

Patience and Kindness in Jesus

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Introduction.

- A. In our regular Sunday-morning lessons, we're actually in the midst of a series, but that series has been interrupted so much over the past month that I thought it would be worthwhile for all of us to take a look at what we're doing. If you'll recall, we began by looking at Galatians 5:22-23, the extremely familiar "fruit of the Spirit" passage. Although we are extremely used to this Scripture, it's tough to pin down just how we do a lot of the things that it describes. Just the abstract words don't give us anything to hang our hats on. We decided, then, to make these words more concrete by looking at the ways that these virtues manifest themselves in the life of Jesus. This week, we're going to be looking at the fruit of patience and kindness.
- B. Both of these ideas are in short supply in the world around us. It may well be that the modern US is the most time-crazy culture ever to have existed. We live our whole lives on a schedule, and everything has to be done now, now, now! This means that we get upset at anything that we perceive as wasting our precious time. Just think: when we're stuck behind a slow driver in traffic, what do we do? Do we philosophically accept that arriving at our destination five minutes later isn't that big a deal, or do we start visualizing cruise missiles screaming out of the sky and destroying this slow idiot driver? Longsuffering is clearly in short supply.
- C. Kindness is an equally scarce commodity. So many around us are absolutely convinced that they are the most important person in the world, and obviously, because they're the most important person in the world, they don't have to show courtesy or sensitivity to others. We are not a kind country, friends, and it's getting worse.
- D. We can't help but be affected by the attitude of the world around us, and that means that from time to time, we need to consider the way we display patience and kindness in our own lives. We need to turn to our Example, and learn those virtues from Him. With this in mind, let's consider patience and kindness in Jesus.

I. Patience.

- A. The patience of our Lord manifested itself in several different ways, and one of the ways He showed patience was in **ACCEPTING OTHERS** and giving His time to them. This shows up in His treatment of the children described in Luke 18:15-16. Remember, friends, at this point of His ministry, Jesus was a celebrity, and He had swarms of people around Him all the time, trying to get His attention. Part of this massive crowd was made up of parents who wanted Jesus to bless their children. From the text, it doesn't even seem that these were sick children. The parents just figured, "Hey, having the Son of God touch my kid can't be a bad thing."
- B. Just like bodyguards or event staff will do today, Jesus' disciples were trying to keep all these annoying parents away from Him so that He had time to spare for more important business. Jesus, however, had other ideas. This is late in Jesus' ministry, and I'm sure that a lot of His attention was devoted to things like dying on the cross for the sins of mankind, but He still had time for all those parents and kids who wanted His attention. Because their business was important to them, it was important to Him too.
- C. How often, brethren, is the same true of us? Most of us don't have nearly the demands on our time and attention that Jesus did, but how often are we far less generous with it than He was? How often do we shut out our loved ones who want some of our time because we have our attention fixed on something else? How often are we impatient with those whom we see as bothering us for no good reason?
- D. Friends, that's no way to treat another human being. Remember that of all the things on this world, people are the most important, because only they are made in the image of God. That means that the time we spend on others can never be wasted. Let's be generous with our time and patient with those who want it.
- E. Similarly, let's be patient in our **TEACHING OTHERS**. We see a time when Jesus' patience in this was sorely tried in Matthew 15:15-17. It's often said that there is no such thing as a dumb question, but it's evident from Jesus' response here that He thinks Peter has just asked one. Jesus has just made a straightforward statement about what defiles a man, but Peter, despite having been taught daily by Jesus for years, doesn't have the spiritual understanding to see Jesus' point. He thinks Jesus is telling a parable, when in fact, Jesus is doing no such thing. What does Jesus do? He sighs and patiently explains His point again.
- F. Friends, there are going to be times when our patience is tested by the failures of those around us too. There are going to be times when our kids ignore us for the 47th time and behave like hooligans. There are going to be times when our spouses do that heinous thing with the toothpaste tube like we asked them not to do 20 years ago. There are going to be times when our co-workers go absolutely brain-dead about the simplest tasks. These annoying, exasperating things happen. It's life. We need to learn to be patient like Jesus.
- G. In a more serious subset of this idea, we need to be patient in **FORGIVING OTHERS**. This isn't just the kind of forgiveness that says "I forgive you." This is the kind of forgiveness that is willing to give a second chance. We see Jesus display patience in this way in His comments to Peter in Luke 22:31-32. Interestingly enough, we see the patience of Jesus on display here before the sin ever happens. He knows that Satan's going to nail

Peter's weak spot. He knows that Peter is going to betray Him at a time when the betrayal would hurt the most. Even so, though, He makes clear that Peter is still going to be part of the team. He's patient.

- H. We need to show patience just like Jesus did. We need to be willing to give second chances. Sometimes, obviously, this isn't going to come up. Sometimes, people don't ever repent and so get to the point where they're even seeking a second chance. Sometimes, people stomp so thoroughly on second, third, fourth, and fifth chances that it's pointless to give them any more with our forgiveness. The rest of the time, though, we need to be patient with others despite their sin, just as we want God to be patient with us.
- I. Finally, Jesus displayed patience in **ENDURING SUFFERING**. Consider with me the description that the Hebrews writer provides in Hebrews 12:2-3. In all of our lives, friends, there is going to be suffering. We don't know what that suffering is going to be; Jesus, however, did. He set His feet on the road to the cross, even while knowing what was going to be at the end. For the joy set before Him, He endured suffering.
- J. This is a lesson we need to grasp too. When the hard times show up in our lives, we need to meet them like Jesus did—with patience. No matter what problems we have—health problems, money problems, family problems—time is on our side. If we endure with patience, we can claim the joy set before us too.

II. Kindness.

- A. Just as the life of Jesus displays patience in all of these ways, though, so too it displays kindness. This kindness, this gracious regard for the well-being of others, Jesus first makes apparent by **ACTING COMPASSIONATELY**. One of the most obvious places where we see the kindness and compassion of Jesus is in Matthew 14:13-14. The occasion described in this two-verse snippet wasn't one of Jesus' planned public appearances. Instead, He and His closest disciples had intended to go off by themselves across the sea of Galilee to spend some time resting and recuperating. Things didn't work out that way. The multitudes figured out where Jesus was headed, and when He arrived on the far shore, there all of them were.
- B. For many of us, our emotional reaction at a time like that would have been frustration and disgust at being deprived of our well-earned rest. Jesus' emotional reaction, though, was quite different. Instead of considering Himself, He considered the needs of the multitude. He saw that they were like sheep without a shepherd, felt sorry for them, and kindly helped them by healing their sick.
- C. We also, friends, need to allow our compassion to lead us to kindness. We need to learn to respond to the physical and spiritual needs of those around us not with annoyance or indifference, but with sympathy and the desire to help. Jesus' heart wasn't hard to the plight of others. No more should ours be.
- D. Even more than that, though, we can learn from the attitude with which Jesus helped others. The Scripture presents Him as **HEALING IMPARTIALLY**. Along these lines, consider the record of Matthew 12:15. Jesus didn't just help those who would give Him some advantage. He didn't only heal those He liked. Instead, He helped all those who came to Him. He was gracious without showing partiality.
- E. This attribute needs to be one we share as well. All of us have favorite people in the world, and all of us have less favorite people in the world. However, we should never let our reaction to someone influence the way that we treat him. Our kindness is not something that the people around us should have to earn. Instead, we should be every bit as ready to help the hateful and spiteful and mean as we are to help those who have done us nothing but good. God is impartial in His blessings to us. We should be impartial in our blessings to others.
- F. Similarly, friends, we also need to learn to follow Jesus in **HELPING WILLINGLY**. We see this in His words in Matthew 8:2-3. Jesus was never grudging in being kind. Instead, He was always glad to help.
- G. Is that true of us? How often are we willing and free in our kindness? Sometimes, this poses a particular challenge for Christians. We know what God wants us to do. We know that He expects us to be kind and help people, and so we do. We go out and do whatever good deed it is that presents itself to us, but all too often, when we're done with that, we grumble and complain. We grumble about how tired we are after showing kindness. We grumble about how much time we spent helping others, and how much it kept us from doing things that we need to do. We grumble about how ungrateful the recipients of our kindness are, especially if they don't thank us for this immense sacrifice we're making. Friends, that's not a Christlike attitude at all. When we behave that way, we demonstrate that fear of punishment has forced us into an outward show of kindness, but that our hearts still belong firmly to ourselves. That's not how Jesus was. Instead, when nothing and no one could have compelled Him, He gave all He had out of willing kindness. Let's be like that.
- H. Finally, though, we see the kindness of Jesus displayed in **SAVING OTHERS**. Let's look together at how Titus described this in Titus 3:3-5. There is no act that shows more clearly Jesus' kindness and compassion for others than His death on the cross for our salvation. It seems like kindness is too small a word for such a massive sacrifice, but what that really tells us is that we need to enlarge our definition of kindness. We are kind not just when we practice small courtesies, but when we help others in life-changing and soul-changing ways. Indeed, there is no greater act of kindness we can carry out than bringing someone else to Christ. We need to learn, friends, just what it means that those around us are lost, and we need to learn that kind regard for their souls that moves us to reach them. That's the ultimate expression of the kindness of Jesus.

Conclusion. If you need the kindness and patience of God today, come to Him now.