

Saturday, September 2, 2017 - Day 244 – Jeremiah 10-12, Psalm 50, Hebrews 6

We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised. Hebrews 6:12

Faith and patience, how difficult it can be to hold on to both.

In a world where all manner of information and entertainment is available to us in a blink of the eye, and in the palm of our hand, how can we gain the maturity that is required to remain faithfully patient, and patiently faithful?

The need for immediate rewards for our faith is no less real today than it was for those being addressed in this chapter of the letter to the Hebrews. Having taken on the enlightenment of accepting Jesus into their lives, some began to revert back to their former ways and days as Jews. The rituals that have been made unnecessary by the grace of Jesus are being returned to by some. Why? Because nothing happened, nothing changed. Some probably said then, as some do today, "I prayed, but nothing happened." So, we return to our former rituals, which for some is an absence of prayer, maybe even an absence of belief. Why bother? Nothing changed, nothing happened.

The author reminds us that what will never change is the inheritance available to us. That is the promise of life eternal, for those who can hold onto faith even when, especially when, nothing seems to be *happening*.

In one Chapter we are both admonished and encouraged. We are also given advice.

Imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

There are many Bible characters to look to find those who have remained patient; Noah, Abraham, Moses, Simeon are a few. But there are other patient saints, and you can name them. Who have been those folks that have touched you in your life and journey because they never wavered in their faith? Who are the folks whose life in Christ goes far deeper and far further than the priest that they liked or the church that they attended? Who are the people that we have known whose giving is sacrificial regardless of their current income or financial position, or their circumstances.

We are called to imitate all of those who have provided for us a living testament of mature belief; those whose eyes never look away from the promised inheritance.

We are called to dialogue directly with our Creator, as Jeremiah does, when he asks this poignant question, "Yet I would speak with you about your justice: Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all the faithless live at ease?"

I paraphrase this to be:

Answer this for me God. How can you expect me to stay on the right road when I see how the faithless are enjoying prosperous lives without a bit of regret?

Going back to Hebrews, we are reminded to *“imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.*

Our humanity tempts and challenges us to compare the things of this world against the promises of eternity. We say that we understand the promise, but we fall back into the ways of the world. We backslide and covet get lazy. We demonstrate our faith with one foot in the world, and one in the Kingdom; and so we become lukewarm, and spit out.

Here is God's answer to Jeremiah:

“If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? Jeremiah 12:5

By The Rev. Dennis Coleman