

Warnings and Encouragement

Sermons From Pastoral Rule, Book 3

June 26, 2016

- I. Exhorting and encouraging the patient and the impatient
 - A. Over the next several weeks, my intention is to present contrasting character qualities, ways of thinking, ways of behaving, and contrasting situations – and talk about each side of the contrast in a way that shows what to put off and what to put on, and what to guard against and what to encourage. My hope is that this will help us apply practical truths to these various areas of our lives, and in so doing, grow in godliness.
 - B. Therefore, we will look at –
 1. Those who are patient and those who are impatient,
 2. Those who are healthy and those who endure a lot of sickness,
 3. Those who fear God’s punishment and therefore live godly and those who despise God’s punishment and go on rebelling against God,
 4. Those who are humble and those who are prideful,
 5. Those who are often in conflict with someone and those who live in peace,
 6. Those who sow discord and division and those who make peace,
 7. Those whose lives are going according to their wishes and those whose lives are more like Job’s during his time of tribulation,
 8. Those who weep over their sins yet continue to practice them and those who don’t weep yet make a commendable effort to put an end to the sins they have practiced,
 9. And those who commit very small but frequent sins and those who avoid the small sins yet on occasion commit the more grievous sins.
 - C. Prayer
 - D. Today we will look at those who are patient and those who are impatient, and we will begin with four scripture passages.
 1. 1 Corinthians 13:4 . . . Love is patient, love is kind . . .
 2. Colossians 3:12-13 . . . So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; [13] bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.
 3. Psalm 37:7-9 . . . Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. [8] Cease from anger and forsake

- wrath; do not fret; it leads only to evildoing. [9] For evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land.
4. James 1:19-20 . . . This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; [20] for the anger of man does not achieve (succeed in accomplishing) the righteousness of God.

E. The Impatient

1. With those four scriptures in mind, we will begin considering those who are impatient – be they frequently impatient or only occasionally impatient.
2. When we Christians are impatient, we are neglecting the God-given quality of self-discipline, and self-control – which is a fruit of the Spirit, and love – which is patient.
 - a. Now I am confident you can see how the neglect of these godly qualities opens the door to impatience, and then how impatience – as Psalm 37:7-9 says – leads to evildoing.
 - b. Therefore, I am encouraging you to pursue these godly qualities of self-discipline, love, and self-control so that you will have the spiritual mindset, strength, and grace to remain patient in the face of challenging people and circumstances.
3. Though we open the door to impatience by neglecting all three of these godly qualities, I want to focus on the neglect of self-discipline in thought, word, and deed, and the effect of this neglect on impatience.
 - a. When tempted to impatience, one of the most significant problems of neglecting self-discipline in thought is that you stop using God's Word as the deciding factor in what and how you are to think. And instead of using God's Word, you hand over that decision making power to your emotions, which have been stirred to the level of poor judgment by the situation that is pushing you toward impatience. And once poor judgment becomes your basis for decision making, you easily move toward such ungodly things as distrust of God, fretting, anxiety, anger, and control of others – which are all manifestations of impatience.
 - b. In a similar way, neglecting self-discipline in word sets aside godly thinking as the deciding factor in what and how you speak, and hands that decision making power over to your agitated emotions. This is why, in times of impatience, we so easily say things in unloving, unkind, derogatory, angry, and even abusive ways.

- c. Of course, the failure of godly self-discipline when impatient also shows up in unloving and sinful actions – even though our Christian sensibilities know such actions are wrong. But sadder still and due to the heat of our impatience, we too often are unaware of, or insensitive to, how badly we are acting. And beyond that, it is all too common to move on with life as if we have done nothing wrong – and all this for the simple neglect of self-discipline.
4. Beyond the problem of neglecting self-discipline, is the common weakness of accepting impatience as a normal part of life, rather than as an evil brought into our world by the devil and perpetuated by our selfish, sinful, undisciplined selves.
 - a. And the problem here is that once we accept impatience as a normal response to certain situations, we all too easily remain unconcerned about the harm we have done to our own character, our spiritual development, and to those who have had to endure our impatience.
 - b. And so my encouragement to you is to see impatience as an evil that doesn't stand alone. It opens the door to other evils. Therefore, if you will keep that door closed, you will not only avoid the evil of impatience, but also its accompanying evils.
5. Next, I want us to consider the problem of our emotions when we are impatient, because the emotions of impatience not only prevent us from being sensitive to our ungodly thinking, words, and deeds, they also get in the way of seeing what we are doing during times of impatience, or looking back at how badly we have behaved after having been impatient.
 - a. In fact, the emotions of impatience are often pointed to – afterwards – as the justifying reason for our impatience and its accompanying ungodly behavior. And by doing this, we excuse ourselves from taking responsibility for our impatience. For example, who hasn't said, "I was so frustrated . . ." or "He made me so mad" or "If I hadn't done something, it would have never gotten done!"
 - b. However, the emotions of impatience always set aside love – which is the guardian virtue of all godliness, including patience, for as the scripture says, "Love is patient" (1 Corinthians 13:4).
 - c. Therefore, to overcome the propensity for self-deception and irrational thinking in times of impatience, I encourage you overcome your emotions by using God's word and the standard

of love as the measuring stick for what you are to think and how you are to behave.

6. Impatience not only stands in the way of self-discipline and feeds dishonesty about the sinfulness of your impatient behavior, it also reveals how much credence you are giving to what God's Word says about God himself, and how much you trust God to provide for you, protect you, and work all things out for your good. And of course, impatience also reveals how willing you are to wait on God to act.
 - a. In other words, the frequency of your impatience is an indication of the amount of Biblical teaching about God and patience that you disregard. And by now, most of us know we cannot disregard specific Bible truths without hardening our heart and dulling our conscience against those truths – so that they then lose their power to convict us when going astray and direct us in paths of righteousness.
 - b. Therefore, we read in Proverbs 28:14, “How blessed is the man who fears always, but he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.” And we read in Proverbs 14:29, “He who is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who is quick-tempered exalts (glorifies, values) folly.”
7. At this point, I want to address a very specific form of impatience, and that is impatience with being repeatedly looked down on, put down, disrespected, or treated as worthless.
 - a. Now it is true that such treatment, especially when repeated over and over, is hard to hear, hurtful, unkind, and sometimes just plain cruel. Therefore, there is no question but that those who are treating us this way are doing something wrong.
 - b. However, in our growing impatience with such ill-treatment, we commonly move toward responding in ungodly ways.
 - (1) For example, we tend to return evil for evil, put down for put down, and cruel words for cruel words. And yet God's word strictly forbids returning evil for evil, or taking our own revenge (Romans 12:17,19). Why? Because it pulls us into thoughts and behaviors that are just as ungodly as the unkind words that are being hurled at us.
 - (2) Another common ungodly response is to defend our honor by showing that we are superior in some way to the one attacking us. However, who can show themselves superior without taking on pride, and an attitude of arrogance toward the one putting us down? The answer is, no one!

- c. Therefore, I am encouraging each of us to memorize, meditate on, and make it our aim to live according to Peter's words about this kind of ill-treatment.
 - (1) And why Peter's words? Because he pointed to Jesus Christ as the premier example of remaining quietly patient, humble, and godly in the face of being looked down on, put down, disrespected, falsely accused, and treated as worthless.
 - (2) Therefore we read in 1 Peter 2:23, that while being reviled, Jesus did not revile in return . . . but kept entrusting Himself to Him (God) who judges righteously.
 - (3) Now there is no question, that following Christ's example requires patience and humility, but we are aided in living accordingly by the power of God's word, the power of the Holy Spirit, the power of prayer, the indwelling Christ, and the support of the church.
 - d. In addition to Peter's words, we have Paul's, who said we are not to be overcome by evil – so as to respond to evil by doing evil – but we are to overcome evil with good – so as to do what is godly and good in the face of evil (Romans 12:21).
 - e. Therefore, I encourage each of us, when tempted toward impatience in the face of unkind words or unjust criticism, remain humble, outwardly calm, inwardly peaceful, and cling to love, while trusting that God knows your true worth, and He will raise you up at His chosen time and place, and He will wisely use these momentary hard times for your spiritual growth.
8. I am certain you know this next truth about impatience even though you may not think about it very often if at all. Impatience damages reputations. For example, your times of impatience as a Christian brings dishonor on God's name, it tarnishes the reputation of the church as a whole, and it damages whatever good reputation you have gained through identifying yourself with Christianity and by living a godly life. In other words, impatience makes God, the church, and you look worse in the eyes of those who observe your impatience.
9. Finally, I want to remind you that impatience comes from within, not from the circumstances or people without. To be impatient is to lose the battle for godliness with your flesh, your emotions, and your mind. Impatience means you have given in to the power of your fears, your selfish or unrealistic expectations, your frustrations, and your anger. It means you have forsaken the power of God's word, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, and self-control.

10. This is why the scripture says, “He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city” (Proverbs 16:32).
 - a. Solomon’s point is that it takes more preparation, more determination, more perseverance, and more power to control your frustration and anger and the resulting impatience than to capture a well fortified, skillfully defended city.
 - b. And why is the one so much harder than the other? Because conquering a city only requires defeating and subduing that which is outside yourself, while conquering impatience requires defeating and subduing that which is within – and in this life you will face no stronger or more formidable or more stubborn opponent than yourself.
 - c. Therefore, I want to encourage those who are still young to start now defeating your anger and impatience, because the longer you wait the stronger your foe, but the sooner you start, the stronger you become in facing and conquering your foe.

F. The Patient

1. There is a well-known saying that says, “Patience is a virtue.”
2. The Bible tells us that patience is one of God’s character qualities (Romans 2:4), that it is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), that it is a manifestation of love (1 Corinthians 13:4), and a manifestation of faith in God’s care, provision, protection, and justice (Psalm 37), and patience is a manifestation of Christ-likeness (Ephesians 4:1-3; Colossians 3:12-13; 1 Peter 2:18-20).
3. To be patient both outside and inside requires more than self-control. It requires the kind of faith that makes you confident you are safe in God’s hands regardless of the circumstances. And by the way, it is this confident faith that produces an inward peace that remains peaceful in all situations.
 - a. In addition, being patient both outside and inside requires compassion – a compassion that is based on your own experiences which have taught you how hard it is to be good and how easy it is to do what you know is wrong.
 - b. Being both outwardly and inwardly patient requires humility, honesty with yourself about yourself, honesty with others about themselves and their behavior, a calm acceptance of what you cannot change or control, and a determined commitment to remain within the boundaries of godliness no matter what.

- (1) However, I want to make it clear that we are never to confuse patience with an approving acceptance of wrong doing, or laziness, or irresponsibility, or deception, or any other evil.
 - (2) However, though we are never to approve of sin or bad behavior, neither are we to be sinfully angry, vindictive, unkind, or unloving when dealing with those who are behaving badly.
- c. Being patient both outside and inside requires paying heed to the exhortation of Paul to the Corinthians – not grudgingly or under compulsion, but cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7). Why? Because in your patience you not only want to be godly on the outside, but also godly on the inside, because God looks on the heart.
4. To those who are committed to being patient, I encourage you to spend time thinking about and praying about and seeking advice about ways to better love to those you must bear with, so that your patience grows more and more into a patience like unto God’s patience.
 - a. Guard against growing tired of being patient with certain people or situations so that you make no room for feeling justified in responding in unkind or unnecessarily hurtful and sinful ways.
 - b. After all, we know from 1 Corinthians 13, that love is not only patient, it is kind, and is not provoked, and keeps no record of wrongs endured, and never gives up.
5. Finally, when faced with a situation that seems like it will never end, I urge you to remember these words from scripture –
 - a. Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you (Luke 6:27-28).
 - b. Do not grow weary of doing good (2 Thessalonians 3:13).
 - c. And finally, remember these words from Hebrews 12:3, Consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

II. Conclusion

- A. Psalm 37:7-9 . . . Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. [8] Cease from anger and forsake wrath; do not fret; it leads only to evildoing. [9] For evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land.