

Sunday Morning Message

December 10, 2017 (Text preached also on July 28, 2013)

Add to Your Faith – Temperance

Text for Today's Message – 2 Peter 1:1 - 15

Congregational Reading – 2 Peter 1:5 - 8

Introduction

A few weeks ago, we looked at the first of the seven things that God says that we should add to our faith, which is virtue:

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; (2 Peter 1:5a)

In that message, we discovered that the word "virtue" means a moral excellence or purity. We said that a person who has virtue knows what is right and will do it. He fulfills his purpose as a Christian in glorifying the Lord. We also examined some examples of virtue from the Bible, particularly in the life of Joseph. Finally, we talked about the exhibition of virtue in our lives.

"Bad men cannot make good citizens. It is when a people forget God that tyrants forge their chains. A vitiated state of morals, a corrupted public conscience, is incompatible with freedom. No free government, or the blessings of liberty, can be preserved to any people but by a firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, frugality, and virtue; and by a frequent recurrence to fundamental principles." (Patrick Henry)

In the next message we learned that we need to add knowledge to virtue:

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue and to virtue knowledge;" (2 Peter 1:5)

In that study, we discovered that the word for knowledge here in 2 Peter is the word γνῶσις (gnosis), which has the idea of gaining or increasing knowledge. Paul said:

"That I may know (ginosko) him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;" (Philippians 3:10 KJV)

As we mentioned in that message, Paul already knew the Lord, but he wanted to get to know him better. I want to get to know him better.

Peter was saying that we who are saved need to add to our faith an increasing knowledge of the Lord; and we can do that through daily devotion, diligent investigation, and then dutiful application.

In the next message, we discussed adding to our faith temperance. We discovered that the word temperance means self-control. We live in an out of control society. People cannot

contain their appetites and passions. God, however, wants His children to allow the Holy Spirit of God to control them.

Transition:

This morning, we will look at the fourth attribute, or character trait, that God wants us to “fully develop” in our Christian Life: patience.

The word patience in the Bible is not exactly used as we use it today. We say that a person who can wait on line, or wait in traffic without complaining is patient. Or, we might use the word to refer to a parent who is tolerant of an unruly child:

Humorous Illustration - A woman sees a father shopping with a fussy two-year-old in his grocery cart. “Be patient, Billy,” he whispers. “You can handle this, Billy. It’s okay, Billy.” The woman said to him, “I don’t mean to interrupt your shopping, but I just had to tell you how wonderfully loving and patient you are with little Billy.” The man replied, “Actually, my son’s name is Patrick. My name is Billy.”

I Biblical Meaning of Patience

I love the definition given by Thayer’s Greek lexicon for the Greek word ὑπομονή (hü-po-mo-nā'), which is the word translated patience here in 2 Peter 1:6:

“In the New Testament, the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings”

Patience has the idea of enduring, waiting, and persevering.

The Bible Exposition Commentary states:

Patience is the ability to endure when circumstances are difficult. Self-control has to do with handling the pleasures of life, while patience relates primarily to the pressures and problems of life. (The ability to endure problem people is “long-suffering.”) Often, the person who “gives in” to pleasures is not disciplined enough to handle pressures either, so he “gives up.”¹

Examples of N.T usage of the word ὑπομονή (hü-po-mo-nā'):

Note – we are going to look at a lot of Scripture. If God wants us to add patience to our faith, then we better have a good understanding of what the Biblical concept of patience is:

Warning – This is a Bible heavy message

Turn to Luke 8:4 – 15:

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible exposition commentary (2 Peter 1:5). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

"And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable: A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." (Luke 8:4-15)

In the parable of the sower, we see that only those that are in the fourth category have exhibited self-control, and patience. They endured, they persevered, even though it became unpopular, even though it became difficult.

Turn to 2 Corinthians 1:3 – 7:

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring [ὑπομονή (hü-po-mo-nā') - patience] of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation." (2 Corinthians 1:3-7)

Turn to 2 Thessalonians 1:3 – 5:

"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; So

that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:" (2 Thessalonians 1:3-5)

Turn to Revelation 2:1 - 3

"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." (Revelation 2:1-3)

Turn to Hebrews 12:1 – 2

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured [ὑπομένω (hü-po-me'-nō) the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1-2)

According to Hebrews 12:1 – 2, God has a purpose (a race) for each of our lives. In many respects, our individual races are the same as everybody else's, but in many other ways, our races are unique. God wants you and I to finish our race, but if we are going to be able to fulfill our purpose in life, we must run the race patiently, meaning, we must keep running even when the pressure is on us to quit.

Illustration from The Daily Bread:

George Matheson wrote, "We commonly associate patience with lying down. We think of it as the angel that guards the couch of the invalid. Yet there is a patience that I believe to be harder -- the patience that can run. To lie down in the time of grief, to be quiet under the stroke of adverse fortune, implies a great strength; but I know of something that implies a strength greater still: it is the power to work under stress; to have a great weight at your heart and still run; to have a deep anguish in your spirit and still perform the daily tasks. It is a Christ-like thing! The hardest thing is that most of us are called to exercise our patience, not in the sickbed but in the street." To wait is hard, to do it with "good courage" is harder!

II Biblical Models of Patience

There are many examples in the Bible we could look at:

A Noah – It took 100 years to build the ark. The ark was built in a place that was not near a body of water, and up until the time of Noah, it had not ever rained. Consider for a moment how much mocking Noah and his family must have endured while fulfilling God’s purpose for their lives.

B Elijah – He was a prophet during a time of great apostasy. It was not at all popular to be a godly man, faithfully proclaiming the Word of God. Ahab the king, and Jezebel the queen, both wanted Elijah dead. Elijah faithfully and patiently endured, fulfilling God’s purpose for his life.

C The Lord Jesus – He set his face “like a flint” for the Cross, and He let nothing waver Him from His purpose of redeeming man through the shedding of His own blood.

D Steven – The first Christian martyr (besides the Lord). He remained faithful to his mission of proclaiming the gospel of Christ, even when the stones were being hurled at him.

E Paul – Turn to 2 Corinthians 11:23 – 30

"Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;" (2 Corinthians 6:3-5)

"Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities." (2 Corinthians 11:23-30)

Paul was able to say at the end of his life:

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Timothy 4:6-8)

F The Saints from Hebrews 11:36 - 40

"And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." (Hebrews 11:36-40)

III Biblical Mandates Regarding Patience

A Just Keep Going (even when it hurts - determination)

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." (Romans 5:1-5)

B Receive Encouragement from the Bible

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 15:1-6)

C Ask God for Help

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1:2-5)

Illustration

The value of courage, persistence, and perseverance has rarely been illustrated more convincingly than in the life story of this man (his age appears on the right):

Failed in business 22 Ran for Legislature--defeated 23 Again failed in business 24 Elected to Legislature 25 sweetheart died 26 Had a nervous breakdown 27 Defeated for Speaker 29 Defeated for Elector 31 Defeated for Congress 34 Elected to Congress 37 Defeated for Congress 39 Defeated for Senate 46 Defeated for Vice President 47 Defeated for Senate 49 Elected President of the United States 51

That's the record of Abraham Lincoln.

Illustration

Young William Wilberforce was discouraged one night in the early 1790s after another defeat in his 10-year battle against the slave trade in England. Tired and frustrated, he opened his Bible and began to leaf through it. A small piece of paper fell out and fluttered to the floor. It was a letter written by John Wesley shortly before his death. Wilberforce read it again: "Unless the divine power has raised you up... I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise in opposing that (abominable practice of slavery), which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But if God be for you, who can be against you? Are all of them together stronger than God? Oh, be not weary of well-doing. Go on in the name of God, and in the power of His might."

Illustration

"Never give in. Never give in. Never, never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in, except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force. Never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy." (Winston Churchill)