



Patience

ADVENT DEVOTION – WEEK 1 | DECEMBER 2-8, 2018

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ROMANS 8:25

As a small child, I remember thinking Christmas would never arrive. The decorations would go up, television ads would hold out the latest and greatest toys, the Advent calendar would have more and more little, open flaps, but time seemed to stand still all the same. As a kid, being patient for December 25 felt excruciating. As I grew older I recognized that I was privileged, my household one that never lacked for food or presents, family or warmth. I began to understand that not everyone – in fact many around the world – did not wait longingly for gifts, but waited painfully for safety and sustenance. They hoped for that which they did not see but knew existed, at least for some.

This text from Romans 8 comes from the section on “future glory,” the passage that includes words about suffering, about all of creation groaning in labor pains. The hope for which we are to wait with *patience* is the hope of Jesus Christ, his coming, his return. The essence of our Advent waiting and our Advent preparing is Christ-directed and Christ-centered. We know that all is not right with the world. We see and feel the pain within and around us. And yet, like children eager for Christmas, we trust something good is coming, even when we cannot see it yet. Our experience of God reveals that our hope is not in vain and that our *patience* will be rewarded with the sure and certain presence of Jesus Christ. Do not, however, mistake Advent *patience* with Advent passivity. Our patient, hope-filled waiting entails worship, prayer and service. Our patient, hope-filled waiting enables others to see that their longing for an end to suffering is not in vain, either. Our patient, hope-filled waiting includes reaching out in love and with compassion to those who fear their waiting for safety and sustenance, justice and healing is in vain. Our patient, active, anticipatory waiting gives the world a glimpse of the great and glorious goodness soon to come.

PRAYER:

God of Hope, fill us with all hope and peace in believing. Grant that our patient waiting would not be passive, but instead filled to overflowing with preparations for the coming of Jesus Christ. Help us to act out of trusting hope, singing, praying, serving, bearing witness to the sure and certain return of the One who brings justice, mercy and redemption to the world. Amen.

DAILY PRAYERS AND PRACTICES

Monday – 2 CORINTHIANS 6:1-10

“At an acceptable time, I have listened to you and on a day of salvation I have helped you.” When have you waited for that “acceptable time” of God to help? Are you waiting now? Today be mindful of how you are being listened to and helped by God and by others.

PRAYER FOR THE DAY:

Lord, we question your timing, wonder if you are indeed listening and are often unwilling to endure much for the sake of your ministry. Bolster our courage. Embolden our witness. Forgive our impatience. Give us eyes to see your presence, ears to hear your Word and the faith to do your will. May we put no obstacle to faith in anyone’s way. Amen.

Tuesday – EPHESIANS 4:2

This verse from Ephesians calls on followers of Jesus Christ to be humble, gentle and patient. We are to bear with one another in love. Is there a situation or person with whom you need to be humble, gentle and patient? What would patience with this circumstance or person look like?

PRAYER FOR THE DAY:

Patient and gentle God, too often we jump to judgment, make hasty conclusions, or rush to fix someone or something when what you are calling us to do is listen, pray and wait. Help us to be patient with ourselves, others and mostly with those who most need compassion, care and kindness. May our interactions reflect your character. In Christ’s name, Amen.

Wednesday – COLOSSIANS 1:11-13

Giving thanks while patiently enduring circumstances not of our choosing requires a spiritual maturity possessed by very few. Today, be conscious of giving thanks, regardless of what happens. List things for which you give thanks and add to it throughout Advent.

PRAYER FOR THE DAY:

Almighty God, you grant us life and breath, salvation and peace. When circumstances challenge our ability to be grateful, help us to give thanks in all things. Help us to see even within difficult experiences your grace and goodness. May our praise and thanksgiving always be greater than our grumbling and complaints. Amen.

Thursday – 1 TIMOTHY 1:15-16

Jesus Christ came to save sinners. Thanks be to God. Otherwise, what hope would we have? Christ's mercy toward us reveals the extent of God's patience with us. As you look back at your life, when has God been patient with you?

PRAYER FOR THE DAY:

As we wait for the coming of Jesus Christ, we rest in the promise of God's grace. We rejoice in the truth that Christ comes to save sinners. We thank you, Lord God, for your merciful patience with us when we have strayed from your path, lost our way or gone our own way. In gratitude and faith, we seek your way, Christ's way, the Way. Amen.

Friday – 2 TIMOTHY 4:1-2

There are few gifts more precious than a patient teacher, one who guides persistently, corrects gently, encourages liberally. A life of faith requires such mentors. Who are the teachers for whom you give thanks? If you are able, express to them what their guidance means to you.

PRAYER FOR THE DAY:

Lord, our Master and Teacher, you instruct us to follow your example. You wash the feet of the disciples, eat with outcasts, have compassion on the hurting and forgive those who persecute you. While we will always fall short, we pray to emulate what you model for us, proclaiming God's Word, encouraging the faint hearted and upholding the weak. Amen.

Saturday – JAMES 5:7

Mystery surrounds the timing and ways of God. We think we know what God should do, and yet often as we look back we marvel at how God has done more than we could ever hope or imagine. How and when has God worked in your life in ways you did not see at the time?

PRAYER FOR THE DAY:

Lord of all time, there are seasons in our lives when we want you to act decisively and quickly. At times we struggle to see your presence and power. We doubt you are working in the painful, confusing places of our lives and world. Assure us yet again that you will never abandon us and that your will is for abundant life for all. Help us to trust your promises even when we do not yet see them fulfilled. Amen.



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