Series: Believe

Message: “26 Virtue – Patience Proverbs 14\_29”

Text:

Key Verse: Proverbs 14:29

Theme: Believe Chapter 26

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Location: Christ Community EFC

A young Christian went to an older Christian for help. He asked; “Will you please pray for me that I may be more patient?”

So they knelt together and the old man began to pray. “Lord, send this young man tribulation in the morning; send this young man tribulation in the afternoon; send this young man...”

At that point the young Christian blurted out, “No, no, I didn’t ask you to pray for tribulation. I wanted you to pray for patience.”

“Ah,” responded the wise old Christian, “it’s through tribulation that we learn patience.”

**Key** **Idea**: I am slow to anger and endure **patiently** under the unavoidable pressures of life.

**Key Question**: How does God **provide** the help I need to deal with stress?

**Key Verse**: Proverbs 14:29 “**Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly**.”

Before we go any further I need to ask:

I. WHAT IS **PATIENCE**?

Let me give you some definitions.

1. “Patience is self-restraint which does not hastily retaliate against a wrong.” That’s pretty good.

When someone does you a wrong, how do you respond - with patience or anger?

2. Here’s another: “Patience is the ability to accept delay or disappointment graciously.”

How do you deal with delay or disappointment? For some that’s really tough. Yet, patience is the ability to accept it without becoming upset.

3. Here’s another: “Patience is the powerful attribute that enables a man or woman to remain steadfast under strain - and continue pressing on.”

Maybe that is where some of you are.

You’re dealing with difficult circumstances. You’re a raising a child, or you’re caring for aging parents, or maybe you have a loved one who is ill and you’ve spent long hours at the hospital or nursing home.

You’re weary, but patience is the quality that says, “This too, will pass. It’s almost over. I can keep on keeping on.”

4. But here is my favorite definition: “Patience is a calm endurance based on the certain knowledge that God is in control.”

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An artist went to visit an old friend. When he arrived she was weeping.

He asked her why. She showed him a beautiful handkerchief that had great sentimental value, but which had been ruined by a spot ink.

The artist asked her to let him have the handkerchief, which he returned to her by mail a few days later.

When she opened the package she could hardly believe her eyes. The artist, using the inkblot as a base, had drawn on the handkerchief a design of great beauty.

Now it was more beautiful and more valuable than ever.

Sometimes the tragedies that break our hearts can become the basis for a more beautiful design in our lives.

Be patient with the hurts over which you have no control. In God’s hands they may even become a source of healing, help, and beauty.

II. PATIENCE IS **DIFFICULT** TO DEVELOP

As desirable as patience may be, it is not easy to develop. It is a divine work of the Holy Spirit.

For instance, I think developing **patience is difficult because it goes against human nature**. We aren’t born patient, are we?

When a baby wakes up in the middle of the night and is hungry, or its diaper is wet, it doesn’t lie there and think, “I know Mom and Dad are tired. So I’ll just wait until a more convenient time to let them know that I need something to eat or my diaper changed.”

No!

That baby cries impatiently and continues to cry until it receives the attention it demands and its needs meet.

Children aren’t very patient. Have you ever traveled with a child? That can be quite an experience.

How about the little 4-year-old boy who was traveling with his mother and constantly asking the same question over and over again?

“When are we going to get there? When are we going to get there?”

Finally, the mother got so irritated that she said, “We still have 90 more miles to go. So don’t ask me again when we’re going to get there.”

Well, the boy was silent for a long time. Then he timidly asked, “Mom, will I still be four when we get there?”

Now here’s a **second reason** why developing patience is difficult.

It’s **because there are weeds of pride, selfishness and anger that can choke out the fruit of patience**.

We have become an impatient and oftentimes angry nation. You see it at work. You see it in school. You see it on the highways.

A man’s car stalled in heavy traffic just as the light turned green. All his frantic efforts to get the car started failed, and a chorus of honking horns behind him made matters worse.

He finally got out of his car and walked back to the first driver behind him and said, “I’m sorry, but I can’t seem to get my car started. If you’ll go up there and give it a try, I’ll stay here and honk your horn for you.”

Thirdly, patience is difficult to **develop because it’s contrary to our culture**. We don’t live in a relaxed culture.

Go to most third world countries today and you’ll find a much different lifestyle. They’re more laid back.

They think, “Whatever happens, happens. It’ll be all right.” And they wonder why we’re so uptight, impatient and agitated.

It’s because we’re on a fast track, and in a rat race. We’re in a world of fast food and quick print and expressways and 10-minute oil and instant coffee in the microwave.

There is even a church in Florida that advertises 22-minute services.

Go there and they promise that in 22 minutes it will all be over, and you’ll be out of there. The sermons are only 8 minutes long.

Now don’t get your hopes up. It’s not going to happen here.

One Calvin and Hobbes comic strip pictured his father sitting at a computer saying, “It used to be that if a client wanted something done in a week it was considered a rush job, and he would be lucky to get it.

Now, with text, cell phones, and Instagram everybody wants everything instantly.”

About that time Calvin walks by holding a microwave dinner, reading the instructions. “It takes 6 minutes to microwave this,” he says. Who’s got that kind of time?”

Listen again to our key verse Proverbs 14:29: “**Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly**.”

Proverbs 15:18 says, “**A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel**.”

Patience is a virtue. It’s a virtue worth waiting for. Again and again the Bible teaches us that we need to develop patience in our lives.

Have you ever said something out of anger only to have made things worse?

Words fly out there, and they continue to wound and hurt again and again.

There is actually and app called “On Second Thought” which will screen you messages and if it sees something questionable it will hold the text so you can have time to think about what you are saying before it actually sends it.

Patience is God’s app for that!

III. HOW DO WE **DEVELOP** PATIENCE?

We need to develop the virtue of patience, but how do we do it?

Let me give you 4 suggestions.

The first suggestion is the same with every one of these virtues—the fruit of the Spirit.

“How do we develop love? How do we develop joy? How do we develop peace? How do we develop patience?”

The answer is always the same:

1. **Abide** in Christ

Jesus, in John 15:5 says, “**I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man abides in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing**.”

So it is important to receive the nourishment that only Jesus Christ can give.

We cannot produce patience unless the Holy Spirit works in us as we are abiding in Christ.

Unless we’re walking in His steps, unless we’re reading His Word, unless we’re growing in our prayer life, unless we’re spending quality time worshiping and fellowshippng with brothers and sisters in Christ we are not in the position where the Spirit can work.

There are other things that we can do. For example, we can:

2. **Slow** down

The God came up with the idea of a Sabbath day - a day to worship and rest. Our bodies need it, our minds need it, our spirits need it.

We need time just to sit and reflect on God and what He’s doing, and absorb His teaching.

So take a walk. Spend some time in the park.

Watch children play, and listen to birds sing. Read a book. Plant a flower and watch it grow.

Thirdly, we need to:

1. Overlook the little **frustrations** of life

Warren Wiersbie tells about the time he picked up a hitchhiker who was kind of a hippie. As they were riding along they came to a detour that took them off the main road onto a twisting, hilly farm-to-market road.

Wiersbie said, “I was soon fretting aloud, anxious because we were wasting so much time, and complaining about the pot holes in the road that we were being forced to use.

Finally, the hitchhiker leaned over and said, `Hey, man. Don’t sweat the small stuff.’” That’s a good lesson for all of us to learn.

But what about the big things that we’re just not capable of dealing with? What do you do when the big stuff comes along?

What do you do when you go to the doctor and he tells you that you have a serious illness?

What do you do when you lose your job? What do you do when your children disappoint you? Or your spouse leaves, and life is empty?

What do you do?

The Bible says that there are some things that we just can’t handle on our own, and that we’ll never be able to handle them without the Lord’s help.

There is a beautiful illustration of this in Exodus chapter 14. Moses has led the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage and they are standing on the bank of the Red Sea.

Before them is this great body of water. Behind them they hear the hoof beats and the chariot wheels of Pharaoh’s army.

They are caught between a sea and an army. What do you do in a situation like that?

They turned and cried out to Moses, “**Moses, weren’t there enough graves in Egypt? You led us all the way out here to die in this God-forsaken place**.”

Then Moses speaks in vs. 13, “**Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again**.”

Now listen to vs. 14, it’s such an important verse. Moses said, “**The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still**.”

So it’s critical that we:

1. Be still and wait on the Lord

Be still and wait on the Lord when it comes to the big stuff because our God can handle it.

IV. JESUS IS THE PERFECT **EXAMPLE** OF PATIENCE

In Matthew chapter 26 we see Jesus coming to the Garden of Gethsemane after the Lord’s Supper.

Leaving the rest of the disciples by the gate, He takes Peter, James, and John with Him into the inner recesses of the garden, and says to them, “**My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me**” [Matthew 26:38].

Then Jesus went on a little farther by Himself and prayed. Luke 22:44 says, “**And being in anguish, He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground**.”

Then when Jesus came back, He found Peter and James and John sound asleep. Now how would you react to that?

Here Jesus was experiencing the most terrible night of His life upon this earth, and they fall asleep, not once, but 3 times.

And yet Jesus treats them with love and patience and kindness.

Christian author, Evelyn Christenson wrote, “I wept as a cardiologist described Jesus’ drops of blood in the Garden of Gethsemane before He was betrayed and arrested.

Medical science reports that only when humans are under rare and extremely grave stress do their blood vessels break and mix with the sweat in their sweat glands...

“I grieved at how Jesus’ disciples could sleep when He kept appearing to them with His forehead bloodied.

And, since the skin becomes so sensitive when it sweats blood that touching it is almost intolerable, I cringed at how my Jesus could stand to have the crown of thorns thrust into His tender brow.

Wearing it for us! And the scourging, and the mocking, and the spitting! For us!”

Now there is just one more verse of scripture that I want you to see.

It is 2 Peter 3:9, and it says, “**The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance**.”

Have you ever stopped and wondered why God hasn’t intervened?

Why doesn’t God send a lightning bolt? Why doesn’t He intervene when injustice seems to run rampant?

For one reason, God is patient and He wants everybody to be saved.

Every day that He waits is just one more day for people to repent and come to Him.

If you have not come to Jesus, one of the reasons He may be holding back His judgment is because you haven’t come, and you’re His child.

And more than anything, He wants you to come to Him, too.

The door of salvation is open because the Lord is patient. The door to Jesus is open because the Lord is patient.

Right now, the opportunity for us to be saved from our sins is still available, because the Lord is patient.

So I extend the invitation of Jesus, and I pray that you’ll respond today to what the Lord has offered through Jesus Christ. Will you come as we stand and sing?