

## Fruit of the Spirit- Patience-January 24, 2021

Pastor Kim and Lorraine are away for a few days, so I have the exciting privilege to speak on Patience! Those of you who know me, know how well I exemplify this trait! (or maybe not so much!)

We are on our journey in which we are looking at the Fruit of the Spirit that Paul describes in Galatians. He describes the 9 qualities of character that the Holy Spirit develops in us when we follow Jesus.

Pastor Kim has preached on the first 3 qualities: love, joy, and peace.

Today we turn to the 4<sup>th</sup> attribute – some translations call it patience, some call it forbearance, and others describe this attribute as long - suffering.

Just to clarify what each means:

**Long Suffering --having or showing patience in spite of troubles, especially those caused by other people.**

**Patience --the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without getting angry or upset.**

**Forbearance--patient self-control; restraint and tolerance**

Patience is an important attribute that speaks volumes about our behavior.

It is what others observe when we get upset.

How do we react when we have unmet expectations, or when someone wrongs us?

When we are in the midst of turmoil what spills out of us?

Now to be honest neither Pastor Kim nor I wanted to preach on this topic.

I do not model this very well and I won't throw Pastor Kim under the bus, but in the Monday musings he admitted this is not his best quality.

That's is one of the reasons that we are both so glad we have Stephen Ministers – they are the patient ones. You might say they have the patience of Job. Especially in their ministry of caring for others.

They listen without judgement, they don't have hidden agendas, they don't rush their care receiver to get over their grief, or heartaches, and they don't give advice on how others should change.

They hold their care receiver as a special gem before God and pray God's blessings on them.

As I looked deeper into this Character trait of the Holy Spirit, I realized many of you exhibit this attribute.

Over my time as minister of pastoral care at Central Church I have heard countless stories of wives caring for their husbands during an illness and of husbands who have cared for their wives for years as they suffered.

Other members have stepped up and helped their parents in significant ways.

It really doesn't matter who you are caring for, because all caring requires patience, long suffering, and forbearance.

Perhaps The best way to talk about this topic, is to describe the behavior of someone who is impatient!

Have you ever sat next to someone in a meeting who had their knee bobbing up and down, or someone intensively tapping their pencil on the table or incessantly clicking their pen?

Perhaps you have been in a conversation with friends and one keeps interrupting you and finishes your sentence.

They never let you complete your thoughts.

Or worse yet, have you ever been sharing something important, and the other person keeps looking at their watch?

Impatience is easy to detect! Our behavior speaks louder than words when we want to move to do something else.

The other day I was at Costco waiting to get my glasses adjusted. I was standing in the line opposite of where the technicians were helping other people.

And I was observing each interaction and watching to see those who could have been working more efficiently and was about to interrupt two workers who were chatting about their weekend, when I recalled the topic I was to preach on.

I had to laugh at my impatience!

My critical observations did nothing to move the line any quicker. Worse, the Holy Spirit pointed out that my impatience is really a bad habit that does not bless anyone who is around me.

A friend sent me a video clip of an elephant giving birth.

What an illustration of patience!

The gestation for a mother elephant is 18 to 22 months. Over twice as long as we who are mothers, carried our newborns.

Ladies, can you imagine being pregnant twice as long?

Now that is patience!

I thought watching this video together and especially the aftermath might be a good example from which to evaluate our patience.

I invite you to watch this with me.

## **VIDEO**

You might have noticed the delivery took no time at all! But getting the baby to stand up took a lot of coaching and assistance!

But let me ask you.

- How many of you fast forwarded the clip to the end to see if the little guy would stand?
- How many of just kept nudging the mouse on your computer a little faster to get to the end?
- How many of you were just engrossed in seeing how the community helped the newborn?

How you watched it, might give you some insight into your level of patience.

(And just so you know, Marilyn Allen cut 2 minutes off this video so we would not try your patience!)

This 4<sup>th</sup> characteristic of the Fruit of the Spirit reflects what we already looked at these last 3 weeks along with the ones that will follow.

The Fruit of the Spirit is a gift and could be described as a gem or



precious jewel.

When you hold it to the light you see all of these character traits separately, but they are all connected and held together in the bond of Love.

It is one gift, clustered under the umbrella of Love.

In other words, patience, contains love, joy, and peace, along with kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control.

Paul states this verse in Galatians 5:22.

<sup>22</sup> But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control.

Paul has already made 14 references to the Holy Spirit in Galatians: highlighting that the Spirit lives in us, that the Holy Spirit gives us assurance of Salvation, and the Holy Spirit enables us to fulfill the law of Love.

This is different from the Gifts of the Spirit that Paul describes in his letters to the Corinthians and Romans.

There each person is given a different gift, but here, there is unity: The Fruit of the Spirit, all 9 qualities, are for each believer.

**The Gifts of the Spirit are about service. How we bless others.**

**The Fruit of the Spirit is about our Christian Character.**

And although it is a gift, it needs to be cultivated! That is why we are looking at each one of these qualities separately.

Paul says in Gal 5 :25 (Walk in the Spirit).

Another translation says it this way:

Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.
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That is how the fruit is cultivated – We walk in the Spirit as He leads us.

The Holy Spirit provides us with an internal motivation and orientation to put on the character of Christ.

We invite the Holy Spirit to be guiding us as we read and ponder God's word, when we pray, when we worship and praise our Lord and when we are in fellowship with our brothers and sisters in the Lord.

It grows as we allow the Holy Spirit to lead, guide and remind us of Jesus' words as we follow Him.

This cultivation is not for us to look good, or to be satisfied with ourselves, thinking we have arrived at the mountain top.

How we demonstrate these character traits in our daily life, has the potential to draw others to Christ.

It is one way in which we emulate the God in whose image we are created.

Moreover, when we demonstrate these character traits in our daily life, they have the potential to draw others to Christ.

When we are tolerant, when we don't shut down others who disagree with us, when we listen without judgement, **that invites others into our sacred space.**

**But for that to happen, we need to be open to the Spirit and allow the Spirit to develop the fruits, all the fruits in our lives.**

There is no limit to these fruits. One is not more important than another. We don't aim for 90% of Love, and 20% of joy and 15% patience.

These qualities are limitless.

And we may not always recognize them in us.

That is not the point – the goal is for others to see them and be drawn to our Savior.

When I was at George Fox, I had an old testament professor who was so gifted and made the Bible alive with God's power and authority!

He was a hard grader, and I worked harder in his class than all the others.

He was teaching on the Old Testament Kings.

After our study of Manasseh I remember asking him, why would God allow his reign to last 55 years!

That would be like President Clinton, or Obama or Trump being president for 55 years!

That would encompass two generations. We would certainly be tired of any president after 55 years!

But Manasseh was not just any leader! His reign was an abomination!

And God was not happy with him.

2 Kings 21:2 says.



<sup>2</sup> He (Manasseh) did what was evil in the LORD's sight, following the detestable practices of the pagan nations that the LORD had driven from the land ahead of the Israelites.

<sup>3</sup> He rebuilt the pagan shrines his father, Hezekiah, had destroyed.

He constructed altars for Baal and set up an Asherah pole, just as King Ahab of Israel had done.

He also bowed before all the powers of the heavens and worshiped them.

<sup>4</sup> He built pagan altars in the Temple of the LORD, the place where the LORD had said,

"My name will remain in Jerusalem forever."

<sup>5</sup> He built these altars for all the powers of the heavens in both courtyards of the LORD's Temple.

<sup>6</sup> Manasseh also sacrificed his own son in the fire.

He practiced sorcery and divination, and he consulted with mediums and psychics.

He did much that was evil in the LORD's sight, arousing his anger.

Which is why, after seeing all his wicked ways, I asked my wise professor why God let him reign so long.

His answer was God exhibiting the fruit that we are discussing today.

**Because God is patient, not wanting any to perish, but for all to come to faith.**

**God waited 55 years!**

It reminded me of the description God gives about himself to Moses in EX 34:6-7

This is how the Lord described Himself!

"The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,

<sup>7</sup> keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,

The answer to my question about the long reign of Manasseh was not answered in the story recorded in 2 Kings ~~21~~ but answered in 2 Chronicles ~~33~~.

2 Kings, leaves us thinking he was the worst of all the Kings.

And that title still holds true.

But in 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles we discover Manasseh had a change of heart.

He was captured and taken to Babylon, where he cried out in prayer to the lord, and was allowed to go back to Jerusalem and scripture says:

**then Manasseh knew that the lord was God.**

Manasseh even tried to undo his evil deeds. He cleaned the temple of his idols, he repaired the altar of the Lord, and made sacrifices to the Lord.

But the consequences of his sin during his long reign, remained in the hearts of the people.

As I have been thinking of our nation: the violence, division, anger, retaliations, and fear that resides throughout the land, I felt like the Lord was saying to me:

“Be patient and pray for hearts throughout the land to be open to Jesus!”

Manasseh’s heart was transformed by a patient God who knocked and knocked until eventually Manasseh answered and allowed the Living God to change him.

When his heart was opened, he repented of his evil ways and was drawn to God.

Patience, forbearance, long suffering, helps us to slow down, to grow deeper in our relationship with Jesus, and to become a witness for Christ.

God’s longsuffering and patience is **In His Timing** is so more people will come to Him.

Patience teaches us to be diligent in praying for others to come to faith.

At a graveside service this week, a friend of the family spoke of the deceased. She said, of the lady who passed away, that it was her faith and grace that taught her about Jesus' love.

She spoke of how grateful she was for that relationship that saved her and taught her about God's grace.

Patience, Forbearance, long suffering – this part of the Fruit of the Holy Spirit, not only identifies us with God, but draws others into the kingdom of God.

Before I wrap this message up, I should probably warn you.

You have probably heard; **you may not want to pray for patience because if you do God will give you a situation that will teach you patience!**

I have a friend in Oregon, who broke her foot after falling over a couple steps leading to her garage.

She was in a hurry and had her arms full of things that she wanted moved into the garage.

The slip and fall happened so fast.

She sat on the garage floor in shock, but immediately knew something drastic had happened. One ankle was broken, the other sprained. In pain she scooted back into the house and to her phone.

After surgery, she had to be off the broken foot for 3 months and could not put weight on the sprained one.

Now my friend is the one who cares for others.

She was Miss Fixit! She cooked meals for others, she took people to the doctor, she was there when others had fallen.

Now she was the one in need. She even had to be driven to another home so she could take a shower. She could not even cook for herself!

It was a humbling experience!

She was now on the receiving end and had to let others care for her.

But the main lesson she learned, was patience.

She just started walking a few weeks ago and now she moves a little slower.

She thinks before reacting, looks where she is going, and is more aware of her surroundings.

Because of the accident and being dependent on others she developed an attitude of Patience.

Limited in what she could do, she found herself worshiping God more often and giving thanks for the small things she can do.

She has a calmer demeanor; she is no longer in a rush and has developed an attitude of patience with others and herself.

**Patience is a character trait we need to strengthen.**

How can we do that?

Maybe we can think of symbols that will remind us to be patient – like a red stop light. When we see a red light, we stop and can think what “patience” means to us.

Maybe we could extend it to amber lights as well.

Instead of trying to assess if we can make it through the light before it turns red, maybe we can slow down and stop on amber.

(You might need to keep an eye on the car behind you who thinks you are going on through the amber light and wants the space you once occupied)

I invite you to add this word to your memory verse this week.

The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, and today add patience.

Find a way to practice patience.

Maybe it is parking farther away from the entrance to a store and pondering as we walk as a way of practice patience.

Maybe you could take time to look at your surroundings and pray God's blessings on those around you who appear to be concerned or preoccupied.

Maybe patience is praying for your neighbor, to have their heart open to receive Christ.

Maybe we can practice patience by praying for our Nation and leaders.

Lifting our new president, our governor, those who control social media, those responsible in organizing the vaccinations to cure the coronavirus pandemic.

But in all our prayers, lets pray for the hearts of others- to be open to receive the Love of Jesus.

Maybe our patience will lead to a revival!