Patience

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 26 May 2019

Preacher: Revd Clive Jennings

[0:00] I was just wondering, I got peace last week, so here we go with patience. Probably the most unqualified person to speak on that one. Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

Last week, as we thought about that idea of peace, I guess maybe that's our prayer for many of us. Lord, give me patience.
I don't know whether you've screamed that in various situations, maybe in the early hours of the morning if your child's waking every two hours, maybe in various situations where peace seems elusive and patience follows and sadly could crack.
It's a familiar prayer in every part of my life. And it's in the stuff of life where we're struggling not only to keep our cool, to chill out, to chillax, as people say, but we need the presence of God in our lives in extra measure to save us from overheating, from boiling over, from losing our cool.
And our last hymn, Abide With Me, is so often asked for with those, I love that chin, Julian, that's brilliant. But maybe in a traditional hymn, it's often asked for at funerals, to reassure us that he is there in every part of our life.
[1:36] And it's based on Scripture in John chapter 15. And in the King James Version, it says, to abide, abide. That idea to abide, to act or accept in accordance with.

Every branch of me, it says, that does not bear fruit, he takes away. And every branch that bears fruit, he prunes. We'll come back to that later.
He prunes so that it may bear fruit. And you are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in me. Come close.
Come, abide with me. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine. Neither can you, unless you abide in me.
I am the vine. You are the branches. He who abides in me and I in him bears much fruit. For without me, you can do nothing. I think that certainly speaks for my patience.
[2:39] I can do nothing in patience without the Lord. We need to draw on the power of the Holy Spirit because we know that patience can bring out the best of us and can also bring out the very worst in us.

Lord, give me patience. I would like you to imagine that it is a very hot day. You are driving a car. You are already late for an appointment.
In fact, you are very late for an appointment. Perhaps you need to pick somebody up from the airport. You need to pick somebody up from school. Whatever it is.
And you are praying that every traffic light will be green. On the way. Lord, get me there on time. When you encounter this lady with her grandchildren, three cars in front of you at a busy junction. This is a grandmother's tale. The other day, I went to a local Christian bookstore and I bought Sound Your Horn If You Love Jesus bumper sticker.
[3:45] I was feeling particularly empowered that day because I had been to a thrilling choir performance followed by a thunderous prayer session and I was feeling so close to God.

So I bought this sticker and I put it on the bumper of my car. I was stopped at a red light at a busy junction and I was just lost in thought about the Lord.
I was praying and giving thanks and I didn't notice that the light had changed from red to green. It was good that someone else loved Jesus because if they hadn't honked, I would never have noticed.
In fact, I found that lots of people loved Jesus. Why? Everybody was sitting there. Even the man behind me was honking like crazy and he leaned out of the window and screamed, for the love of God, go, go.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

My goodness, what an exuberant cheerleader he was for the Lord. Oh, do you know what? Everybody just started honking and I leaned out of my window and started waving at them and smiling at all these lovely Christian people.
[5:06] I even honked my horn a few times myself just to join in the joy and love. I saw another man waving in a funny way with only his middle finger stuck in the air when my teenage grandson, who was in the back, and I said, what does that mean?

And he said rather embarrassingly that it was probably a Hawaiian good luck sign or something like that. Well, I'd never met anyone from Hawaii, so I leaned out of the window and gave him that good luck sign back again.
Well, isn't this wonderful? My grandson burst out laughing while even he was enjoying this religious experience.
Well, a couple of the people were so caught up in the joy of the Lord in the moment that they got out of their cars and they started running towards me with their arms in the air.
Oh, I bet they wanted to pray or ask what church I went to. Well, this was when that I noticed the light had changed to green.
[6:15] Well, so I waved to all my brothers and sisters, grinning as I just drove through the junction. Oh, I noticed that I was the only car that managed to get through before it changed back to red.

I was quite sad to leave them all behind. with all the love that we had shared. So I just slowed the car down. I leaned out of the window and I gave them all the Hawaiian good luck sign again.
Oh, praise the Lord. What wonderful people I'd shared my day with. I don't know what you're like with patience.
Patience is a constant through the Bible. Again and again, God's people again and again have had to understand and practice what patience is.
Moses in the desert, waiting for 40 years. 40 years waiting on the Lord. You know, most of us struggle with 40 minutes for if a train or a bus is late.
[7:30] Wait more than that and we're demanding for compensation. There's a lot we can learn in Scripture about patience. The prophets take Isaiah and Jeremiah.

The ebb and flow, Lord, do it now, do it now. And they waited. The psalmist, when God, when will you do this? Job, Job not happy, tested, but having to learn through the devastation of his life and what happened to him.
Hence, we get the patience of Job. Elizabeth, wanting a child, having to wait till late, late in life. Jesus, patient, patient to the end with his disciples.
in the Garden of Gethsemane, the crunch time. Couldn't you wait with me? Couldn't you just wait with me for one brief hour?
Did he come back and did he lambast them for that? No. God's patience with us. The patience in the early church, the whole church, would turn to God and then, sadly, they would make up all their own rules and regulations and slowly drift away from the core sense of what it was and reinvented what it was.
[8:47] Patience is perhaps one of the greatest fruits to exercise, but because it is so evident, but it is so frail in our human nature. That's where we need God again and again.

Patience, patience in the power of the Holy Spirit to be more like Jesus who just didn't get to it but would stick and bear with us and with them through all sorts of things.
When you read the scripture about Jesus with his disciples, for me, it reflects so much of our walk with God, of him saying again and again to us, do you know what? I'm so patient with you, Clive, but when are you going to get it?
When are you going to get this right? When are you going to actually connect with this patience and grace stuff? It was that deep, eternal sigh, that pause that says, patience.
And knowing in our own lives that we will let people down because of our lack of patience in our own discipling, in our lack of love. And Paul knows this as he wrote this scripture this morning because he knows people will be frustrated with us and distracted.
[10:09] Yet we are called as God's people. We are called as holy and dearly loved. We are called to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

And perhaps that starts not only with each other but with us within our relationship with God. because when I think about patience, I think of myself being patient with one another, being patient and bearing with people.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

But how about my relationship with God where we are urged to keep on asking, seeking, keeping on knocking, to have patience. patience. I've said a prayer, Lord, and you haven't answered it to my satisfaction.
Lord, I've asked this prayer and you haven't answered it in the last half an hour in the way I expected it. In fact, I've prayed this twice, Lord, and you haven't answered this.
I've had to learn like you again and again and again that patience works two ways in a relationship. In our relationship with Jesus, it works two ways.
[11:29] And we often put in our prayer and we expect an answer, a bit like a vending machine. We put it in and we expect it to just drop into the tray of life. Yet often in my experience, the answer to my prayer isn't what I asked for.

And it's answered in a totally different way. If you look at your journals, if you journal anybody, look back and think of the way in which the Lord has answered prayer in an amazing different way, certainly not in the way I ever expected it to be.
Consider God's patience with us. Yeah, I can hear you. I hear you asking. I know what you're asking of me. I am here. I am always here. I will never leave you or forsake you.
But I am here. But the answer that you are asking for is not for now. And that takes patience. I don't need to tell people here of that patience of waiting.
My goodness, is he a patient God with me. The times when I fail to listen and wait on him. The times when I expect instant results. The time I come up with a solution that doesn't reflect his grace and love.
[12:40] The times that I bite back rather than waiting and reflect on grace. The times when I rush in rather than wait for wisdom. The easy route or so many of us is often filled with impatience.

And indeed, isn't that what our culture says to us? No wonder we get impatient. Our impatience says, I remember that credit card advert? There was a take the waiting out of wanting.
It was a great advert, wasn't it? We're all encouraged to go out and just duck the card and get it there and then. Do it now. Take it now. Why wait?
You deserve it. You can pay for it later. And that reflects the whole of society to the spiritual dynamic. For waiting isn't encouraging. Wait, said Jesus.
Wait until the Holy Spirit comes upon you. Wait. Have patience. It will come. Wait. I will send another, the comforter.
[13:43] Wait. The Bible is riven through with wait, wait and patience. The old idea of patience as a virtue, I'm sure maybe many of us said that to us.

Patience is a virtue. My goodness, is it a virtue that I need time and time again. Yet often in today's culture, patience is seen in some circles as weakness.
certainly often in leadership. Do it now. Drive it forward. Get it done. Go for it. Yet let's not underestimate the power of God when he does and can act immediately.
But be ready to exercise patience when the time is right to listen to God. To give holy space. To allow space for us to grow.
I don't know about you, I've grown so many times in my patience. My character grows because I've had to wait. I've had to see it from the other person's point of view.
[14:46] I've had to still my soul. I have had to abide, as it says. Mandy will tell you quite frankly and you can, Mandy will go to the information desk and you can stay there until about six o'clock where she'll tell you about my instances of impatience.

But I remember when this dog collar thing came along and God was very fortunate. I mean, you know, other than going up a mountain and bringing down, he couldn't have left me in any doubt.
But I was impatient. And I was due to go for a thing, it was called a bishop's advisory panel and we were due for the date was in July. Mandy, who has the wisdom as all women do in life as we know that husbands and partners, we know that our partners has this great amount of wisdom.
And I said, I think I need to bring it forward. I think I need to go for May. I'm going to find out if there's a cancellation. Mandy said, no, no, be patient. That's the date you've got in July.
Ah, but if we do it in May, that'll give us time to put in my notice. I can put in my resignation in the police. I can do all of this. We can think about the house. We can get it. No, said Mandy.
[16:01] Don't change it. Did I change the date? Yes, I did. And do you know, from the moment I got on that train, I didn't feel one sense of peace in that bishop's advisory panel right the way through, even right to the end.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Praise God there's some good bishops who have wisdom. That's great. You see, I had to learn a lesson, a huge lesson about patience, about waiting on God and listening.
But I'm certainly not here to preach to you in any way for those of you who have shown patience in so many different ways.
things. But sometimes the Lord gives us the time to do that. As you know, I love the film Evan Almighty. Like many of you, I will be very disappointed when I get on that great day and find that God doesn't look like Morgan Freeman.
But it's, it's just, to me, the character in that film embodies the character of God in so many different ways.
[17:13] And if you don't know the film of Evan Almighty, what happens is that Evan is a congressman. He's been towed to build an ark in the middle of the desert. And God sends him all these things that happen.

First of all, he starts growing a beard. And his hair grows. And then all of a sudden animals arrive at his front door. And then somebody delivers all this wood to him with a plan wherever he looks.
And I want you to imagine the patience of his wife with all of this happening in his children. And it gets to a point where she has almost had enough.
Well, she has had enough. She bundles the kids in the car and she gets to a diner and she sits there. And she's served by a man who is God.
If you look very closely, it's almighty on his badge. And he gives her these words of wisdom. Huh? Excuse me, can I get a refill, please?
[18:19] Come right up. Thank you. Excuse me. Are you alright? Yeah. No. This is a long story.

Well, I like stories. I'm considered a bit of a storyteller myself. Huh? My husband? You heard of New York's Noah? The guy who's building the ark.
That's him. I love that story. Noah and the ark. You know, a lot of people miss the point of that story. They think it's about God's wrath and anger. They love it when God gets angry.
What is the story about, then, the ark? Well, I think it's a love story. About believing in each other. You know, the hellos showed up in Paris.
They stood by each other, side by side. Just like Noah and his family. Everybody entered the ark side by side. But my husband says God told him to do it.
[19:15] What do you do with that? Sounds like an opportunity. Let me ask you something. If someone prays for patience, you think God gives them patience?

Or does he give them the opportunity to be patient? If he prayed for courage, does God give them courage? Or does he give them opportunities to be courageous? If someone prayed for the family to be closer, do you think God zaps them with warm, fuzzy feelings?
Or does he give them opportunities to love each other? Well, I got to run. A lot of people to serve. Enjoy. What's the story about? It's believing in one another. It sounds like an opportunity.
If someone gives you patience, does he give them patience? Or does he give them opportunities to be patient? Does he give them opportunities? If someone gives you patience, does he give them patience? Or opportunities to be patient? Does he give them opportunities?
Does he give them opportunities? Does he give them opportunities? If we don't respond in his gifting in power, how will we know? If we're not grafted into the vine? I'm not going to stand here because, and I can't preach because I know that many of you have born with things for a very long time.
[20:42] Maybe that's an illness. Maybe that's with a situation. Maybe a family situation. That might be something in your own relationship. It might be something that you have asked for patience and abundance and you are there at that moment in time.

All I'm going to say this morning is, into that space, we ask the Holy Spirit to come. And that's what we're going to do today.
In our patience and in this week, we're going to ask the Holy Spirit to come into that place to speak to us, to be with us, and to abide with us, and us with God.
I think that's what we're going to say. I think that's what we're going to say. I think that is so important. And the psalmist in Psalm 40 said, I waited patiently for the Lord.
He turned to me and he heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit. He lifted me out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on a rock, on a firm place.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[21:52] And he gave me a firm place to stand. It didn't say he took away the situation. It just said he gave us a firm place in which to stand and wait.

He played a go to the perspend, where he condensed the iceulator and put his hand on his Saf■. He protested me back in Australia with a strong Beautiful Ruthie. Happy New 30's!

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host