



Worship Service Theme: Patience

Helpful Elements:

Green table covering (Ordinary Time)

Welcome: Welcome! It's so good to be together to celebrate faith and community today. My name is ____ and I'll be leading our worship time today. Our theme for today is **patience**, something that is often in short supply in this world. We'll look at what patience means in our lives of faith.

Please pray with me as we open our time together.

Opening Prayer: Great and loving God, we ask your Holy Spirit to bless our time together and to refresh us with your presence. In the midst of a world full of trouble and strife, we thank you for watching over us, guiding us, and as we confess our sins, for forgiving us. Enable us to enter your presence today joyfully and reverently, and let us depart with the assurance that our sins are forgiven. Fill us, O God, with the peace that passes all understanding. Amen.

Opening Hymn: Doxology, p. 1

Statement of Faith, p. 2: Let us affirm our statement of faith by reciting Psalm 23, "The Lord is My Shepherd," together:

¹The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

²He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

³He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

⁵Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Hymns:

We Gather Together, p. 3

For the Beauty of the Earth, p. 4

Joyful, Joyful, p. 5

First reading: Habakkuk 1:2-5. In this passage from the Old Testament, the prophet Habakkuk cries out to God:

² “How long, Lord, must I call for help,
but you do not listen?

Or cry out to you, ‘Violence!’
but you do not save?

³ Why do you make me look at injustice?
Why do you tolerate wrongdoing?

Destruction and violence are before me;
there is strife, and conflict abounds. ...

[And then the Lord answered Habakkuk:]

⁵ “Look at the nations and watch –
and be utterly amazed.

For I am going to do something in your days
that you would not believe,
even if you were told.”

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Hymns:

Jesus Loves Me, p. 6

Oh, How I love Jesus, p. 7

Holy, Holy, Holy, p. 8

Second reading: From the New Testament book of James (5:7-11):

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. ... ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and

patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹ Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Hymns:

His Eye is on the Sparrow, p. 9

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms, p. 10

Interactive Homily: Let's pause our singing for a moment and talk more about patience. What is patience? How can we *define* patience, other than listing examples of patience?

- Dictionary: patience is “the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering [... and here's the kicker:] *without getting angry or upset.*”
- How often is life uncomfortable? What kinds of discomfort might we experience?
 - Physical, mental, emotional distress
 - Loss of friends, spouses, jobs, goals
 - Hard labor, or even boredom!
 - Nuisances: harsh weather, ill-fitting clothing, blackouts, embarrassing situations, stress
- When you don't get or have something you want, what can happen when you fall into impatience?
 - Complaining! Get angry, upset; eye rolling, huffing, tapping foot, sighing, shaking head
 - Make poor decisions; rush into things
 - Create more stress and anxiety, worry
 - Affect relationships badly
 - Blame or shut out others and God
- What kinds of things in life take a lot of time?
 - Children: raising them, caring for them
 - Strong friendships
 - Solid marriage
 - Complex work projects
 - Artistic endeavors: sewing, painting a portrait, writing music
 - Medical work: surgery, healing
 - Growing an oak tree (or any plant)

- Growing a character trait, like compassion
- What kind of *value* do these things have? (*Can go through the list again and ask this for each one: "how valuable is ___?"*)
 - Lasting; priceless, even eternal
- When you are able to be patient for things that take time, how does that help you and the people around you?
 - More likely to get it right, have a quality outcome
 - Not as likely to cut corners or make an unethical or bad decision ("it pays to pause")
 - You don't waste time fretting or trying bad things
 - Respects the process and other people (it's not just about you and your schedule)
 - Self-control: waiting without making things worse, complaining
 - Takes the long, eternal view
- How much control do we have over many things that we wait for?
 - Not much!
- What *do* we have control over?
 - *How we wait.* We wait in acceptance that we are not in control of everything we want.
 - From an article in the magazine *Christianity Today*: "In every ... life there comes a time when one must wait upon God. Sometimes we must wait for a need to be met [or] for the satisfaction of a significant desire. ...At other times we wait for God to fulfill a promise [or] to comfort during a trial. ...Patience with God involves faith, and to exercise faith is to surrender [control]."¹
- How should we pray as we wait?
 - God welcomes our honesty!
 - Habakkuk the prophet is very honest with God: "How long, O Lord, must I cry out?? It feels like you're not listening!"
 - And God responds: "I'm doing something you wouldn't believe even if you were told. Trust me and wait."
- What is God's promise for us when we wait patiently?
 - *Blessing.* Read James 5:11 again: "¹¹ Behold, we consider those *blessed* who remained steadfast."
 - We live with assurance of God's love and purpose, even as we wait.

¹ <https://www.christianitytoday.com/biblestudies/articles/spiritualformation/virtue-of-patience.html?start=4>

... Let's take a moment to silently pray for the virtue of patience.

(Silent Prayer) ... Lord, hear our prayers. Now let us pray the Lord's prayer together:

Lord's Prayer: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

Hymns:

He's Got the Whole World, p. 12

In the Garden, p. 13

Standing on the Promises, p. 14

Third Reading: Quotes on Patience

God's patience is infinite. Men, like small kettles, boil quickly with wrath at the least wrong. Not so God. If God were as wrathful, the world would have been a heap of ruins long ago. –Sadhu Sundar Singh, Indian Christian missionary

Faith is not simply a patience that passively suffers until the storm is past. Rather, it is a spirit that bears things—with resignations, yes, but above all, with blazing, serene hope. –Corazon Aquino, first woman president of the Philippines

Patience ... means to be farsighted enough to trust the end result of a process. ... It means to look at the thorn and see the rose, to look at the night and see the dawn. –Elif Şafak, British-Turkish novelist

Hymns:

It is Well with My Soul, p. 15

Amazing Grace, p. 16

Fourth Reading: "The Garden," from *Frog and Toad Together* by Arnold Lobel
Frog was in his garden. Toad came walking by.

"What a fine garden you have, Frog," he said.

"Yes," said Frog. "It is very nice, but it was hard work."

"I wish I had a garden," said Toad.

"Here are some flower seeds. Plant them in the ground," said Frog, "and soon you will have a garden."

"How soon?" asked Toad.

"Quite soon," said Frog.

Toad ran home. He planted the flower seeds. "Now seeds," said Toad, "start growing."

Toad walked up and down a few times. The seeds did not start to grow.

Toad put his head close to the ground and said loudly, "Now seeds, start growing!"

The seeds did not start to grow.

Toad put his head very close to the ground and shouted, "NOW SEEDS, START GROWING!"

Frog came running up the path. "What is all this noise?" he asked.

"My seeds will not grow," said Toad.

"You are shouting too much," said Frog. "These poor seeds are afraid to grow."

"My seeds are afraid to grow?" asked Toad.

"Of course," said Frog. "Leave them alone for a few days. Let the sun shine on them, let the rain fall on them. Soon your seeds will start to grow."

That night Toad looked out of his window. "Drat!" said Toad. "My seeds have not started to grow. They must be afraid of the dark."

Toad went out to his garden with some candles. "I will read the seeds a story," said Toad. "Then they will not be afraid." Toad read a long story to his seeds.

All the next day Toad sang songs to his seeds.

And all the next day Toad read poems to his seeds.

And all the next day Toad played music for his seeds.

Toad looked at the ground. The seeds still did not start to grow.

"What shall I do?" cried Toad. "These must be the most frightened seeds in the whole world!"

Then Toad felt very tired, and he fell asleep.

"Toad, Toad, wake up," said Frog. "Look at your garden!"

Toad looked at his garden. Little green plants were coming up out of the ground.

"At last," shouted Toad, "my seeds have stopped being afraid to grow!"

"And now you will have a nice garden too," said Frog.

"Yes," said Toad, "but you were right, Frog. It was a very hard work."

Hymns:

When the Saints Go Marching In, p. 17

How Great Thou Art, p. 18

[sing more or fewer songs to fill out the time]

Closing Blessing: (Strike bell as you say the word “Lord”)

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his to face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and grant you peace. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Doxology, Reprise, p. 30

Extra Material:

Patience is the companion of wisdom. –St. Augustine

Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet. –Genevan philosopher Jean-Jacque Rousseau

The two most powerful warriors are patience and time. –Russian writer Leo Tolstoy