

Longsuffering (Slide 1)

Galatians 5:22-23

Reading: Psalm 86:11-17

(Slide 2) *Longsuffering* is easier to define than it is to put into practice. “*Thayer*” defines *longsuffering* in this way: “*patience, forbearance, longsuffering, slowness in avenging wrongs.*”

Longsuffering is one of the listed “*fruits of the Spirit*” as found in Galatians 5:22 in the KJV. It is translated as “*patience*” in the NASB1995. *Patience* is a very good working definition for *longsuffering*.

If there is one attribute I wish I had more of it would be *patience*!!

Longsuffering opposes many of our natural responses and feelings. Nevertheless, if we wish to be “*Imitators of the Holiness of God,*” *longsuffering* is required.

James states in:

James 1:18-20 (Slide 3)

18 In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

19 This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, (Slide 4) slow to speak and slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

We are to be leaders by example when it comes to *longsuffering* knowing full well that as Christians, or at least if we have let our faith be known, that we are on public display.

We should also be grateful that God is not quick tempered. Otherwise, we would be in serious jeopardy.

The Bible has many examples of God's *Longsuffering*.

The *Apostle Peter* writes regarding God's patience in the days of *Noah* and how we must also emulate God's patience though it may cause us hardship:

1 Peter 3:13-19 (Slide 5)

13 Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED, 15 but sanctify Christ

as Lord in your hearts, (Slide 6) always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; 16 and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in (Slide 7) Christ will be put to shame. 17 For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong. 18 For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, (Slide 8) having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; 19 in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, 20 who once were disobedient, (Slide 9) when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.

Nehemiah writes about the tremendous restraint that God displayed during the early days of the children of Israel after they escaped Egyptian captivity:

Nehemiah 9:16-21 (Slide 10)

16 "But they, our fathers, acted arrogantly;

They became stubborn and would not listen to Your commandments.

17 "They refused to listen,

**And did not remember Your wondrous deeds which You
had performed among them;**

**(Slide 11) So they became stubborn and appointed a leader
to return to their slavery in Egypt.**

But You are a God of forgiveness,

Gracious and compassionate,

Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness;

And You did not forsake them.

(Slide 12) 18 "Even when they made for themselves

A calf of molten metal

And said, 'This is your God

Who brought you up from Egypt,'

And committed great blasphemies,

(Slide 13) 19 You, in Your great compassion,

Did not forsake them in the wilderness;

The pillar of cloud did not leave them by day,

To guide them on their way,

Nor the pillar of fire by night, to light for them the way in which they were to go.

(Slide 14) ***20 “You gave Your good Spirit to instruct them, Your manna You did not withhold from their mouth, And You gave them water for their thirst.***

21 “Indeed, forty years You provided for them in the wilderness and they were not in want;

Their clothes did not wear out, nor did their feet swell.

I honestly think that it would be difficult to emulate the true nature of God in this situation, having watched how the Israelites tried to replace *Him* with a *golden calf* and claim that this hunk of gold was what brought them out of Egyptian captivity.

It was by the Grace and patience of God that He even heard their cry in the first place!! What tremendous restraint!

The Apostle Paul had first hand experience in mercy of God's patience:

1 Timothy 1:15-16 (Slide 15)

15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,

among whom I am foremost of all. 16 Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, (Slide 16) Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.

No matter the circumstance and no matter our inadequacies and failures, if we trust God and truly are repentant, God shows us mercy and patience in difficulty. No one knows that better than David:

Psalm 86:11, 15 (Slide 17)

***11 Teach me Your way, O LORD;
I will walk in Your truth;
Unite my heart to fear Your name.***

***15 But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth.***

The Apostle Paul instructs the church at Colosse in:

Colossians 3:12-14 (Slide 18)

12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; (Slide 19) just as the Lord forgave you, so also

should you. 14 Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

The *Apostle Paul* instructs the church at *Ephesus* in:

Ephesians 4:1-3 (Slide 20)

1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

I think that the *Apostle Paul* has given us the perfect segway into learning how we might become “*longsuffering*.” When he emphasizes love as the ultimate guiding tool for our hearts and feelings toward others.

Love is above all else because love molds our hearts to show mercy, compassion and forgiveness for one another.

Apostle Paul says this about Love (*Charity* in the KJV). In 1st Corinthians 13, *Apostle Paul* speaks of the absolute necessity of Love for all good that one might do and that without Love no value exists.

In Brother E.M. Zerr's commentary, he states that the Apostle Paul is continuing to speak regarding Spiritual gifts of which the *Corinthian Christians* were “*wrangling*” over. In fact, they had become more valuable to them than the word itself and the Love the word should produce.

Apostle Paul concludes with the fact that these gifts will cease to exist and his conclusion points to what will remain (*abideth* in the KJV, vs. 13).

1 Corinthians 13:13 (Slide 21)

But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Abideth means that when the written word comes the Spiritual gifts will cease to be necessary. However, faith, hope and love will continue. Faith, produced by “hearing the word of God” will act as our guide to God and hope is the motivator to keep looking above.

Yet, Love (charity) is greater because a time will come when the Lord returns for His own that we will now longer need to have faith because now we see. We no longer need hope because what we hoped for we now have!

Love continues, endures and will never cease to exist in the Kingdom of Heaven because God is Love!!

Jesus emphasized *Love* when He taught how we are to forgive:

Matthew 18:21-22 (Slide 22)

21 Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

Jesus references that having a forgiving heart is reflective of the true nature of the *Kingdom of Heaven*. God's forgiveness is abounding and endless for those who repent and love Him.

Love is the first and foremost element of God's nature that helps us become "*longsuffering*." However, just like any natural opposing human response, taking on a single characteristic of God takes tremendous effort.

It would then stand to reason that to become more like Him we must get to know Him better and communicate with Him often:

Colossians 1:3-12 (Slide 23)

3 We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; 5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, (Slide 24) the gospel 6 which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth; 7 just as you learned it from Epaphras, (Slide 25) our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf, 8 and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit.

9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will (Slide 26) in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, (Slide 27) for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

Invitation

The Bible says that *"Love covers a multitude of sins."* It doesn't mean because of someone's love our sins are eliminated. It means that love is a bond that allows one to be longsuffering and forgiving.

Yet, it is the very nature of God's love that sent Jesus to die on the cross. His death and the shedding of His blood cleanses us from sin. It is because of our love for those outside of Christ that this invitation is given.

If you have not been baptized into Christ Jesus, please consider doing that today.

It is also because of love that if you have been baptized and you are a member of God's Kingdom, that your Brethren are here to pray for any need you may have. We desire and are willing to help anyone that has an urgent Spiritual need.

Please let us know how we may help you in your walk with God.....

Reading:

Psalm 86:11-17

**11 Teach me Your way, O LORD;
I will walk in Your truth;
Unite my heart to fear Your name.**

**12 I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with all my
heart,
And will glorify Your name forever.**

**13 For Your lovingkindness toward me is great,
And You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.**

**14 O God, arrogant men have risen up against me,
And a band of violent men have sought my life,
And they have not set You before them.**

**15 But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and
[g]truth.**

**16 Turn to me, and be gracious to me;
Oh grant Your strength to Your servant,
And save the son of Your handmaid.**

**17 Show me a sign for good,
That those who hate me may see it and be ashamed,
Because You, O LORD, have helped me and comforted me.**

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