

THE SOUTHWESTERNER



Home of the Southwest School of Bible Studies

Publisher of Christian Worker

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THE NEED FOR PATIENCE

CODY WESTBROOK

If Christianity were easy everyone would do it. Following Jesus requires everything I am, and everything I will ever be. It is a life time of dedicated service—a complete self-sacrifice (Rom. 12:2). Some are simply not willing to make this kind of commitment. Multitudes left Jesus when He taught things that they deemed too difficult to apply (John 6:66). Today, people still walk away from the Lord when they realize that following Him is an arduous task. Jesus never promised us that following Him would be easy. In fact He confirmed the opposite. He said, “And you will be hated of all for my name’s sake...” (Matt. 10:22). Paul affirmed, “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12). It is the way that we respond to the difficulties of the Christian life that make all the difference. Many will flee when trouble arises, but some will stay and patiently endure.

Webster defines patience as the ability to remain calm. But “Patience,” as the Holy Spirit uses it in 2 Peter 1:6 has a deeper meaning. It is the same word that is used in James 1:3 where James says, “Knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.” It refers to one who has staying power; who does not swerve away from his purpose. It has to do with one’s ability to weather life’s storms in service to God. It denotes an unwavering desire to serve God even in the times of difficulty. Patience is what allows us to fulfill Paul’s command to “...endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Tim. 2:3). When the waves come crashing in, patience is what keeps us afloat. Jesus said, “By your patience possess your souls” (Luke 21:19).

The Thessalonian church stands as a wonderful example of patience. In Acts 17 we learn that the congregation was established in great difficulty. There were many who believed Paul’s preaching but the unbelieving Jews stirred up the city and drug Jason and others before its leaders. All of this turmoil caused Paul and Silas to leave the city in the secrecy of night. We can be sure that after their departure those same Jews made life very difficult for the newly established congregation. Certainly the Thessalonian Christians were chastised and troubled by their Jewish brethren, who tried everything they could to provoke them to leave Christ and go back into Judaism. They even went so far as to try and discredit the apostle Paul! Yet in 2 Thessalonians 1:4 Paul wrote,

So that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure.

The brethren there were so patient and steadfast that word of their faithfulness spread throughout the world (1 Thess. 1:6-10).

Christianity is a race but it is not a sprint, it is a marathon (Heb. 12:1-3). It is a life-time commitment that is not for the faint of heart! The trials that accompany it are what separate the good soil from the bad soil (Matt. 13:20-21). We must patiently endure the cruel reproaches that come our way. It is true that Jesus never promised that following Him would be easy, but He did promise that it would be worth it. Matthew 5:10 says, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.” Paul wrote that God will

will render to each one according to his deeds: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality (Rom. 2:6-7).

We must be steadfast and patient in our Christian walk.

SW

THE CHANGING AND THE UNCHANGING

Dan Flournoy

Lord, thou has been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God (Psalms 90:1-2).

Since we are creatures bound by time, the words “eternity” and “everlasting” are hard to grasp. We can think in terms of seconds or centuries, but beyond this our mind loses perspective. In this Psalm, mountains are representative of that which is stable and enduring. Yet God was before the mountains and will be after they are gone. All material things had a beginning and will end; however, God is from everlasting to everlasting.

In contrast to God’s eternal, unchanging nature, is the changing world in which we live. “*In the morning it flourisheth and growth up: in the evening it is cut down, and withereth*” (Psalms 90:7). We need to learn this basic truth: **All earthly things change!** Nations rise and fall. Political ideologies come and go. Scientific theories are revised constantly. Religious creeds are updated every few years. With the changing seasons Nature takes on the new and puts off the old. Death continually works its way in our world and our relationship to people and things change. We are reminded of the words in a great hymn: “*Change and decay in all around I see. Oh Thou who changes not, abide with me.*” Oh how we long for that dwelling-place that does not change! A home that is like our God, “*eternal in the heavens*” (2 Corinthians 5: 1). We wish we could grasp the meaning of “eternity” as we sing “*When we’ve been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we’ve no less days to sing God’s praise than when we’ve first begun.*”

While the duration of eternity is beyond our ability to grasp, by faith we accept its reality. We feel the need

amidst this changing scene for that which is permanent.

The answer to our soul’s deep longing is found in this glorious Psalm: “*Lord, thou has been our dwelling-place in all generations.*” May we come to our God in faith and obedience to find our permanent abode. Remember the words of F.L. Eiland in his powerful hymn written to strengthen the failing faith of a Christian brother:

Time is filled with swift transition Naught of earth unmoved can stand. Build your hopes on things eternal. Hold to God’s unchanging hand. Trust in Him who will not leave you, Whatso- ever years may bring. If by earthly friends forsaken, Still more closely to Him cling. When your journey is completed, if to God you have been true, Fair and bright the home in glory, Your enraptured soul will view. Build your hopes on things eternal. Hold to God’s unchanging hand.

As we travel through life in this turbulent and ever changing world, may we all the more trust in the Lord. Let us continue to live the sentiments of the grand old song by Carl von Weber:

My Jesus. as Thou wilt-’ All shall be well with me; Each changing future scene I gladly trust with Thee: Straight to my home above I travel calmly on, And sing, in life or death My Lord, Thy will be done.

Midtown Messenger, The Midtown Church of Christ Weekly Bulletin, July 14, 2019.

SW



GOD HATES THOSE WHO SOW DISCORD

Mark Reynolds

These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: [A] proud look, a lying tongue, and hands

that shed innocent blood, [A]n heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, [A] false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren (Proverbs 6:16-19).

This passage appears to be a new section, but not a new subject. In fact, the closing words of this section, “he that soweth discord” connect it with the previous section because verse fourteen ends almost identically. It appears, then, that we are reading a description of a man who walks after the world rather than God: “A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth” (Proverbs 6:12).

This passage is certainly not an all-inclusive list of everything God hates. We are told that God also hates those who cheat others (Proverbs 11:1); A king committing wickedness (Proverbs 16:12); The worship of the wicked (Proverbs 15:8); The prayers of those who ignore the law of God (Proverbs 28:9). The Proverbs writer wants us to understand that there are some things that the Lord finds detestable. He further wants to make sure that we understand that one certainly cannot both please God and continue in things that are an abomination to Almighty God.

The Sin of Sowing Discord

The word for “brethren” means “friends or associates, members of the same circle.” Our inclination may be to think only about those who sow discord in the church. While this would certainly include the family of Christ today, it is not limited only to our brethren in Christ. This describes a man who strives to make others think less of any individual through lies and misrepresentations.

We have a tendency to categorize sin. By this I mean that many are ready to come down hard on some sins, while nearly overlooking others. Many will condemn some works of the flesh, such as, adultery, fornication, murder, drunkenness, etc. (Galatians 5:19-21). But the same passage mentions other fleshly works, such as, strife (acts of contention), wrath (open eruption of anger), divisions (when fellowship is split by the working of the spirit of strife), [B]ackbiting and whispering (gossip) (Galatians 5:19-21; Romans 1:29-30). Oftentimes the latter sins are seen as less destructive to our souls, and are tolerated by members of the community, members of the church, elders, parents and others. The end result, however, for those who practice the above is the same: “...as I have also told you in time past, that they

which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:21). These “lesser talked about” sins of the flesh are components of sowing discord and are equally hated by God. Now the question is, “Why does God hate when people sow discord?”

The Beauty of Unity

The Psalmist declared,

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore (Psalm 133).

Unity is to be pursued and appreciated! It is compared to the anointing oil that consecrated the whole body of the High Priest, and then flowed to the whole congregation. Just like the dew of Mount Hermon that brings vigorous life to plants and crops of those who depend on it for their livelihood, even so unity brings vigorous life to God’s people. Unity is a blessing both spiritually, as illustrated in the anointing oil of the High Priest, and unity is a blessing physically, as illustrated in the dew from Mount Hermon that gives life to their crops. Therefore, without unity we suffer both physically and spiritually.

Don’t Be the One Responsible for Breaking Unity

The “Discord Sower” can be found nearly everywhere. You can find him in the office or factory where you work; he can often be found in the church you attend; nearly every family has one (maybe not in your immediate family, but extended family); you can see him at a ball game; at your school, and we could go on and on. He is the guy that likes to keep things stirred up; he is never content, always has a complaint. He/she likes to pit one against another. He will listen to and spread gossip. He puts down others to make himself look better. He is the most miserable person you ever want to meet. And his soul is lost!

1 Tim Ayers in The Book of Proverbs. The Seventh Annual Southwest Lectures, p. 102.

2 Roy Deaver in A Commentary on the Book of Psalms, Vol. 2, p. 211.

The Forest Hill News, Forest Hill Church of Christ Weekly Bulletin, January 29, 2019.

Record for the Week of September 8, 2019

Bible Class	165
Morning Assembly.....	225
Evening Assembly	149
Iglesia de Cristo	
Morning Assembly.....	N/A
Contribution	\$N/A

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PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER:

Elvira Martinez is now home recovering from a fall last week.

Sue Shamburger is improving and hopes to be released from the hospital this week.

Paul Wood was restored and requests prayers for strength.

Health Concerns: Tom Genduso, Pat Lyckman, Angela Young.

Shut-ins: Jeannette Hansen, Rosemary Garrett, Jon Little, Bobby Johnson, Elvira Martinez, Ginny Oswald, Jan Smith, Bonnie Thetford.

Others: Sonny & Lee Barr, Rodney Boes, Olivia Carson, Caleb Crouchet, Bill Ellison, Ada Fleming, Bonnie Gomer, CK Holt, Deborah Hoover, Nell McCown, Bill & Nancy Ponds, Kay Westbrook, Gib Young.

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