

Patience and Scriptural Comfort

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Rom. 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

The written word of God has enormous potential here in the world. Scripture says that “the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (**Heb. 4:12**), and it is this great capacity that provides us with comfort. That comfort is so often revealed to us when we study His word about the gift and practice of patience. That’s why I believe the Lord connected the two in this verse of scripture. When we study about patience, and when we seek to learn the art and pathway of patience, we grow to be able to get comfort from the word of God concerning our journey here on earth. We learn to be comforted when we see and experience things that just don’t seem to add up. When we go through some rough times that seem to take everything out of us, we can discover things in the bible that strengthen us to go on; things that help us make sense out of what seems to be insanity sometimes. And if things are really insanity, we are able to be comforted by scripture to know that these to have a purpose in the great unfolding purposes of God.

I want us to look at aspects of patience today and use these things to get to another milestone in our spiritual lives. Let that milestone be a growth in comfort from the Lord about His great purpose and our roles in it.

I. The first thing I want us to think about concerning patience is that it is a state of mind and spirit in which we are waiting for the Lord to do something and to accomplish something, rather than for us to presume something and begin to form an opinion or take a course of action based on our own ill-conceived idea about what is going on, or what we need or don’t need. David says it well:

- ◆ **Psa. 37:7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him**: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.
 - First, on this, let me ask: If you didn’t have some bit of advice like this from scripture, what might you think as a human being if something like this thing about how some people seem to always have it good; always have an abundance, always seem to be on top of the world. Or how would you start thinking, using your own human reasoning, when you saw how somebody you knew always seemed to get away with the worst kind of evil?
 - You might be tempted to imagine that those things were actually beneficial.

- But, what if you made up your mind to wait on the Lord and see the end of these kinds of things? If you did that, you would find out that things don't always turn out like human thinking imagines they will.
- ◆ David has written another beginning of a song that gives us more insight into patience and more insight into outcomes in our lives:
 - **Psa. 40:1-2 To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.** I waited patiently for the LORD; and he **inclined** unto me, and **heard** my cry. **2** He **brought me up** also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and **set my feet** upon a rock, *and* **established my goings**.
 - Now, let's just imagine for a minute that, in this time of crisis David writes about here, he had not practiced patience...that he had done like Saul at Mt. Carmel when Samuel didn't show up to conduct the sacrifice service he was supposed to perform (**1Sam. 15**). Do you think David would be able to be writing such a verse of song as this if he had done that? No! His verse would be quite different.

II. Scripture teaches us yet more about patience, and if we learn it, we can find great comfort in the outcomes of life

- **Ecc. 7:8** Better *is* the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: *and* the patient in spirit *is* better than the proud in spirit.
- You might think this is just some kind of platitude that Solomon thought up, but truth lives in this statement and if we take it to heart, we can really gain ground in developing patience and the comfort from scriptures about it.
 - I have leg cramps pretty often late at night when I have spent too much time working my legs during the day. When one of those cramps starts, it won't quit until I jump out of bed and stand on my feet for a few minutes. The beginning of one of those is very painful and sometimes scary; but guess what, when I stand there in the middle of the night in the dark and that pain subsides and my leg quits aching, that is a much better time for me than when that cramp started. But, to get to that time, I have to be patient to stand there for the amount of time it takes for the aching and spasms to stop (read the verse again).
 - A man who knew about the outcome of patience once wrote:
 - “With patient mind [your] course of duty run:
 God nothing does, nor suffers to be done,
 But [you] [would] do [yourself], [could] [you] but see
 The end of all events, as well as He.”
- ◆ Scripture can comfort us in other ways by giving us guidance about how to conduct ourselves as believers. I find a particularly good comment about the practice of patience in **Heb. 12:1-3** – “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us **run with patience the race that is set before us**, **2** **Looking unto Jesus** the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. **3** For

consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, **lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.**”

◆ Scripture also cautions us about being hasty in giving up on exercising patience over the long haul:

- **James 1:4** But **let patience have her perfect work**, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.
 - Patience produces a spiritual final product. But if we jump off the assembly line right in the middle of the production process we end up with a half-baked result.
 - A rose bush without flowers is just a thorny plant.
 - Impatience is the death of patience and that impatience is something we all are prone to in the flesh. But in regard to bringing forth spiritual fruit, and seeing things through to the development of a spiritual product, we must be done with impatience.

◆ How can we bring this idea down to everyday life?

- Not letting patience dominate while waiting on the Lord to bring out the whole result of our experience is like pouring concrete and then walking on it before it sets up.
- It is like making jello and then trying to eat it before it jells.
- It is like pouring your coffee when the pot first starts to perk.

III. We want to take just a minute now and identify where we get this patience:

◆ **Rom. 5:3** And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that **tribulation worketh patience**;

- We also learn that patience works experience and experience works hope: (**Rom. 5:4** And patience, experience; and experience, **hope**)
- I bring this up because with these words combined with other scripture we learn something that can really comfort us: **1Th. 1:3** Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and **patience of hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;
- **James 1:3** “...**the trying of your faith worketh patience.**”

IV. Our last point on this scripture is this: it is what the Lord aims at in teaching us through patience and comfort of the scripture – it is that we might have hope. Now what is so important about having hope?

◆ First, going back to my last point, **hope generates yet more patience**. But there is more:

◆ **Rom. 8:24-25** For **we are saved by hope**: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? **25** But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it*.