

5. The Fruit of the Spirit is Patience (1Q 2010—The Fruit of the Spirit)

Biblical material: Heb. 10:36, Exod. 34:6; Mark 4:26–29; Rom. 15:5; Eph. 4:1, 2; James 1:2–4.

Quotes

- God is the God of patience, and waits and waits for the child who keeps him waiting and will not open the door. *George MacDonald*
- We have a better method. Unlike that of violence, it certainly involves the exercise of restraint and patience; but it requires also resoluteness of will. This method is to refuse to be party to the wrong.... *Gandhi*
- Every now and again take a good look at something not made with hands—a mountain, a star, the turn of a stream. There will come to you wisdom and patience and solace and, above all, the assurance that you are not alone in the world. *Sidney Lovett*
- It's good to hope; it's the waiting that spoils it. *Yiddish proverb*
- Patience is the ability to idle your motor when you feel like stripping your gears. *Barbara Johnson*
- The key to everything is patience. You get the chicken by hatching the egg, not by smashing it. *Arnold H. Glasgow*
- I am so tried by the things said about God. I understand God's patience with the wicked, but I do wonder how he can be so patient with the pious! *George MacDonald*

Questions

Why is patience particularly important—both from the divine and the human perspective? How does an attitude of patience relate to the issues in the great controversy? Why is it so hard to be patient at times? What can impatience lead to? How is a lack of patience an attitude of distrust in God, and doing it our way?

Bible discussion

“You need to be patient, in order to do the will of God and receive what he promises.” Heb. 10:36 TEV. Sunday's lesson references Jonah, and God's patience with this reluctant prophet. In Exodus 34:6 God announces his patient nature. Our inability to hasten or slow the process of natural growth is illustrated in Jesus parable recorded in Mark 4:26-29. The crop grows, and patience is needed! Romans 15:5 reveals that God is the source of patience (this is worth reflecting on...) “Be always humble, gentle, and patient,” advises Paul in Eph. 4:2 TEV. Patience and endurance in the face of trouble is urged by James (1:2-4).

Comment

“If someone were to ask you how you picture God in your mind, how would you describe Him? This is revealing, because how a Christian thinks of God has a lot to do with his world view and how we treat others. If we see God as angry and quick to punish, how would we likely treat others in the church and in our homes?” (Sunday's lesson). An excellent suggestion—to picture God in your mind—but how do we know our picture is a

true representation of God? Is one view as good as another? As is mentioned, our view of God will lead us to act accordingly.

Patience is often in short supply, and yet this is identified as one of the fruits of the Spirit. I hate to wait, yet recognize that patient waiting is just as much a Christian principle as zealous action. And often with mature reflection come better ideas, more appropriate ways of speaking and doing...

If you have to wait, it's easy to become frustrated and want to leap into action—to do something, *anything!* Yet we're told to wait on the Lord, and to exercise patience as we allow him to work out his purposes in his way.

Sometimes it does become boring when we are waiting patiently on our own. But when we are together, and we are active in our waiting, then time just rushes by. I don't believe God calls us to be inactive and idle in our patient waiting—he wants us to be thoughtfully considering, meditating, and yet most of all using the time wisely and well to share the good news about God and his character. In that way, our patience is not worn out, because while we wait for some things, others need to be done now.

That's what "waiting on the Lord" is really about. As Isaiah 40:31 makes clear, if we do this then we shall renew our strength, and mount up with wings as eagles. We'll fly! And we'll run without becoming tired, walk without getting worn out. This is what God has in store for us, and as we grow in the fruit of the spirit in patience, may we see the fulfillment of all we wait for.

Ellen White Comments

The whole spiritual life is molded by our conceptions of God, and if we cherish erroneous views of His character, our souls will sustain injury. We should see in God one who yearns toward the children of men, longing to do them good. . . . All through the Scriptures, God is represented as one who calls, woos by His tender love, the hearts of His erring children. No earthly parent could be as patient with the faults and mistakes of their children as is God with those He seeks to save. {TMK 263}

...when the people of the world accept the truth, there will be much work to be done in their behalf, that their false theories of religion may be replaced by true theories, that their false conceptions of God may be banished through the bright beams of the Sun of righteousness shining into the darkened chambers of mind and heart. {RH, May 31, 1892}

It is not the will of God that we should be gloomy or impatient, nor that we should be light and trifling. It is Satan's studied plan to push persons from one extreme to the other. As children of the light, God would have us cultivate a cheerful, happy spirit, that we may show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. {AH 432}

"The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain." James 5:7. So the Christian is to wait with patience for the fruition in his life of the word of God. Often when we pray for the graces of the Spirit, God works to answer our prayers by placing us in circumstances to develop these fruits; but we do not understand His purpose, and wonder, and are dismayed. Yet none can develop these graces except through the process of growth and fruit bearing. Our part is to receive God's word and to hold it fast, yielding ourselves fully to its control, and its purpose in us will be accomplished. {COL 61}

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