtor – to give him more time to repay his debt.
 - i. What the language of the passage doesn't tell us in English is that the 1st slave owed his master something in the range of our NATIONAL DEBT.
 - ii. It was ludicrous for him to ask for more time because in a thousand lifetimes he would have not been able to repay what he owed.
 - iii. Yet in his ignorance or pride or just trying to simply to "delay justice" he begs for patience on the part of his master.
 - iv. The incredible part is that the master doesn't just delay the day of accounting, but FORGIVES the entire debt.
 1. **Do you understand what forgiving a debt of that size would do to a financial institution?**
 - a. It would devastate its financial health and possibly even bankrupt it.
 - b. Yet, the master forgives the debt. (it was uncollectible anyway).
 - c. The master bears the cost of the debt himself.
 - c. **Here is the parallel between us and God.**
 - i. We have a debt we owe that we cannot pay. Most of us recognize that it is impossible to pay, but we try anyway.
 - ii. Most of us spend our lives trying to repay it through good works, getting religious, etc.
 - iii. Then one day, the day of accounting comes due. The Spirit of God shows us what we deserve for our debt of sin. And we cry out for patience.
 - iv. And God gives us much more than patience, God pays a debt He does not owe and bears the offense upon Himself.
 - v. It is a ruinous proposition. It is a costly choice God makes.
 - vi. Because it means the death of His only Son.

- vii. But the debt could not be paid any other way.
- d. At the end of verse 27, the Greek literally says that "*the king forgave him the debt.*"
 - i. You say, "Well, what did the guy do to deserve such forgiveness? How do you get the forgiveness of God?"
 - ii. You come to God with a broken heart over your utter sinfulness, knowing you could never pay the debt.
 - 1. You cry out to God for mercy and patience, aware that you deserve eternal judgment. In the midst of that brokenness, God comes in His tender grace and loving kindness to forgive your debt.
 - 2. I believe that the moment a person recognizes and confesses his sin, coming with a repentant and worshipful heart to the only One who can possibly forgive it, is the time when God comes with the forgiveness made available in Jesus Christ.
 - 3. God can forgive because He Himself has absorbed the loss through the death of Jesus Christ who has already paid the debt for sin.
- e. Now the forgiven slave goes on his merry way!
 - i. His burden is lifted, he is now debt free. Wouldn't that be nice?
 - ii. He looks at his books and sees "liabilities = 0"
 - iii. Then he looks at his "accounts receivable column" and sees a big fat 100 denarai someone owes him.
 - iv. As he walked away from the king, just as he left the palace, he happened to spot out of the corner of his eye a man who owed him some money.
 - v. The Bible says it was 100 denarii. That would be the equivalent of ten dollars compared to the billions he was just forgiven.
 - 1. Nothing, just a piddling ten dollar bill.
 - 2. The fellow had borrowed it to take his family to McDonald's and hadn't paid it back yet.
 - vi. Verse 29 is almost a word-for-word replay of verse 26.
 - 1. Only this time everything is reversed.
 - 2. What the first man had said to the king in begging for patience, the second man now says to him.
 - 3. The man with the great debt is on top and his friend who owes him ten bucks is begging for mercy.
- f. The Bible says the man saw his friend who owed him money and starts off the conversation like Guido the debt collector – he doesn't just tell his debtor that the debt is due, but he throttles him by the throat and begins to choke him.
 - i. He tries to put the fear in the fellow.
 - ii. The fellow begs for patience – it is a debt that he CAN pay. He just needs some time.
 - iii. But the first slave is unwilling to bear anything.
 - 1. He doesn't even want to bear the burden for another hour.
 - 2. He demands justice immediately.
 - 3. He expects the guy to pay, if not with money then with suffering and throws him in prison.
 - iv. Doesn't that sound inconsistent?
- g. **It ought to be unimaginable, but Christians do this.**
 - i. We don't forgive each other even after being forgiven such a great debt ourselves.
 - ii. The reason churches split and die is that they have relational friction that is not resolved.
 - iii. For example, rather than giving an irritating situation to the Lord and forgiving and embracing the person who caused it in love, people get bitter.
 - iv. That is what devastates God's family.

1. In the New Testament, we can see that even the disciples were in the midst of doing this themselves.
 2. Fighting to see who would be the greatest in the Kingdom, they may have cultivated in their hearts demeaning attitudes toward the others, putting them down lower than they were so that they could feel good about their own self-exaltation.
- h. The master hears about this inconsistency in behavior and calls the first slave back in for a chat.
- i. *'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 'Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' 34 "And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. 35 "My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.'*
 - ii. The master holds the first slave to a high standard.
 1. He holds him to the same standard of mercy that he had received.
 2. If you've been forgiven, you must forgive.
 3. **If you received patience you must offer it, bear the pain and burden upon yourself, because it is NOTHING like what God had to bear in dealing with you!**
 4. Compared to our sins against God, our sins against each other are nothing, because, though our debt to God is unpayable, the debts people incur against us are easily payable.
 5. **We must base our forgiveness on what God has done for us, not on what another person has done to us.** (Kent Crockett)
 6. We ought to get used to forgiving, because we are going to need it, not only from God in a parental sense, but possibly from the very person we won't forgive ourselves.
5. **As your pastor, if I haven't already stepped on your toes, someday, if you remain in this church, I will step on yours.**
- a. Those of you who have been here for a couple years or more, you probably have a few bruised toes that I have walked on. Amen?
 - b. Folks, I am far from being perfect. (that's no secret to some of you).
 - c. I had a couple share with me that they had been hurt by me and were struggling with the offense.
 - i. Then this couple realized something that I believe was a word from God..
 - ii. He showed them that they aren't in this church to serve "Pastor Bob.'
 - iii. They are here to serve Jesus.
 - d. Truly, I was saddened to hear I had hurt someone, but it was true.
 - i. My "people skills" aren't the best.
 - ii. I am not the most compassionate person you will ever meet.
 - iii. I am just as flawed as everyone else in this room.
 - iv. But the truth is, I am not the one who is to be worshipped here.
 - e. So make up your mind today that if you are going to be a part of this church that you will be prepared to forgive me when I bruise your feet or your toes.
 - i. I won't mean to do it, but I will probably offend someone every week by what I say or don't say or do or don't do.
 - f. You will probably hurt me as well.
 - i. I am glad I don't keep a journal of wrongs that people do to me.
 - ii. I sure hope you don't keep one either.
 - iii. But whatever I do to you or you do to me, it will never be so great that I cannot forgive you and move forward.

- g. Lord Herbert said, "He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass."
6. There is one more aspect to God developing patience in us that we must look at this morning:
- a. In Hebrews 6:11-15 *And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who **through faith and patience** inherit the promises. For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, "I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU." And so, **having patiently waited, he obtained the promise.***
 - b. **Faith + Patience = Inheritance of God's promises.**
 - i. **(Patience without faith is useless!)**
 - ii. Abraham bore up under despair, he bore up under the facts of his body being too old to bear a son, he bore up under the threat of losing his only hope of propagating the promise (by offering him as a sacrifice in obedience).
 - iii. He bore up under all of these contradictory circumstances, holding fast, with enduring faith until God fulfilled His promise.
 - iv. Folks, that is patience.
 - c. God is not holding back patience from us, but rather is showing us that faith takes time to work.
 - i. It is our faith that brings things to pass into our lives -- and life experience.
 - ii. We have to learn how to wait, from the time we pray until the time the thing you have prayed about or for, manifests into your life.
 - d. Contained within the Biblical meaning of the word "patience," is endurance.
 - i. This Greek word for "endurance" (hupomeno) means *to bear up under, to remain without retreat or giving way. It is often translated as patience.*
 - ii. Endurance means to "stand and stay" right there, no matter what comes to pass, and to stand there unwavering, unchanging -- IN OUR FAITH
 - iii. Abraham had to WAIT. And ENDURE.
 1. Patience doesn't mean that you don't squirm.
 2. Abraham squirmed. I know that because he tried to get the promise met through his wife's servant Hagar.
 3. He was enduring, he was waiting, He was trusting. And the bible says he patiently waited.
 4. His patience wasn't perfect. But it endured.
 - e. Look at James 1:2-4 *"Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."*
 - i. **Trials + Faith = Patience or endurance.**
 - ii. Just as Abraham bore up under the contradictory circumstances, we must bear up under the trials that attack our faith.
 1. So your car gets stolen. Does that destroy your faith? (if it does, you were looking at the wrong god).
 2. What happens when a loved one dies, you lose your job, you suffer for your beliefs...how do those affect your faith?
 - iii. Trials test and PROVE our faith. They not only test its reality and depth, but they also temper it (make it stronger). That is what happens when you endure.
 1. **Remember it is not YOU that is being tested, it is your FAITH that is being tested ...for the purpose of producing or developing patience and endurance, the capacity to bear up under difficulties for the purpose of obtaining the promises of God.**

7. Is your faith real? How do you know?

- a. When you bear up under the intense and crushing weight of trials that require faith to withstand.
- b. When you are willing to bear the pain of an offense, to bear its entire cost upon yourself for another because their debt to you is far less than the debt you were forgiven.
- c. Those are the kinds of patience that God desires to produce in us.
- d. Is He producing them in you?
 - i. When you refuse to forgive and bear up under an offense (it feels big, but it isn't nearly as big as what you owed God) then the trial has PROVEN the metal of your faith and found it wanting.
 - ii. I believe that there is no greater test of our faith than this. Greater than a loss of a loved one, greater than the loss of convenience, perhaps even as great as the loss of our own lives is what happens when someone injures us and leads us to want to collect the debt they owe us. It is then that you will find out how real your faith is. If you will look to the cross you will find the power to forgive because you will see the debts in perspective.
- e. What are you carrying today? What load did you bring in the door this morning?
 - i. Will you lay it down here today.
 - ii. Will you leave it here.
 - iii. Maybe you have been tempted to give up – don't do it. Hang on, hold on, let patience have its perfect work and reveal God's character in you.
 - iv. Maybe you have been angry at someone – and haven't forgiven or let go. Think about what you once owed...can it come close to being what God forgave you of? Let it go today.