

GALATIANS 2:22-23
(OT: Ps 103:8-14; NT: Mk 14:32-42)

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

- What kind of life have we been designed to live?
 - So far, seen God call us to lives of love, joy, and peace.
 - Today, we move to patience.
- Let's begin by asking Jesus to meet us in this time. **[Pray]**

INTRODUCTION:

- When was the last time you lost your temper?
 - Who was it with? What was it about?
 - How did you feel at the time? How do you feel about it now?
 - Anger is animating emotion – gets us up and running and makes us feel energized in the moment.
 - But it never takes us where we want to go – tends to leave us with regret.
- Which is a challenge, bc in our world, frustration comes in all shapes/sizes:
 - **Small:** Traffic, waiting in doctor's office, hell we call visit to DMV.
 - **Medium:** Thoughtless friend, disobedient kid, difficult colleague.
 - **Large:** Relationships we can't fix, cancer, death.
- But here's the good news:
In a world of frustration, part of God's design for your life is for you to be patient.

Transition: Why is that such good news?

- Let's get into it by following outline we've used in this series.
- **Definition** (What is patience?) → **Gospel** (How is Jesus the source of our patience?) → **Application** (How can we be patient?).

DEFINITION: WHAT IS PATIENCE?

- Term translated *patience* in **Gal 5:22** is Greek word *makrothumia*.
 - Compound word:
 - *makro* = large.
 - We use this word in English.
 - You remember it from when suffered through Macro Economics.
 - *thumia* = passion, desire.
 - Stick these words together and you get the idea of having a long fuse...
- In the Bible this term is used – we could say – passively and actively:
 - **Passively:** To be patient means we don't express anger prematurely.
 - Externally → We don't yell or lash out physically.
 - Internally → We don't seethe or get road rage.
 - **Actively:** To be patient means to be steadfast in the face of suffering.
 - Externally → We persevere when times are tough.
 - Internally → We have what our culture calls *grit*.¹
- All this takes us to a definition of patience that has two parts:
*The ability to deal with trouble without blowing up; to suffer without giving up.*²

- When faced with trouble/suffering, find ourselves doing one/other:
 - We blow up/give up → We explode, or we withdraw...
 - Lack of patience can make us too big or too small...
- Bible says we don't need to live this way → We can have patience...
 - Tender and Tough → Gracious and Gritty.
 - Handle whatever comes our way.

Transition: How do we live like that? Let's move from our **Definition** → **Gospel**...

GOSPEL: HOW IS JESUS THE SOURCE OF OUR PATIENCE?

- Join me with Jesus in a garden called Gethsemane.
 - Ordinarily, Jesus loved this place.
 - Often went there with his disciples (**Jn 18:2**).
 - It was one of their favorite places to hang out.
 - But tonight different: Within hour he'll be betrayed, then denied/tried/crucified.
 - Under this shadow, we read he's **greatly distressed/troubled (Mk 14:33)**.
 - And then get rare description from Jesus of how he is feeling himself: **My soul is very sorrowful, even to death (V34)**.
- Trouble/suffering are about to come – to a degree/depth never experienced by anyone...
 - But in the face of it all, notice how Jesus is *patient*...
 - Do you see how he embodies both parts of our definition?

The ability to deal with trouble without blowing up...

- We see this in his interactions with his **disciples**.
 - In this hour of desperate need:
 - He has taken 3 of them – Peter, James, and John → 3x he leaves them to pray → 3x they fall asleep – unable even to stay awake.
 - **Donald MacLeod:** *“Had the redemption of the world depended on the diligence of the disciples (or even on their staying awake) it would never have been accomplished.”*³
 - If you were Jesus, how would you have responded?!
 - Externally and internally: We'd forgive him if he'd blown up!
“How useless are you guys? You can't even stay awake?!”
 - But Jesus doesn't yell or lash out → Instead, he speaks tenderly:
 - **The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak (V38)**.
 - **Ps 103:14:** **He knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.**
- Tender/gracious – he is embodiment of patience: Deals with trouble without blowing up.

And notice how he embodies other side of coin too → Ability to suffer without giving up.

- We see this in his interaction with the **Father**.
 - In **V35** Jesus leaves the sleepy disciples, falls on ground, and prays.
 - He asks God if there's another way → Is it possible to save the world without going to the cross?
 - Bc if there is another way – if it is possible – let's do that instead.
 - Never underestimate the horror involved in saving the world.
 - And Jesus felt it all → deeply in his soul.

- But even here, he trusts: **Yet not what I will, but what you will (V36).**
 - Most important thing isn't how I feel.
 - Most important thing is for me to live in your will.
- We don't read Father's response, but from what happens next, we know it came.
 - There is no other way → only a cross.
 - So Jesus ends passage by saying: **V41: The hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.**
 - And then comes grittiest verse in entire Bible: **V42: Rise, let us be going.**
 - There is no other way → Death on cross is only option.
 - So Jesus doesn't shrink back from walking into the will of God.
 - **Rise** → Get up guys.
 - **Let us be going** → It's time to get on with it.
- Tough/gritty – he is embodiment of patience: In the face of suffering he doesn't give up.

Put these two things together, and see our salvation depends on perfect patience of Savior:

- And as he hangs on the cross, he continues to embody both.
 - As he's insulted/abused – he doesn't **blow up**.
 - Instead of lashing out at the injustice of it all...
 - He says: **Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.**
 - As he suffers – he doesn't **give up**.
 - He doesn't come down from the cross as some challenged him to do.
 - Instead, he stays there until **It is finished** → Till there's nothing else to do.
- Can you imagine anything more beautiful/powerful than the patience of Jesus?

Transition: When you experience it, it changes you...

- His patience for you, enables you to be patient with others...
- Let's consider that as move from: **Definition → Gospel → Application...**

APPLICATION: HOW CAN WE BE PATIENT?

- I wonder which aspect of patience you feel you need today?
 - Do you tend to blow up or give up?
 - Interestingly, we sometimes do one to avoid the other:
 - We don't want to blow up so we give up → Can't face another fight with your spouse so just withdraw from the conversation completely.
 - We don't want to give up, so we blow up → When the person we're talking with withdraws, we start to protest even more.
- Whatever your tendency, let's chew on both...

1. Maybe you need to deal with trouble without blowing up...

- If so:
 - When dealing with thoughtless friend/disobedient kid/difficult colleague...
 - Let's remember how patient Jesus is with us and allow that to shape our response.
 - When we're thoughtless/disobedient/difficult/sleepy → Doesn't yell at us.
 - Instead, he considers how best to love.
 - Kind words to his disciples in the garden.
 - Kind words to his abusers on the cross.

- Imagine what that might look like – if we used frustration as a prompt to love...
 - When feel it rise, don't just blow up → Instead, get curious about how to love.
 - What's going on with thoughtless **friend**? Maybe struggling with something you don't know about?
 - Why is **child** being so disruptive? Maybe something underneath it you haven't considered yet?
 - Or difficult **colleague** – why are they being such jerk? Maybe another way to handle this than getting defensive/yelling back?
 - Frustration gets exchanged for compassion, and we start to love.
- Here's a question I try to ask myself when frustration rises up:

How does the thing that's driving me crazy give me an opportunity to love?

 - Stop taking everything so personally/making it about us.
 - Patience allows us to think of others and how we can love...
- We can have that kind of patience → Bc that's the patience Jesus has with us.

2. Or maybe you need to deal with suffering without giving up...

- One of things I love about our church is that we talk about fact that life can be tough.
 - Rejection, misunderstanding, and sorrow are part of life.
 - And it gets worse – relationships we can't fix, cancer, death...
- But the gospel enables us to face these things without giving up...
 - We can persevere...
 - We can have grit.
- We do this when we allow our sufferings to drive us to the patience of Christ.
 - When you suffer – suffer with him.
 - Remember how he endured all things on our behalf.
 - And remember that God worked his suffering for our eternal good.
 - And then trust that God will do the same with the suffering in your life.
- Here's another helpful question I ask myself:

How does the thing that's killing me give me an opportunity to trust?

 - To go to Jesus → Suffer with him → Remember he'll redeem it all in the end.
 - Instead of giving up, we give in to his will...
 - That's very different...
 - Shifts our focus from suffering of moment to one who has us in his arms.
 - Occupies our minds with an entirely different perspective...
 - And enables us to say...
 - **Rise, let us be going.**
 - Patience makes you tough → Patience gives you grit.
 - We can have that kind of patience → Bc Jesus had that patience for us.

THE CLOSE: Which aspect of patience do you need today?

- For someone you love, for someone in your life, for some struggle dealing with...
- Why not practice this today?
 - With Jesus, you can deal with trouble without blowing up.
 - With Jesus, you can suffer without giving up.

***In a world of frustration, part of God's design for your life is for you to be patient.
And we can live that way bc of how patient Jesus is with us.***

RESOURCES AND ENDNOTES

Resources

This list contains some of the resources that were used to prepare this sermon series. Check them out if you want to dig a little deeper.

- Luke Bretherton, *A Primer in Christian Ethics: Christ and the Struggle to Live Well*.
- Jay Kim, *Analog Christian: Cultivating Contentment, Resilience, and Wisdom in the Digital Age*.
- C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*.
- C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*.
- Martin Luther, *Galatians*.
- Donald MacLeod, *The Person of Christ*.
- Douglas Moo, *Galatians*.
- Redeemer Presbyterian Church, *Paul's Letter to the Galatians*.
- John Stott, *The Message of Galatians*.
- B. B. Warfield, *The Emotional Life of Our Lord*.

Endnotes

¹ See Jay Kim, *Analog Christian*, 68.

² This definition is adapted from the definition in Redeemer Presbyterian Church, *Paul's Letter to the Galatians*, 169.

³ I owe this section and the quote that follows to Donald MacLeod, *The Person of Christ*, 170-175.