

Kings Norton Baptist Church

Sunday 15th January 2023 10 am

The fruit of the Spirit is patience

Welcome to all.

Opening Scripture

Hymn MP 506 O Lord my God

Scripture Psalm 40 (page 566)

Prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

Children's talk

Chorus MP 37 As the deer pants for the water

Testimony

Notices

BCM prayer update

Missionary focus

Prayer time

Reading James 1:1-12 (page 1213)

Galatians 5:16-26 (page 1172)

Hymn MP 988 How deep the father's love for us

Sermon The fruit of the Spirit is patience

Hymn MP 990 I will offer up my life

Closing Prayer

Close



Exordium and Prayer

This morning we are looking at the fruit of the Spirit and in particular 'patience' **The fruit of the Spirit is patience.**

- The forester plants trees and then waits years for them to grow - I have always been impressed with that - The forester waits patiently.

In our passage **patience** is also translated '**longsuffering**' or **forebearance** This forester may be patient - but he is not longsuffering, - longsuffering is being patient under trials. The forester's life may be easy, being patient under trials is not.

It is not about your personality. Some people are unruffled by nature, some are calm, some are slow to be perturbed.

No, longsuffering - and cheerful longsuffering - is the mark of a Christian, one in whom the Spirit of Christ dwells.

This quality is seen when the Spirit of Jesus overcomes my spirit, His character of patience - overcoming my natural inclination to be impatient.

So bearing **the fruit of the Spirit** shows the presence of Jesus within a person, it is the mark of a true believer. These are not *gifts* which are given to different people at different times, even non-believers, that they might unwittingly fulfil the purposes of a Sovereign God. No, this morning we are not talking about *gifts* but fruit, or graces, the evidence of the Holy Spirit within a man or woman, boy or girl, the evidence of true conversion.

Notice it is 'fruit' singular, in other words when we look at one - such as patience, - in some measure they will all be there too – for they are His character manifested in me. Patience is a characteristic of God. for

God is patient x2

Jonah looking across to the wicked city of Ninevah, the capital of the cruel Assyrian Empire, when he'd called them to repentance **prayed: "O LORD, I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, (Jonah 4:2, so also Ps 145:8, Joel 2:13) a God who relents from sending calamity.** However, years later when the time for judgment has finally come we read in Nahum **The LORD is slow to anger and great in power; the LORD will not leave the guilty unpunished.** 1:3 He did not punish straight away - he was patient x2, he bore with them for 200 yrs, but then the judgment came.

- After Adam and eve sinned God saw the wickedness on the earth and was grieved with all the violence - yet it was 1,500 years before the flood of judgment came – why so long? because God is patient.

Again and again God saw His creation turn away from Himself, he bore with them - that is why the Bible is such a big book, because God is patient.

Why has Jesus not returned, why so long? - because God is patient.

2 Pete 3:9 helps us understand. **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.** He is patient, very patient!

This is clearly seen in a parable that Jesus told: **"A man had a fig-tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig-tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?' "'Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig round it and fertilise it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, - then cut it down.'"** Luke 13:6-9

✝ The axe is at the root of the tree, - but let's wait, we will give it time – Let's see if it will bear fruit? A bit longer x2. Surely, God is patient.

The patience of God is seen in Jesus who patiently bore with his slow to respond friends. He was patient with Judas giving him chance after chance even though he knew he was going to do betray him, Jesus was so patient with him.

Jesus has been so patient with me. All those years when I ignored Him, ignored His ways, ignored His commands, ignored His Son, and ignored and suppressed my God given conscience. Made excuses.

And over all these years as a Christian he has been so patient with me.

Has he been patient with you? He has. He is.

The Apostle Paul tells Timothy that he was shown mercy **"so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.**" 1 Tim 1:16

Yes God is patient – God is patient with me – so I should be patient with others.

The word "**patience**" in the NT implies suffering, it implies enduring or bearing it. Therefore it is something we choose to do, not simply through necessity. As such it is an essential Christian virtue. We are to exercise it. We need to "wait patiently" on God, to endure without complaining the various forms of sufferings, wrongs and evils that we meet with, to bear patiently with those injustices and frustrations we cannot remedy.

(Strong's 3114 μακροθυμέω makrothumeo mak-roth-oo-meh'-o)

2a

The first three in the list are: **love, joy, peace**. These are the singular experience of every born-again Christian. The **love** of God is manifested in me, I have **joy** in the Lord and there is a **peace**, a settlement of heart, **my peace I give unto you**, said Jesus - and he has - and it is wonderful. We who know Him dwell with Him and constantly rejoice in these great blessings. That is one of the reasons why we meet this morning. These are the themes of our songs of praise. We rejoice in them. They rush in from Day one of our conversion. They are new, real, profound and so different from anything I experienced in this world.

The world does not know these things. The sentimental nonsense, or sexual desire this world calls 'love'. The world has no love, nor is there deep joy which the world shams as pleasure and happiness. And in this world you will not have peace, there is none for the unregenerate man or woman, no unforgiven sinner will have peace, there's no peace for the wicked and that is what we are until Christ cleans us up.

The world is not **loving**, the world is not at **peace**, the world is not the source of **Joy**, don't look there, the world is not **patient**, it is impatient. Nor is it **kind**, nor **good**, nor is it **faithful**, nor is it **gentle**, nor does it value **self-control**. No the world is not **patient**.

Have you been bruised by the world? And the people in it? Yes, I am sure you have. Maybe you put a brave face on things and try to make it work for you. Or maybe you want a different way, maybe that is why you are here this morning. Here is a haven away from the storm. But the real haven is Jesus, the living Jesus who says **"come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest.** Will you come to him, confessing your sin, will you chose the way of the cross ✝ ? the hard way - but the right way, the good way, it requires a change of heart and a change of direction. The door is open to you if you are contrite and humble of heart. Come in on your knees and you will then receive. If you do - you will receive abundantly.

A Christian knows these things **love joy and peace**, we cultivate them, we bask in them and praise Him for these deep realities that are within the heart of everyone in whom the Spirit abides. They are the privilege of every true convert - they represent our enjoyment of God.

However, they are not the test of my character. As I said these three '**love, joy, peace**', as one fruit are connected with the next three '**patience, kindness and goodness**'. This second group comes out of the first group.

2b

- We do not have one part and not the other, any more than we marry only part of a person.

Patience or longsuffering is not to do with my relationship with God but with others.

You can see just who the true believer is by the way he reacts to others and how he reacts to his circumstances here is the measure. Patience only shows in difficulty and as soon as we engage with others we will all face difficulty. People are difficult, I am difficult! You have to bear with others - and others have to bear with you! We are all odd, peculiar, we are all sinners.

Do you praise God for the love in your heart, yes of course, but then you are confronted others, who are so annoying, (has a name sprung to mind? maybe several!). It is unavoidable, here is the test, you find people against you, those who try to wear you down, those who frustrate you, the question is how do you react to them? What about your love, joy, peace now??

- ✚ Have you been praying the Lord will take that annoying person away? Be sure he will soon send another! and another – yes it is lifelong!

Things may be fine shut away on your own hoping to enjoy the blessings of Christ. But you and I do not live in isolation, we live with others, if not in the home then in the world, interacting, engaging, and it is here that the test emerges. All is fine when you're on your own but with others here your true character is seen. Do you display patience? Are you long suffering? Are you showing the presence of Christ in you by being like Him? Here is the evidence. That **love** you rejoiced in is shown in you being **patient** – remember the famous on love in 1 Cor 13 passage. **Love is patient**

And **patience** is not passive, it is not begrudgingly bearing with another, what's the next word? **kindness** no patience responds by being **kind**.

- ✚ The first group is about who I am essentially, this second group is our relationship with others. this group follows on from the first group. What a man is – he manifests. And that is where you start – and then he will show this in how he reacts to his surroundings and his circumstances.

It is a test which is why the natural man or woman draws back, disengages, retreats into the cave of self-protection, I fear having my true self exposed.

The measure of your Christian maturity is not that you have **love, joy, peace** enjoying His blessings, singing the songs behind the four walls of church or home. No we do not run away from the difficulties of engaging with others. God did not save us to live a monastic life, to hide away at home or escape

engagement with the world. Jesus saves us out of the world, - puts his spirit in us winds up / charges us up - and then sends us back into the world. John 17

We see this pre-eminently with the life of Jesus, didn't he engage and therefore suffer? Are we who follow him not going to likewise engage and suffer to? - **“if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. ... When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.”** 1 Pet 2:20-23 and so should we. That is how it shows that Jesus is in you.

- Driving in the states on the multi-lane freeways you can use any lane, actually with cruise control everyone travels at the same speed.
- That is not true in life, as it is here, there are some in the fast lane, and some are slow lane people. How about you?

Are you able to patiently bear with those going at another speed to yourself? Some are middle lane people, seemingly in a world of their own oblivious to those around. **I remember following a work colleague all the way into Birmingham and she never looked in her mirror once. We are told on the driving course to do so every few seconds and be constantly awake to what is around.**

There are those, who are not aware, not sensitive, not considerate of others. The result is those slights, 'that person walked straight past without saying hello!' Or that misinterpreted look, or body language. Are you able to assume the best motives of others? –and still act in love and respond kindly? **As you probably know the majority of car crashes are due to impatience.** So you end up with a clash or crash with another and the problems multiply, the devil rubs his hands in glee, the fellowship, the bond of peace, is broken.

- ✚ And if you respond with impatience, then you become the problem!

The answer? **Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.** Colossians 3:13.

- ✚ Remember that Christ's love is the source of your patience.

And if you are the more observant one - then you **ought to bear with the failings of other and not to please ourselves.** Romans 15:1

To be patient in bearing the offenses and injuries of others is to be long in spirit, to strong in spirit, to be large hearted. We must persevere patiently and bravely and endure all the trouble He brings to us.

After all - How can I be impatient when the **love, joy and peace** of God is with me? How inconsistent. The Lord's Spirit is never contrary to itself!

People problems are just part, - and often a large part - of the sufferings that we experience. Living in this sinful corrupt world, will bring a host of trials, **many kinds** says James, - and persecutions - if you stand up for Jesus.

How you respond to these difficulties and hardships proves your faith to be genuine – or not as the case may be! To respond in grace proves Jesus, it displays His glorious character. Then He is seen, otherwise that all is seen is ugly me.

Trust that Christ's plan for you is a good plan and humble yourself under it.

Andrew Murray who wrote a number of books on prayer said: "Cultivate the disposition of welcoming everything that calls for or helps you to humility."

Paul said he rejoiced in weakness for he then knew God's extra grace, The Lord said to him "**My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.**" Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." 2 Cor 12:9-10

So to summarise

I should be patient: At home, in the church, in all the circumstances the Lord brings to you and I. Will you now **be completely humble and gentle; and patient, bearing with one another in love.** Eph 4:2. Let us all as **God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.** Col 3:12

Being patient in your circumstances means you are being patient with what God has for you. Then you will live by faith as we see in Hebrews 11 the hall of patient faith. Noah waited patiently for the ark to be built and he preached for years and years, with not one response. An encouragement for us preachers.

Abraham lived in tents waiting for the day he would be in the promised land, he waited patiently for God to fulfil his promises. So did Joseph in the famine, So did Moses those 40 years in Midian and so on and on with many others in that hall of patient faith.

God's people have always stood out as being a patient longsuffering people.

■ **The patient ferment of the early church, a collection of accounts of how the early church conducted itself from the post apostolic fathers.**

4a

Speaking of the expansion of the church we read:

✚ ...the growth was not carefully thought through. Early Christian leaders did not engage in debates between rival "mission strategies." The Christians wrote a lot; and what they wrote is surprising. The Christians wrote treatises on patience— but they did not write a single treatise on evangelism (page 9).

And again:

✚ The teachings of Jesus, according to Justin Martyr, are not only essential for Christians to learn mentally; they are indispensable guides for the Christians' daily living. Justin notes that his community doesn't consider people true Christians if they simply quote Christ's teachings but don't live them. He believed that the effectiveness of Christian witness depends on the integrity of the believers' lifestyles. So the church baptizes only people who live the things that Christ teaches, and allows them to participate in the eucharistic services only if they "live as Christ handed down to us." (page 15 Justin 1 Apol 61:2,66:1 (Hardy 282,286))

God is patient, So his people are patient **Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him;** Ps 37:7. So we should be patient with each other proving that you are saved, not to love our brother in this way - is not to be saved.

I read at the beginning: **The Lord.... is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.** 2 Peter 3:9

This passage is addressed to Christians. God is patient with you, longing that you display Christ-likeness. We as Christians are to live a life of repentance humbly accepting the Lord's good reign over our lives.

There is a reward to come to all those who persevere. **The crown of life** x2: a wonderful reward that will abundantly more than make up for all our troubles!

✚ **Jonathan Edwards** says: Let us to bear tribulation with patience; patiently bearing, and patiently waiting for the reward. And patience works experience; for in the midst of our tribulation, we experience those blessed incomes of the Spirit in our souls, that make even a time of tribulation sweet to us; and is such an earnest abundant confirmation of our hope; and so our patience works hope.

2 Corinthians 4:17 **For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.** _____END

4b