

Really? I Have To Be Patient?

-How many of you know what a sloth is? (An animal)

-Can you describe how it looks and it's characteristics? (It's about the size of a small dog but has the look of a long-haired monkey. It lives in trees in the rainforest and has a physical structure built for crawling, thereby dragging itself across the jungle floor on its two front arms. Its muscles are such that they only allow it to move at a snails pace whenever it decides to move. It hangs from trees for hours on end and patiently eats the leaves. Thereby the name "sloth"!)

-When you think of the word "sloth" or "slothful", what comes to your mind first?
(lazy)

-But, God created this animal to teach us an important lesson. Now, I'm not saying to be lazy, because the sloth still swims and has to go and forage for its food, but there is something we can learn from this creature that God created. Let's take a moment to see what that is.

-Would you consider the sloth to be patient? (Remember, God created it with muscles that will not allow it to rush through the rainforest, but makes it take its time to get from one place to the next.) (Yes, it accepts what it is given and works with it.)

-Now, an important question for us, do we accept what we have been given and are we patient with it, working within the parameters God has placed us in? Or are we constantly complaining about how much we wished this would change and that would change? (...)

-To help us understand that we are not alone in this struggle, we are going to look at Jesus Himself. In order to do this, let us read our first set of verses together from Philippians 2, it is #1 on our Verse Sheet: (Philippians 2:5-8 "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, *Who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in the human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*")

-When God the Father called His Son to leave His Heavenly throne and come down to earth, what form did Jesus come in? (A baby. A human form, complete with skin, pain and limits.)

-How do you think that may have been different from His Heavenly body? (He was in the form of God! He had no limits.)

-Then, when He came to earth as a baby, who was called to take care of Him while here? (Mary and Joseph. Not a King or Queen, but a humble couple that Jesus Himself created with God the Father. In John 1:1, it says that Jesus, the Word, was with God and was God. And it also says that all things were created by Him.)

-How long was Jesus here on this earth to *patiently* endure the journey God called Him to? (About 33 years. Here, the King of the Universe, Creator of ALL that exists, is born to a lowly couple in a lowly town, raised by a hardworking carpenter and taught his trade. Was laughed at and scorned and then after 33 years He was crucified for a human race that despised Him.)

-Now, when you think of it this way, do you think Jesus had to be the King of Patience?

-Sometimes God calls us to bear something or endure something that may last a very long time, even years. Can you think of something He has called you to bear? It can be a sickness, disease, loss of a loved one or being alone, financial burdens or lack of finances, etc. (Take a moment and share if you are willing...)

-Sometimes He calls us to bear it even until our death, just as He did Jesus. But, it never means we cannot ask Him to take it away from us.

-Do you remember what Jesus prayed on the Mount of Olives right before He was taken to be crucified? (...)

-Let's read our next verse together to hear His words. (Luke 22:41-42 "And He withdrew from them (the disciples) about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, 'Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me. *Nevertheless*, not My will, but Yours, be done.'")

-When you read this verse, we are seeing Jesus, God's Son, asking God His Father that the cup of bearing our sins on the cross and His separation from His Father be taken away from Him.

-When we read how Jesus prayed, what does it tell you about how freely you can be open about your feelings with God in your own prayer life? (That if Jesus the Son could ask this of the Father, we too can be fully open and honest with God and ask Him to take something away that may be causing pain and suffering.)

-But let's not stop there. Notice how He also said at the beginning, "If You are willing"? When we pray, do you think that this should be an important part of our prayer as well and why? (Yes! Because God's will is the best will. It trumps all others, even our own, because He is looking at the eternal and we are looking at the present. His will is perfect in the grand scheme of all humanity, for all humanity.)

-Can that be a hard thing to say in our prayer when we are facing something extremely difficult here on earth? Maybe something we don't even understand could possibly have an eternal benefit? (Absolutely!)

-You may be saying, "Okay, He can do that and bear that because He is Jesus, God the Son! I'm not!"

-Let's read our next set of verses to help us with this. #3 on our Verse Sheet: (1 Corinthians 6:19 "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the *Holy Spirit* within you, whom you have from God?...)

-According to this, Who lives in us and where did He come from? (The Holy Spirit. God's Holy Spirit that He gave us when Jesus ascended into Heaven! The same Spirit that lived in Jesus!)

-Romans 8:11 says "And if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He Who raised Christ from the dead will also give *life to your mortal bodies because of His Spirit Who lives in you.*

-That same Spirit gives life to our mortal bodies. He gives us what we need to live life out here on earth.

-Now, let's read verse #4 to see what it is that God's Spirit gives us in our times of need in our lives here on earth: (Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, *patience*, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.")

-From these verses, what do we have at our disposal every moment of the day if we choose to tap into the power of the Holy Spirit that lives in us as believers? (love, joy, peace, *patience*, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control)

-Notice the fourth one, what is it? (Patience!)

-He gives us patience!

-Do you ever remember someone saying, don't pray for patience because God will send you trouble to make you have it or learn it? (...)

-Do you think troubles come whether we ask for patience or not? If so, why? (Yes, it is just part of living in a fallen world and comes with the territory. God uses things to also make us stronger and rely on Him rather than others or ourselves.)

-This verse is telling us that God's Spirit gives us patience as well as all the other things we need to live in this world! We just have to act upon what He has given us.

-Let's go back to Jesus' example. We talked about Him coming from His Heavenly throne to this fallen world, shrouded in human skin and bones, and then born in a lowly manger. Living here for over 33 years, knowing the whole time that what He was called to do was going to be very painful for Him.

-And yet, He patiently endured it for all mankind to be saved. Being obedient to the will of the Father.

-Now, let me ask us a question. If the Father is asking us to bear something that seems very hard to do, and it isn't changing after we have prayed and prayed about it, can we trust Him enough to know that He has not forgotten us and has a greater plan that we may not be able to see at the moment? Can we trust Him? (...) Why? (...)

-I would love for us to read our last verse together for a little encouragement on this matter. Let's read it together, #5 on our Verse Sheet: (2 Corinthians 4:16-18 "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, *yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.* So we fix our eyes not on what is

seen, but on what is unseen, since *what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal!*")

-What does the first sentence say? (To not lose heart.)

-Jesus did not lose heart. Even though His heart was broken, He knew His Father was going to help Him through it and He did, just as He does for us today.

-What does the second sentence say? (Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.)

-Though our bodies are deteriorating, our spirits are renewed daily. How are we renewed day by day? (Though His Words and His Spirit giving us strength and encouragement.)

-The third sentence says our momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that outweighs all of them. What do you think this means? (...)

-“Barnes Notes on the Bible” said that the way these “momentary troubles” produce eternal glory is by their tendency to wean us from the world; to purify our hearts; by looking to God for consolation and support; by helping us to look at the glories of heaven as our future home and not just at the earth and its temporal pleasures, and as a result of bearing trials in this life, God graciously promises to reward His people with an eternal home *with Him*.

-What does the very last sentence in these verses say: (“So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since *what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal!*”)

-According to this verse, what *we* see is temporary. But, there is so much more than temporary. What God sees is the whole eternal picture.

-Remember, God is watching over everything and He is bringing justice and redemption in the end for all of us! Trust in Him in your situation! He is so worth it!!!

-There is a short poem that was written by the writer during a difficult, reminding her to trust in the Lord, the One Who held her future when she didn’t know what the future held for her. I hope it encourages you today as you listen.

**“From dawn till setting of the sun,
Not my will but Thine, be done.
From eventide to morning rest,
I trust You, Lord, that You know best!” (By: Charleen Albury)**

-May each day that we face our trials, we rest in His unchanging love and plan for each one of us!

“REALLY? I HAVE TO PATIENT?” VERSE SHEET

1. **Philippians 2:5-8** “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, *Who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in the human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*”
2. **Luke 22:41-42** “And He withdrew from them (the disciples) about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, ‘Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me. *Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done.*”
3. **1 Corinthians 6:19** “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the *Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?*...”
4. **Galatians 5:22-23** “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, *patience*, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”
5. **2 Corinthians 4:16-18** “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, *yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.* For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. *So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal!*”