



OKOTOKS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

AT THE FORGE

PATIENCE, IT REALLY IS A VIRTUE

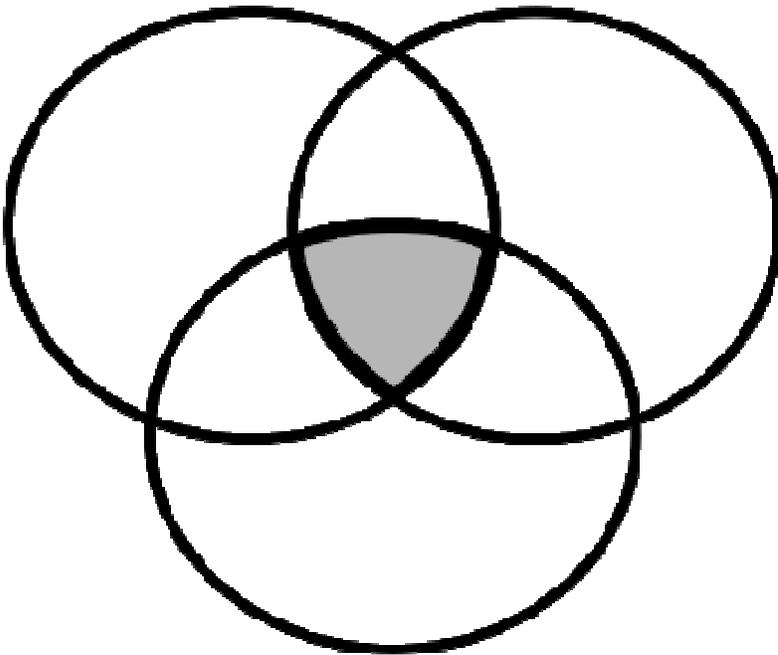
OCTOBER 22-28, 2017

SERMON OUTLINE

Patience: It Really Is a Virtue

Mark 10:35-45; John 13:1-5,12-17

Patience: Self-Control and tolerance in frustrating times, comes from a balance of,



3 ambitions to find more patience:

- To guidance from scripture AND God's Spirit
- To love and serve like Jesus
- To a community that will allow you to put it all into practice

Continue with it until you enjoy it

What do I need to do with what I have heard today?

MAIN POINT

Christ-like patience enables us to put others first and endure our circumstances with joy.

THINKING THINGS THROUGH

Connect the sermon to the study.

1. Our world today moves a lot faster than it used to. What are some differences you have noticed from even just a few years ago? How do you think the “speed” of our world affects our level of patience?

2. At this time in your life, which is testing your patience more—a relationship or your circumstances?

Leader: “Patience is a virtue,” or so the saying goes. If we are being honest, though, patience is a virtue most of us struggle to practice. Think of the countless things that try your patience every day—traffic, children, slow internet connections, challenging coworkers, the list goes on and on. At its most basic sense, patience is the ability to put up with other people even when that is not an easy thing to do. The disciples who argued for power in Mark 10 did not make it easy for Jesus to put up with them. When it comes to Christlike patience, though, we must think of it as a characteristic of God, who is longsuffering with His rebellious creatures (see 2 Peter 3:9). If God has been so patient with us and our sins, should we not display this same grace in our relationships with one another? In order for this to happen, we must allow the Holy Spirit to take our focus off of ourselves and put it on God. The apostle Paul is a great model of patience for us, as he lived out this Christlike characteristic in both his circumstances and his relationships with others.

DIGGING DEEPER

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> [HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 1:12-18.](#)

3. Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians while he was imprisoned in Rome. Knowing that, what stands out to you about his attitude? Which specific words or phrases do you find noteworthy?

4. When you come up against resistance and hardship, how much is your attitude like Paul’s? What does it look like if it’s not so similar?

5. When your worldview is shaped by putting Jesus and others first, as Paul's was, what changes in the way you respond to challenging circumstances? Why does it matter how Christians act in trying situations?

Leader: Paul could have easily let his circumstances try his patience and derail his focus. Not only was he under house arrest in Rome, but plenty of people had rejected his teaching and lashed out against him. Instead of throwing in the towel, he was able to find joy in his circumstances because he knew with confidence that the gospel message was spreading. This knowledge enabled Paul to patiently and joyfully face whatever trials came his way. Through this letter, he encouraged the Philippian believers, and us, to do the same.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 2:12-18.

6. With these verses, Paul challenged his readers with the way they relate to others in both attitude and action. Why are complaining and arguing (v. 14) harmful to our relationships, engagement and witness with the world? How do these traits contrast specifically with the patience and humility of Christ we are called to model?

7. How does the attribute of patience specifically enable us to “shine like stars” (v. 15) before the world? From verses 12-18, what makes it possible for us to live that way?

Leader: The Philippian Christians lived in world that desperately needed to know Jesus, just like we do today. Into this world God called them to be lights that point people to Jesus. In order to do that, their lives must look noticeably different from the darkness of the world. A true believer displays faith not in a self-righteous or self-glorifying way, but so others may see the light and come to Christ. This requires that we learn to put others first. Paul understood this and lived it out, but he is quick to note that he was only able to do so through God at work in him (v. 13).

8. Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. What additional insight do these verses give us into Paul's ability to joyfully and patiently endure his circumstances and love others well?

9. Patience is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), which means that we are dependent on Him to help us live it out. What is one thing you need to let go of in order to allow the Spirit to take your focus off of yourself and put it on God today (control? fear? pride? etc.)

SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

Leader: Things in Paul's life did not always go well, but he was able to joyfully and patiently endure them because he relied on Jesus' grace and power, rather than his own. Paul learned to view his weaknesses and sufferings as a way to point people back to Jesus. Jesus shifted Paul's focus off of himself and his hardships and onto Jesus, and that shift enabled Paul to prioritize the good of others above his own comforts and interests. Like the kindness we discussed last week, true patience is a fruit of the Spirit. This means we are dependent on the Spirit to grow patience in us, and when He does, it shapes how we see the world and how we relate to others.

DOING LIFE TOGETHER

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

10. Why is patience an important characteristic for the follower of Christ to model? What does this fruit of the Spirit communicate to others about God and His relationship with His people?

11. If you allow the Holy Spirit to grow the fruit of patience in you, how might that change your outlook on that challenging relationship or situation?

PRAYER

Ask God to help us learn to be patient with others as He has been patient with us. Pray that we will not be hasty in our judgments of others or situations. Ask Him to help us always remember that His patience toward us has led to our salvation, so that we can extend the same kindness toward others.

MEMORIZE

"For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose." –
Philippians 2:14

SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE

PHILIPPIANS 1:12-18

Even though Paul was allowed to live in his own rented residence (see Acts 28:30), he remained chained to a Roman soldier. Undoubtedly he talked to these soldiers about becoming Christians, and perhaps some did. The entire imperial court knew that Paul's

SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

imprisonment was for Christ's sake. Furthermore, Paul's boldness in sharing his faith in Christ had inspired confidence in other believers to share the gospel with boldness. Their boldness was inspired by Paul's courage in the face of his life-threatening imprisonment.

Some were preaching Christ because they were envious of Paul. Others were proclaiming Christ out of good will. Both groups Paul mentioned were preaching Christ. The only difference was their motives for doing so. Nothing suggests that the first group was proclaiming a false message. Their message was theologically correct, but their motives were wrong. Nevertheless, Paul rejoiced because the message of Christ was being proclaimed. Such rejoicing, however, doesn't mean that Paul approved wrong motives. Elsewhere in Philippians he had a great deal to say about the importance of Christlike attitudes.

Paul continued his discussion of those who preached out of proper motivation. Their reason for preaching Christ was love. The term translated appointed means to exist for a specific purpose. Paul saw a divine purpose behind his imprisonment. That purpose was the defense of the gospel. Paul viewed this trial before Nero, the Roman emperor, as a benchmark in the spread of the Christian gospel throughout the Roman Empire. Indeed it was the single most important matter relative to the Christian faith to gain the empire's attention since Jesus' crucifixion.

The group Paul mentioned in verse 17 was proclaiming Christ out of wrong motives. The term for rivalry also could be translated "selfish ambition." The word was used of those who exhibited a self-seeking attitude even to the point of demeaning themselves or their cause. They were concerned only for their own selfish gain. Those who preached Christ out of rivalry wanted to cause problems for Paul during his imprisonment. They seemed to think they could bring harm to Paul or make him jealous of them because his freedom to travel and to preach had been seriously curtailed by his imprisonment. Instead, as his next statement shows, he rejoiced that Christ was being preached, regardless of the motivation. He assured the Philippians that those with false motives would not defeat himself or the gospel. Instead, false motives defeat those who have them.

PHILIPPIANS 2:12-18

2:12-13. Obedience is directed to God, not Paul, who hoped his potential death would not dampen Christian enthusiasm. Work out means to apply salvation, not to earn it. Fear and trembling means to have proper respect in response to God's blessing. True obedience comes from reverence, not fright. God... is working provides the deeper incentive: Christians are recipients of God's initiatives of motivation and empowerment.

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2:14-16. Grumbling and arguing come from selfishness and vainglory (1:15,17; cp. Dt 32:5). Blameless (complete Christian character) and pure (inoffensive living; cp. 1:10) introduce metaphors. First, believers are to be morally faultless in a world crooked and perverted by its failure to understand the word of God. Believers are straight models for distorted lives. Second, they are to shine like stars whose brilliance contrasts with the darkened world.

2:17-18. Drink offering recalls the OT sacrificial system. Paul was the substance being poured out for these believers. Sacrifice is the offering; service performed the ceremony. All of this brought Paul—and the Philippian believers—joy.