

The Broadmoor Bulletin

A Monthly Publication for the Christians at Broadmoor

November 2008

While God's Patience Waits

Seek the Lord while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. (Isaiah 55:6)

Although God invites us to seek Him and find Him, we don't have forever to turn in His direction. God's patience is great, but it is not open-ended. Sooner or later, our opportunity for repentance will be interrupted. Such an interruption is not a matter of "if" -- it is only a matter of "when." We are encouraged, therefore, to seek God while He may be found.

The writers of the Scriptures occasionally refer to God's patience as something that "waits" for us. Peter, for example, spoke of those "who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared" (1 Peter 3:20). When the Flood finally came, many who perished may have felt that God "owed" them just a little more time to do what was right, but in truth the time already past was more than sufficient for repentance if they'd had any inclination to change their ways. If God is not sought while He may be found, we'll have no grounds for complaint against Him later on.

It is God's desire, of course, that we say yes to Him. He is anything but neutral with regard to our decision. As Peter says in another place, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). And Paul asks, "Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" (Romans 2:4).

What we choose to do while God's patience is waiting for us is one of the greatest indicators of our character. To continue putting Him off says one thing about us, and to seek Him while He may be found says quite another. *In matters of this importance, our integrity is at stake with every decision we make.* In God, we are being offered the very gift of life itself. Our integrity is defined by our choice when we face this, the final fork in the road. A human being cannot fail more tragically than to fail at this juncture; nor can we succeed more greatly than to pass this test.

To fall in love with God is the greatest of romances! To seek him is the greatest of all adventures! To find him is the greatest human achievement. (Raphael Simon)

Gary Henry

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

Ephesians 4:1-3

“It Will Surely Come”

And Jehovah answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tablets, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for the appointed time, and it hasteth toward the end, and shall not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not delay. (Habakkuk 2:2 – 3)

What God said to Habakkuk highlights the very essence of our Lord's being. God not only is love but is also truth and is faithful to His word. When He speaks of what will come to pass, it happens just as He declared it, though in His own time. God may tarry and we may need to wait, but in its time it “will surely come” and “it will not delay.”

God promised Abraham that He would bless all nations through the patriarch's seed. Though God tarried and Abraham and Sarah failed to “wait for it,” it “surely came” to pass when God empowered them to give birth to Isaac. The same occurred with God's announcement of Babylonian Captivity and the fall of Babylon. God tarried for some years, but in the fullness of time it came without delay.

God's people need to remember this today. First, remember that Jehovah for several thousand years promised the coming of a Messiah – to Adam and Eve, to Abraham, to Jacob, to Moses, to David, and to Old Testament prophets. In the fullness of time, Jesus was born of a woman, fulfilled the prophetic utterances, and announced that the kingdom was at hand (Galatians 4:4; Mark 1:14 – 15). God kept His word at the appointed time.

Second, remember that God has appointed a time for death, for the appearing of His Son again, and for judgment (see Hebrews 9:27 – 28). He has written these things plainly. Although they may “tarry,” we must “wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not delay.”

We may be impatient like Abraham and Sarah and think because He tarries that He has forgotten. When we make that mistake, we will endanger our souls. Our chief mistake is to live as though it could not be today. In that case, like the people of Noah's days, we get caught up in living for ourselves, ignoring God's word, and walking after our own lusts (Matthew 24:37 – 39).

And by “lusts” I do not merely include drunkenness, fornication, and lascivious living. I mean the cares and pleasures of life – fishing, golfing, bowling, shopping, reading, watching TV, exercising, and walking-running; I mean these things to the exclusion of assembling, studying, praying, and visiting the weak or sick.

It's easy to get busy with *ourselves* and *our* goals and neglect the Lord and His will. We're just sure death, the second coming, and judgment won't be today. But it could be. God has His appointed time and it hastens onward; He does not lie; He is faithful to His word and though it tarries – “wait for it”; “it will surely come”; “it will not delay.”

L. A. Stauffer

The Point of No Return

A plane, flying across the ocean, will eventually reach the "point of no return." It is a real and definite point, beyond which it is better, in case of mechanical problems, to proceed than to attempt a return to the origination point. In the mind of the pilot, it is impossible to turn back.

There are a number of passages which seem to indicate that it is possible for someone to reach a point in his plunge into apostasy and sin, so that it is impossible to be brought to repentance. Consider the following sobering words:

"But these, as creatures without reason, born mere animals to be taken and destroyed, railing in matters whereof they are ignorant, shall in their destroying surely be destroyed, suffering wrong as the hire of wrong-doing; men that count it pleasure to revel in the day-time, spots and blemishes, revelling in their deceivings while they feast with you; having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; enticing unstedfast souls; having a heart exercised in covetousness; children of cursing" (2 Peter 2:12 – 14).

"For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Hebrews 6:4 – 6).

How do we reconcile such passages with those that express God's wonderful longsuffering and patience? For example, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Let me make three observations, which I hope will clear up the difficulty, while at the same time, serve as a serious warning to each and every one of us with regard to living faithfully in our service to God.

First, there is along the pathway that leads away from God, a point, which once passed, that spells final doom for the hardened and impenitent heart. It is a real point. Once this point is reached, it is virtually impossible to reverse the direction one is traveling spiritually. Is this because God will not forgive? No. It is because the heart becomes so hardened that it can no longer be touched with the Gospel. The problem lies not in the power or willingness of God to forgive, but in the inability of the heart to turn away from sin.

Second, realization of such a point ought to motivate us to turn away from sin while it is still within our power to do so. I have had occasion over the last two or three decades, of attempting to persuade individuals to turn away from sin and obey God, whether to become a Christian or to be restored to their first love. Some have obeyed. But a far greater number have convinced themselves that there is plenty of time, and that "someday" they would come to God. I have also witnessed a number of souls delay their return so long that eventually they simply no longer have the desire to give the least bit of consideration to their spiritual plight. They have, spiritually speaking, passed the point of no return.

Third, if you are outside the safety fold of God's gracious love and salvation, and if you, at this very moment, are giving

consideration to a return to your Lord, I would strongly encourage you to act on that desire, even while it is called today. Your delay moves you ever closer to the point of no return.

I cannot think of anything more tragic, or that will bring more remorse to the lost when, having entered into eternity, they remember the numerous opportunities that were theirs to come home to the Lord, but they neglected that open door provided by their gracious God. If you would be saved, delay not till the morrow, for tomorrow may be too late!

Tom Wacaster

For an additional study on patience or longsuffering, visit the site http://executableoutlines.com/fs/fs_12.htm to view an outline by Mark Copeland.

Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.

Romans 2:1-8

Help for Brethren in Zimbabwe

Thank you for your generous response to the request for help to benefit our suffering brethren in Zimbabwe. \$8,000 was contributed for their relief in addition to personal gifts given to Bob Buchanon during his meeting with us in October. Bob posts information on his trips at the website: <http://bobbuchanon.spaces.live.com/>. Brother Buchanon wrote the following sentences before he left for Zimbabwe on November 5.

"Many of the brethren have been boiling weeds or tree bark to make a soup for their meal. I've received many reports of many Christians skipping meals for two or three days."

Times of Service

Sunday Bible Class	9:00 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	9:55 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00 p.m.

Visit us on the web at <http://www.broadmoorchurch.com>