

## **THE PURPOSE OF TESTING #2**

We are continuing our series on “The Purpose of Testing”.

### **Review**

We began by showing, from scripture, how testing, trials, troubles and tribulation cannot be avoided in the Christian life; but our Sovereign God has a purpose in allowing all of them...to conform us to the image of His Son.

Now tonight I want to tackle a most needed message on a particular kind of test:

### **I. The Testing of Our Patience**

I want to show you, from the Bible and from our personal experience, how God will use the testing of our faith to produce patience; and how the power of patience can bring us into the full provision of God.

### **Theme**

**The greatest tests of Christian faith come in the testing of our patience.  
Can we wait on the Lord in the midst of our troubles?**

In my personal pastoral experience, I have only seen a few people fail the testing of their faith when it comes to *doing*; but I have seen many, many people fail the testing of their faith when it comes to *waiting*.

Many people cannot pass the patience test:

- Some get ahead of God and lose the Kingdom, like Saul when he couldn't wait for Samuel to show up
- Some get weary in the waiting and give up on God; like Israel when they made the golden calf
- Some, like the Prodigal son, get impatient for the inheritance and end up in the pig pen

No one ever told them that the greatest tests of faith come with the testing of our patience; that God allows the testing of our patience for a purpose!

## A. Every Test Has a Purpose!

### James 1:2-4

**My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.**

1. Pay attention to the text:
  - a. “My brethren”-the message is addressed to Christian believers.
  - b. “Count it all joy WHEN you fall into various trials”, not IF you fall into various trials; they are unavoidable but they have a purpose.
  - c. “The testing of your faith produces patience”.
  - d. And patience has a purpose: ”So that you may be complete, mature, and lacking nothing”
2. God allows our faith to be tested for a purpose; to produce patience! So...

### What is Patience?

**The capacity to accept or tolerate delay, problems, or suffering without becoming annoyed or anxious.**

3. God puts a high priority on patience, one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

### Galatians 5:22-23

**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.**

**Other versions translate “longsuffering” as “patience”.**

**NASB/NLT/NIV/NCV**

4. We hear many sermons on faith but very few on patience. But it takes BOTH to receive the promises of God!

### Hebrews 6:11-12

**And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.**

5. Let me help you here with a pattern found over and over in the Bible...

## **B. PROMISE-PROBLEM-PROVISION**

1. Here is how it works:

- God gives a promise of something He will do, something He will provide in the future
- But between the PROMISE and the PROVISION there is always a PROBLEM-and often the problem involves patience; waiting on the provision.

2. Here are some examples:

a. God promised to give Abraham a son; but it was 25 years before Isaac would be born. He got impatient and produced an Ishmael; a mistake that is still echoing in the world today. (The conflict between Israel and the Muslim nations)

b. God promised to give Israel the Land when He brought them out of Egypt; but between Egypt and the Land there was a wilderness to cross.

3. Every promise comes with a problem before the provision; the problem almost always includes a season of waiting.

### **Hebrews 10:36**

**For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.**

a. Notice: there is a space between the time you do the will of God and the time you receive the promise; what do you need in between? Patience!

4. One of the great principles of biblical truth is the law of sowing and reaping; most Christians can quote Galatians 6:7.

### **Galatians 6:7**

**Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.**

a. But very few Christians can quote Galatians 6:9.

**Galatians 6:9**

**And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.**

5. We sow seed with our good works and with our giving because we have faith in the promise of provision; the problem is patience waiting for the harvest.

a. Jesus spoke of sowing the seed of the Word in 4 kinds of hearts; but only one kind of heart was “good ground”:

**Luke 8:15**

**But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.**

6. And what of those of you who have a vision; a dream; something they believe God has shown them?

**Habakkuk 2:2-3**

**"Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.**

a. A vision from God is like a promise; but the problem is that it is for an “appointed time”; it is in the future; you must be patient and “wait for it”.

b. “Though it tarries” (from your human side), wait for it because “it will not tarry” (from God’s side).

7. What promise are you claiming? What problem is in the way of the provision? Remember that between the promise and the provision there is always a problem that usually requires patience and waiting on God. And God gives patience as a product of the testing.

**James 1:2-4**

**...the testing of our faith produces patience...**

**But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.**

8. God allows our faith to be tested for a purpose. It produces patience. And patience produces mature believers. But patience is...

### **C. The Forgotten Fruit of the Spirit**

**1. There is nothing more countercultural than preaching a sermon on patience in the midst of what some call “the age of impatience”.**

- We get angry when we can't find a parking place
- Or when there aren't enough checkers at the grocery store
  - And we hate standing in line for anything
- I remember comedian George Carlin's comment on people who say “I don't have all day”...

#### **George Carlin**

**When someone says, ‘I haven't got all day’, I always wonder, How can that be? How can you not have all day?’**

a. Of course we have all day! What we're saying is we're having to wait and we don't like it!

2. In his classic book, “The Believer's Secret of Waiting on God”, the great South African missionary Andrew Murray (1828-1917) wrote...

#### **Andrew Murray**

**“The great lack of our Christianity today is that we do not know God in that our first and highest duty is to wait on Him to do the work that pleases Him. Waiting then becomes the only way to experience full salvation, the only way to truly know God as the God of our salvation.”**

#### **Andrew Murray**

**“All the difficulties that keep us back from full salvation have their cause in this one thing: our lack of knowledge and practice of waiting upon God. Waiting on God is itself the highest salvation.”**

3. A more modern missionary and writer, Elisabeth Elliot wrote this:

**Elisabeth Elliot**

**“Restlessness and impatience change nothing except our peace and our joy. Peace does not dwell in outward things, but in the heart prepared to wait trustfully upon Him who has all things safely in His hands.”**

4. Patience has the power to produces maturity; but impatience can destroy us.

**Chinese Proverb**

**“One moment of patience may ward off great disaster. One moment of impatience may ruin a whole life.”**

5. I want to close with some thoughts on the power of patience and the perils of impatience as revealed in 2 men: Adam and Christ.

## **II. The Power of Patience and the Perils of Impatience**

### **A. The Perils of Impatience: Adam**

1. Impatience was born into the human race in the Garden of Eden; it was the sin that set up the fall of the human race.

a. God created man and gave him dominion over all he created.

b. His task was to cultivate the Garden and expand its borders until its blessings gradually covered the earth.

c. But no! The serpent offered a short cut! No need to wait on all the generations it would take to do the job; you can be “as god” right now!

**Franz Kafka**

**“There is only one cardinal sin. Because of impatience we were driven out of Paradise; and because of impatience we cannot return.”**

2. In one very real sense, impatience played a part in the fall of the human race into sin.

3. Created in the image and likeness of God, yet impatient with their station, our first parents grasped for a greater place of appointment and lost everything.

4. On the other hand we see the power of patience in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam; the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **B. The Power of Patience**

1. Jesus Christ is the Son of God; the 2<sup>nd</sup> Person of the Holy Trinity; the one ordained to come to save us from our sins.

2. He was present to witness the Fall of man into sin; He could have immediately intervened in the Garden; but He knew God's plan included allowing the man to be tested...and fail.

3. So He waited 4000 years to come to the earth!

### **Galatians 4:3-5**

**Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.**

4. And then, when He came, it was a baby! Then He waited 30 years before He entered into His ministry.

### **And Jesus began His ministry at about 30 years of age...**

#### **Luke 3:23**

a. Today we prepare 3 years for a 30 year ministry; but Jesus prepared 30 years for a 3 year ministry!

5. Then at the end of His 3 year ministry, they come to crucify Him; instead of accepting an immediate deliverance, He submits to the suffering of the Cross.

### **Hebrews 2:10-11**

**For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.**

6. And where is He today? Waiting!

**Acts 2:32-35**

**This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.**

**"For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself:**

**The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'**

7. There is great power in patience, modeled by Jesus; but there is great peril in impatience as modeled by Adam!

8. We have need of patience.

### **III. Close**

**The greatest tests of Christian faith come in the testing of our patience.**

**Can we wait on God in the midst of our troubles?**

#### **A. Review:**

1. God allows the testing of our faith for the purpose of producing our patience.

2. Our patience has the power to bring us to maturity.

3. It is by patience and faith that we inherit the promises!

**Fulton J. Sheen**

**“Patience is power. It is not the absence of action; it is waiting on the right time to act, for the right reason and in the right way.”**



## Closing Prayer

**Title**