

WEEK 7 – Patience in Suffering

MONDAY – True character



James 5: 7 & 8 *Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient.*

Patience! What was James thinking? Not only does he urge us to be patient, but in Chapter 1 he says when troubles of any kind come, we should consider this an opportunity for great joy!

Patience – the dictionary defines it as the ability to wait; the ability to continue doing something despite difficulties, to suffer without complaining or becoming annoyed.

In a world where so often we hear people say “Lord, give me patience” do we understand that patience is learned? Our true character comes to the fore when we are under pressure.

So at this present time in our world, how are we to learn to be patient, to find joy when we are in the midst of a pandemic?

Maybe, we need to learn to look at things differently, maybe we need to learn to use our time more wisely, maybe need to look at some of our habits and change them. Perhaps

we could spend a little more time in quiet? Perhaps family relationships could become more important to us.

What have you learned during the past months? Has this been a time of restlessness and frustration, or have you learned that God’s timing and ours is different?

Pause for thought:

Are you using this time to allow God to develop a resilient character within you?



PRAYER: God it is not easy for us to understand the need for patience when we live in a fast-moving world and everything is wanted or needed within a time frame. Help me to get in step with You and to walk mindfully through my days.
AMEN

Living Hope: <https://youtu.be/u-1fwZtKJSM>

TUESDAY – Bear one another's burdens



Galatians 6: 2

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

When we look at the cross, we see a picture of a God who is no stranger to human pain. God has been there. He has shared our pain. He who gave His life for us walked this earth and endured sorrow, frustration and pain on our behalf.

We are never alone in our pain.

Developing patience during times of suffering is not something we are capable of doing on our own. We need the help of others to see us through times of trial. When we are feeling low, the voice of a friend, a text from someone who cares for us, or a visit with a trusted counsellor can help us to navigate our way.

God has put us in communities for a good reason – He doesn't expect us to live in isolation. Reaching out for help when you are in need is not a sign of weakness.

In our series last year we looked at the Serenity Prayer, and one of the lines in this prayer reads as follows..."*Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace*".

Trevor Hudson in his book "Seeking Serenity" reminds us we need to face our problems and difficulties. He acknowledges that it is not easy to face the loss, grief, loneliness and stress that comes our way and that we need to be gentle with ourselves. I love his words of encouragement "*Reality is always God's home address. As we take courage to face the difficult realities of our lives, God meets us where we are with His loving presence and resurrection power.*"

Pause for thought

**Could you share your burdens with a friend?
Could this friend be Jesus?**



PRAYER: Jesus, You who suffered for me, hear my call to You today. AMEN

WEDNESDAY: The power of prayer



James 5: 17-18 The Message *The prayer of a person living right with God is something powerful to be reckoned with. Elijah, for instance, human just like us, prayed hard that it wouldn't rain, and it didn't—not a drop for three and a half years. Then he prayed that it would rain, and it did.*

We are often intimidated by Bible characters. They seem too good, too holy, too self-controlled for us. Their deeds seem superhuman, their perspective too great. Yet as James encourages us to effective, fervent praying, he reminds us of a man who prayed this way—and that “Elijah was a man with a nature like ours”, yet he did amazing things through prayer. Elijah was a regular guy—a mere man, like us—yet he shows us what people like us can do when we pray in faith.

Regular people like us can pray earnestly. This is the kind of prayer James is encouraging: “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much”. The reason God granted Elijah’s prayer was not because He had another interesting chapter to add to the Bible, or because He owed Elijah a special favour. He was a regular guy—yet when regular, righteous people pray earnestly, God acts! “Earnestly” is not to be

overlooked—it describes a spirit of continual, energetic, enthusiastic, faith-based praying. It is not easily dissuaded, nor does it forget what is asked. It sees prayer as more than a throwaway, last-chance attempt at getting what we need. Elijah was no superhuman—just a man—yet he prayed earnestly and received what he requested.

Regular people like us can pray in the will of God. The amazing thing about Elijah’s prayer was that it was simply a prayer for God to fulfil His word.

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PRAYER: Lord, teach us to pray. AMEN

The **Secret** Place:
<https://youtu.be/-EixRP254PU>

THURSDAY – This is not the answer I was expecting!



Jeremiah 33: 3 *'Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'*

James 5: 10 & 11 *"As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful."*

Call to me and I will answer you. This is God's word to us and His word cannot be broken. Sometimes the answers that God gives are not the answers we are expecting!

How then do we accept this and stay patient and expectant during suffering?

Romans 8 in The Message gives us some answers and encouragement: "This resurrection life you received from God is not a timid, grave-tending life. It's adventurously expectant, greeting God with a childlike "What's next, Papa?" God's Spirit touches our spirits and confirms who we really are. We know who He is, and we know who we are: Father and children. And we know we

are going to get what's coming to us—an unbelievable inheritance! We go through exactly what Christ goes through. If we go through the hard times with Him, then we're certainly going to go through the good times with Him! That's why I don't think there's any comparison between the present hard times and the coming good times. The created world itself can hardly wait for what's coming next." This means we can stay patient and trust God who will bring us to a time of rejoicing.

Pause for thought:

Is a spirit of adventure possible as we journey through suffering with Christ?



PRAYER: Dear God, help me to see Your answers which sometimes come as a complete surprise to me. AMEN

FRIDAY – Holding on to God’s promise



James 5 : 8b-10 *Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.*

Here is a promise worth reading and reading again. **Isaiah 40:** *Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.*

James is very clear in his writing that we should be both patient and prayerful as we wait in expectation for God’s answer to our prayers. We are to be patient in our own situations and also with the weak. His letter is straight forward, we are to live in such a way that our speech, our lives, and our patience will bring encouragement to our companions and glory to God.

He ends his letter with these words *“My brothers, (and sisters) if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever*

brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.”

Let us live through our times of suffering in such a way that we might be a light to the nation, a beacon of hope in times of difficulty.

Pause for thought:

Would someone observing your life be encouraged to trust in God?



PRAYER: Jesus, help me to live faithfully, prayerfully and patiently as You guide my steps each day. AMEN