

# In His Image: Faithful & Patient

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, good morning, Braemar. I was standing in the back as I do, and I was looking, and I was looking at my watch, and I was looking at the pews, and I thought, huh, it'll be another Bible study.

There'll be five of us, it'll be good. And yet, everyone showed up. Look at this. So welcome this morning. I'm so glad we didn't shovel this morning. My back is still complaining from last Saturday and Sunday.

So I'm standing here cringing, but it's good. It keeps me happy to be alive. Well, this morning, we're going to continue in our sermon series called In His Image Reflecting God.

We've been recognizing that as human beings, we've been created in the image of God. And an important aspect of that fact, that we've been created in God's image, is that we may exhibit many qualities or attributes, communicable attributes, as I've talked about before, that we can see in God Himself.

And last week, we considered that God is, as you may remember if you were here, merciful and gracious. And we recognize that there's a direct connection between justice, mercy, and grace, certainly as those characteristics relate to God.

[ 1 : 20 ] Our confession, our repentance from our sin, directly relate to God's mercy. Do you remember what we recognized last week?

Here's a test. Getting what we deserve is called... Pastor's kid. No cheating.

Getting what we deserve is called justice. Not getting what we deserve is called... mercy. That's okay.

You jumped ahead, Terry. And getting what we do not deserve is called... grace. Exactly. Mercy, justice, mercy, and grace.

God's mercy and forgiveness means getting what we do not deserve by the grace of God. Knowing that we don't deserve God's mercy or God's grace, knowing that we could never afford those gifts, we acknowledge that God's mercy is a free gift that we could never afford.

[ 2 : 29 ] And it's made possible only through the grace of the price paid by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Amen? Amen.

This morning we're going to consider exploring these communicable attributes. I always get caught on that one. And we're going to recognize this morning, any guesses based on our worship set, that God is faithful and patient.

And be patient because we'll get to that one second. So when you consider the idea of someone or something being faithful, what does that mean to you, audience participation?

Someone or... Sorry, Bill? Anyone else? Always there? Marriage.

Interesting. Hopefully. So there's a sense of stability there, right? There's a sense of something being...

[ 3 : 39 ] Or someone. I'm going to stick with someone. Being reliable. Being dependable. Being constant. And do you recognize a sense of a quality of character as well?

Someone who's faithful is likely truthful. Honest. Trustworthy. Perhaps committed to following a code of ethics or morality.

They are faithful to something. And what about a sense of loyalty? Being in our corner, someone who is faithful.

Someone who is supportive. Someone you can count on. As Annette said, someone who's there for you. Faithful. Sure, a lot of ideas and concepts there, aren't there?

Do you have someone in your life, or hopefully several someones, that you would consider to be faithful? Do you recognize in them some of the ways that we've defined what it means to be faithful

already this morning?

[ 4 : 47 ] And I'm going to switch gears. Have you ever had someone break your heart? Have you ever had someone that you loved deeply, that you trusted, above all else, betray your trust?

Someone that you trusted with a secret. You hear that secret come back to you through someone else. Or have you felt abandoned in a moment of need by someone who you thought would always be there for you?

Well, sadly, folks, I think we can all recognize that, can't we? We can recognize moments like that. Or times when someone's faithfulness to us has seemed to falter.

But I want you to think about it for a moment. Have you ever failed in your faithfulness towards someone else?

Have you ever offered words of criticism instead of words of encouragement or support? Have you ever betrayed a confidence that someone placed in you?

[ 6 : 03 ] Have you ever acted in a way towards someone else that may have been more faithless than faithful? Friends, that doesn't make you a bad person.

It makes you human. And as humans, we may tend to choose our own best interests. We've talked about this before. Our own best interests over those of someone else.

Our own needs versus the needs of someone else. Simply put, when we consider the lofty ways in which we define that concept of faithful this morning already, we're not always good at it, are we?

But what does it mean to say God is faithful? Well, the Bible says in Numbers 23, 19, God is not a man that he should lie, nor a son of man that he should change his mind.

Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? Friends, God doesn't say one thing and mean something else.

[ 7 : 19 ] He doesn't make promises to us only to break them later. When God says something, when he promises something, he will do it.

Isn't it frustrating? It was, sorry, frustrating. Fascinating and encouraging to us when we consider that God's word to us, God's truth revealed in Scripture has so many wonderful layers to it.

We could study Scripture all day, every day for the rest of our lives and not get it all. That's encouragement, not discouragement, by the way. Last week we heard the words of Lamentations 3, 22 and 23, and it applies here again because we consider God's mercy and grace with this passage, but let's hear this again.

Lamentations 3, 22 and 23 says, because of the Lord's great love, we are not consumed, because his compassions never fail.

Now, God's grace and mercy is at work there. But God's grace and mercy, they are new every morning, the passage continues.

[ 8 : 35 ] Great is your faithfulness. God is constant. God is reliable. God is dependable.

He has shown up for us before, and he will do it again. Do you remember last week that we recognized that God has given us his law to protect us, to guide us, to lead us?

Well, the Bible says in Psalm 25, verse 10, all the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful for those who keep the demands of his covenant.

When we obey God's law, when we follow the path he has laid out for us throughout Scripture, his ways are loving and faithful.

He is reliable. He is consistent. We can have confidence in that. 1 Thessalonians 5, verses 23 and 24 Now, folks, hear this great promise.

[ 10 : 02 ] This blessing hinges on this next phrase. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

How is your patience these days? Does this make you patient? Does waiting in a line make you patient?

Does physically distancing make you patient? Does waiting for someone else to decide whether or not to put on a mask make you patient? Does waiting for a vaccine make you patient?

Does all your pre-COVID quirks, do those make you patient? So much of our human experience is based on waiting, isn't it?

I reflected on that concept, it feels like 10 years ago, in a series that I preached on waiting when I first started here at Braemar. It was in early 2019.

[ 11 : 09 ] And you can find that series on our website. Shameless plug. But especially these days, it can become so easy, I believe, for us to lose our patience, can't it?

The average person's fuse is shorter. We're perhaps hyper-focused on our circumstances or the news. I'll tell you, the presidential election had me watching TV for hours, watching the news for hours.

And now I've started reading again, and I feel at peace. But even things that may have been minor inconveniences in the past, they can now seem like major issues, can't they?

And we need to recognize that's directly related to our sense of the unknown. The tension of our current circumstances.

And we need to try and give both ourselves and others extra grace in these times. What does it mean to be patient?

[12:18] Let me know. I'll wait. What does it mean to be patient? Trusting?

Content. I think I'll have to be content with two answers. Well, patience means being willing to wait. I believe that's the core. It means being even-keeled and even-tempered, even in the unknown. Not easy, right?

Patience means that we don't overreact. But we remain in the moment. We seek to keep our emotions in check.

Patience also means that we aim to be considerate of others. Have you ever thought of it that way before? When you're waiting, you're often waiting for someone else.

[13:25] I have two teenagers. No, not one teenager. And one who's like a teenager. But it means waiting. And now I can see with grace my own father waiting in the car for three boys.

Waiting. And waiting. And waiting. But it means being considerate of other people. Being aware of time. Being aware of the value of other people's time.

Patience means being willing to wait. Trusting that the goal, the end result, what we're headed towards, will ultimately be worth it.

No matter what is happening in our lives right now. Psalm 37 verse 7 reminds us to be still. There's the core of patience.

Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him. Are you able to do that? Be still and wait patiently?

[14:29] You're already squirming with that thought, I think. Are you someone who seeks to help God out? Well, I'm going to give God a hand.

And I'm going to plan ahead. And I'm going to start working. I'm going to start moving forward. Why? Wait for God. I'm saying this to myself right now, by the way.

Wait for God. Because in trying to help God out, you're really looking to move your own plans forward.

Aren't you? It's not about helping God. It's about making your own plans happen. Oh, God's busy. I'll just keep moving the ball down the field. Well.

But when you find yourself waiting in a situation, waiting for an answer, waiting for someone to arrive, waiting for anything, what emotions do you recognize in yourself?

[15:29] Well, for me personally, when my patience wears thin, I begin to recognize frustration. Why am I still waiting? Irritation, or even at times, the start of anger.

I'm Scottish and Irish, right? I've told you that before. My fuse can be short. Fortunately, I can cut it off before it burns down. But often worry or anxiety or the unknown, these are things that cause us to fray at the edges.

Can you relate to that? Those negative emotions that we experience in impatience, they reveal that we've begun to lose focus.

That perhaps we've even begun to lose our trust in God. He'll show up. I promise you he will.

But his timelines are different. His will is different. And when we hold tightly to our worries and our anxieties in the unknown of our circumstances, we become anxious.

[16:42] We become angry and irritated. We become like spoiled children, don't we? But it's when we focus on God and ask him for patience that we find peace.

Have you ever done that for yourself? Found yourself anxious? Found yourself stressed and worried and actually stopped and said, God, I need your help.

I need you to step in here. I've done it more recently and the peace that comes is almost instantaneous because it's returning our focus to where it's always meant to be.

We're not expected to figure it all out. That's God's job. It's when we focus on God and ask him for patience that we find peace, as I said.

Psalm 86, verse 15. Links several of these concepts together as we read, But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

[ 17 : 58 ] God's character is about love and compassion towards him, towards others, towards ourselves.

And as we can see throughout Scripture, God is eternally patient with his people, isn't he? And he waits for us and waits for us.

And while we seek to wait with patience, that's the goal, we can trust that God remains with us because he is faithful.

We don't wait in a vacuum. What is unknown to us is fully known to God. Lean in to him and trust him.

As human beings, I believe that waiting often quickly turns into a sense of inconvenience.

[ 18 : 59 ] Right? But we don't wait without a faithful God whose plan for our lives is at work. Hear that.

And as a community of believers, none of us wait in isolation. We seek God, friends, together. As the Apostle Paul reminds us in Romans 15, verses 4 and 5, Friends, the truth of God's character is revealed over and over again in Scripture.

The more we learn that truth, the more we know about what God has done in the past. And in knowing that, the more confidence we can have that he will do it again in the days ahead.

This morning, as we've recognized that God is faithful and patient, I hope you can find encouragement in that.

These qualities that we've been learning are not merely words or concepts. They are truth. Learning about the qualities and characteristics of God help us to gain insight into how we can better relate to him.

[ 20 : 36 ] Where we can have confidence and take comfort in knowing what God is like. God is not merely faithful and patient as the story of our lives unfold, but also as his greater plan for creation, all of creation, unfolds.

And as we look towards that day, we must continue to seek God and grow through his strength to become more and more like Christ in our words, in the ways we treat others, and in how we bring salt and light to a world that so badly needs God.

2 Peter 3, verses 14 and 15, reflects this great promise and our destiny as followers of Christ as we wait for his return. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with him.

Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. So friends, let me encourage you.

Let's be people who don't sit idly by, waiting for our eventual destiny to come. Let's live in anticipation of that glorious day.

[ 22 : 12 ] Let's live our lives with patience and confidence that God is in control. And above all, let's live as active agents, active agents of change and transformation in a world that so desperately needs the good news of Jesus Christ.

Let's pray. Father, thank you that you are indeed faithful. Lord, we can trust you that you will act in our lives.

You will act in our circumstances. You will act for the good of all creation. Lord, thank you that you are with us in this moment as much as you will be with us tomorrow and in the days ahead.

Lord, you are faithful, you are true, and you are trustworthy. Lord, thank you that you are in control of our lives in the unknown of our circumstances.

And thank you we ask for comfort in the days ahead. We ask you for peace in the unknown. And we ask you for patience, Lord. Because your plan is at work and things will be okay.

[ 23 : 29 ] We pray all these things in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.