

“Grumbling and Patience” | Rev Craig Chapman | August 09, 2020

Old Testament Reading Job 23:1-14

23¹ Then Job answered and said:
² “Today also my complaint is bitter;
my hand is heavy on account of my groaning.
³ Oh, that I knew where I might find Him,
that I might come even to His seat!
⁴ I would lay my case before Him
and fill my mouth with arguments.
⁵ I would know what He would answer me
and understand what He would say to me.
⁶ Would He contend with me in the greatness of His
power?
No; He would pay attention to me.
⁷ There an upright man could argue with Him,
and I would be acquitted forever by my Judge.
⁸ “Behold, I go forward, but He is not there,
and backward, but I do not perceive Him;
⁹ on the left hand when He is working, I do not be-
hold Him;
He turns to the right hand, but I do not see Him.
¹⁰ But He knows the way that I take;
when He has tried me, I shall come out as gold.
¹¹ My foot has held fast to His steps;
I have kept His way and have not turned aside.
¹² I have not departed from the commandment of
His lips;
I have treasured the words of His mouth more
than my portion of food.
¹³ But He is unchangeable, and who can turn Him
back?
What He desires, that He does.
¹⁴ For He will complete what He appoints for me,
and many such things are in His mind.

Epistle :James 5:7-11

5⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming
of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the pre-
cious 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;** ⁹ Do not grumble against one an-
other, brothers, so that you may not be judged; be-
hold, **the Judge is standing at the door.** ¹⁰ As an ex-
ample of suffering and patience, brothers, take the
prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.
¹¹ Behold, we consider those blessed who remained
steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of
Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord,
how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

Gospel Reading Matt 6:25-34

6²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about
your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor
about your body, what you will put on. Is not life
more than food, and the body more than cloth-
ing? ²⁶ **Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow
nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heav-
enly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value
than they?** ²⁷ **And which of you by being anxious
can add a single hour to his span of life?** ²⁸ **And why
are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies
of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor
spin,** ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory
was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so
clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive
and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not
much more clothe you, O you of little faith?
³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall
we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we
wear?’ ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these
things, and your heavenly Father knows that you
need them all. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God
and his righteousness, and all these things will be
added to you.
³⁴ “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for
tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the
day is its own trouble.

Introduction

James is writing to Jewish-Christians dispersed beyond Israel, struggling with trials in life; today we’ll cover what James taught about the importance of patience. Two points: (1) Problems with patience and (2) Solutions for impatience.

Background

1. Problems with patience (James points out at least three problems with patience)
 - a. It’s been our calling as God’s people to exercise patience: Abraham; Joseph; 400y of slavery; 40y in wilderness; centuries wait for Messiah; 400y of God’s silence. Following the living God is a pilgrimage of patience.
 - b. We have abundant opportunities to exercise patience. We’re constantly called up- on to exercise patience with daily problems which confront us in our lives; e.g. :
 - 1) In v7 farmers must wait for the early and late rains;
 - 2) In v9 we must not grumble against one another in the church.
 - c. The problem with impatience is dangerous: in v9 grumbling leads us to the Judge standing at the door. In [Num 14:1-11](#) God equates grumbling as unbelief in Him. But, because God is patient, slow to anger, God forgave the Israelites for grum- bling against Him but promised judgment [Num 14:20-25](#); ∴ we should be warned.
 - d. In [The Great Divorce](#), [C. S. Lewis](#) says
“Hell begins with a grumbling mood, always complaining, always blaming others... but you are still distinct from it. You may even criticize it in yourself and wish you could stop it. But there may come a day when you can no longer. Then there will be no you left to criticize the mood or even to enjoy it, but just the grumble itself, going on forever like a machine. It is not a question of God “sending us” to hell. In each of us there is something growing, which will BE hell unless it is nipped in the bud.”
 - e. James warns against grumbling: it reveals a prideful heart, turned in on itself.
2. Solutions for impatience
 - a. Look to the past, James instructs in vv10-11; i.e., the steadfast prophets:
 - 1) God tells Hosea to buy his harlot-wife and he comes to appreciate God’s pa- tience with him in the face of the public disrespect our rebellion gives to Him.
 - 2) Job 23:11 Disasters destroyed Job but he never stopped praying to God, taking to Him his temptation for impatience. Job does what James urges ([James 1:2-8](#)) by counting it joy when we meet trials; the testing of our faith produces patience. Job trusts that patience in trial can produce growth in character and maturity.
 - These prophets point us to Christ, the only perfect, innocent sufferer: poor, be- trayed, rejected, humiliated, yet perfectly patient in the face of all evil.
 - His patience atoned for our impatience – He patiently waits for us to come to Him.
 - He offers us His patience so we can be patient with neighbors and circumstances.
 - b. Look to the future, James instructs in vv7-8, be patient for the coming of the Lord. The certainty of Christ’s second coming gives us hope to endure now, patiently: all injustices put right, all tears wiped away; we can’t have patience without hope.
 - c. In the present, don’t be anxious about our lives.
 - 1) Consider the lilies (Matt 6:28), they just lay back and receive.
 - 2) Look at the birds (Matt 6:26), how your heavenly Father feeds them. However, it was Craig’s robins’ job to work to find the worms God had provided.
 - Birds patiently work; lilies patiently wait – we need the wisdom of the Lord to know when to patiently work or to patiently wait; we obtain that wisdom by seeking Him, spending time with Him. The key is having a relationship with Jesus Christ.
 - Gratitude is another antidote for grumbling, complaining and impatience: count our blessings, give thanks to the giver of every good gift ([Phil 4:8](#)). Give thanks in all circumstances [1 Thes 5:18](#). In [The Hiding Place](#), [Corrie ten Boom](#)’s sister Betsy thanked God for the fleas; the fleas kept the guards away allowing Bible Study.
 - The book of James reminds us that suffering is for our good and His Glory.

Discuss

1. The problem with impatience is dangerous ... the Judge is standing at the door.
2. “Hell begins with a grumbling mood ... “ Grumbling reveals a prideful heart.
3. Solutions for impatience: Look to the past, the future and the present.
4. [Pastor Will Bowen](#)’s purple bracelets; re: our abundant blessings and God’s patience.
5. The antidote to Betsy’s fleas and our fleas.

Conclusion/Application

•What are our fleas? How is God working them together for good to be a blessing to us; are we thanking Him in the midst of the fleas? The call to patience is impossible without God’s Grace, without a moment-by-moment awareness of the presence of the Lord, particularly through prayer. Christ Jesus is praying, now, for us; let us join Him.