

# *Straight from the "Hart"*

Worship Service from October 10, 2021



It is important to know in whom we believe, and patiently anticipate his promises, even if we don't understand it all.

## **Music I Know Whom I Have Believed**

**Theme** Once upon a time, two doors lived in the same house. One was a beautiful living-room door with glass panes. The other was an ordinary bathroom door. They both had really hard lives because they were in a house that had a lot of energetic children who tended to bump and kick and slam doors a lot. While the kids slept each night, the doors would talk to each other about their day.

The elegant living room door was tired of being mistreated and was ready to explode with anger. But the bathroom door would say, "Don't worry, they're children, they'll learn. Be patient and things will get better."

The living-room door calmed down for a while. But one day, after a big party and extra children and a lot of bumping and kicking and slamming doors, the living-room door finally lost it. That night the bathroom door tried to soothe him, but he refused to listen, and angrily said, "I've had enough!" The next time someone slams me I'm going to break, and that'll teach them a thing or two."

So the next morning when the first child crashed into him, (and it wasn't even that hard), the door lost it and broke. That created quite a ruckus in the house. The parents got after the children, and the living room door felt happy about getting back at the children. He felt so good about it he decided to break every time he was shoved with just the least little bit of force, bringing more lectures to the children and happiness to the door. The bathroom door warned him that this was not a good idea, but the living room door was so enjoying getting the children in trouble that he refused to listen.

After a few weeks of this, the parents got tired of constantly lecturing the children and having to fix the door. They decided that they'd fix both problems in one swoop. Instead of fixing the door yet again, they decided it was now too banged up to stay repaired, and they decided to replace it. The beautiful but impatient and not listening dining room door suddenly found himself out in the cold. Over time, the children began to grow up and sure enough, they learned to take better care

of things. Luckily, the living room door was salvaged by someone and put in a new home and the door rediscovered his true purpose. But he regretted what he had done, because he missed the attention of all those energetic kids, even if it was a little rough. He was sorry he had let his anger get the best of him and that he hadn't listened to the bathroom door and been more gracious and patient.

So number one -- take care of things so it doesn't get mad and break on you. And number two -- sweet things come to those who wait graciously and patiently, but mostly, we are graciously patient with others because that is how God is with us...

### **Responsive Reading (LR - Lay Reader, C - Congregation)**

Pastor: ... as we hear in today's reading.

LR: We will thankfully praise God with our whole heart.

**C: His loving grace for us is great.**

LR: He is kind, merciful, and compassionate. He doesn't easily get angry; he is rich in grace and truth and his love can always be trusted. He turns toward us, approves and strengthens his servants.

**C: We serve the Lord.**

LR: Therefore, dear friends, let every person be quick to listen and slow to speak. When words are many, it is easy to say the wrong thing, so be sensible and control your speech.

**C: We will be wise and watch what we say.**

LR: Be slow to get angry. For human anger does not accomplish the good things God wants done. [It is why] God descended in the cloud and stood beside Moses, and then passed in front of him and spoke his name to him, saying "I am the Lord God, I am merciful and show great compassionate love. I can be trusted. I am very patient with my people, forgiving offenses, crimes and sins, yet not exonerating the guilty."

**C: The negative effects of the parent's offenses are experienced by their children -- even to the third and fourth generations.**

LR: [Therefore], those who belong to Christ have crucified their old nature with all that it loved and lusted for. If our lives are centred in the Spirit, let us be guided by the Spirit.

**C: The fruit of the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience**

Inspired by Psalm 86:12-13a, 15-16a; James 1:19-20 with Proverbs 10:19, Exodus 34:5-7; and quoting Galatians 5:24-25 (PHILLIPS) 22 (NLT)

There are many paradoxes in the bible -- full life comes through dying out -- victory comes through surrender, you have to deny yourself if you want to find your true self, ... and as our hymnwriter puts it -- it is when we become captive that we find true freedom.

### **Music Make Me a Captive, Lord**

#### **Prayers**

And in his time, captivated by his love, held in his creative hands, he makes all things wonderful. Let's prepare our hearts for prayer by singing.

#### **Prayer Music Something Beautiful (2x)**

**Pastor's** Almighty Creator God, your fingers formed the stars, and curl the baby's ear. Your Spirit broods over the waters and brings order to the day. Your Savior sends us to the earth's ends with grace, love, and unity; that we may praise your majestic name. Among many peoples, we are privileged to be called your children, united as brothers and sisters for whom Christ prayed, and it is only by his loving, grace-filled sacrifice that we our adoption becomes a reality, and now as a part of your family, we love you with all our hearts and in love for others we present our requests to you, specifically, today, we name

**Intercession** \* Sheila Daniel's brother Brent Sampier with bladder cancer \* The Family and Friends of these who have passed away: Lisa Weaver's brother-in-law JR New-come, 3 cousins of Karen Nowak -- Danny Stine, Sharon Stine, David Dunn \* For these with covid: Jan Martin, her friend Gaynell and her sister Jackie, for Kathy Novak's friend John Fleming who is hospitalized, and Terri Preiss's friend's husband who is in ICU. And Lord, as we wait for answers for all these things, we pray the prayer that you taught us to pray. **Lord's Prayer**

And so as we pray those words of the Lord's prayer, Lord, as we wait for those things to come into full fruition, our patience is enhanced by walking more closely with you, because when we feel weak, even when falter, when we face toils and snares, you are our strong protector who shares in our burdens. Amen.

#### **Special Music Just a Closer Walk With Thee**

#### **Bible Reading Introduction**

Today's Bible reading describes our hoped-for closer walk and spiritual growth in terms of an agricultural metaphor: We soak up the life-giving waters of the Spirit, and the more we soak it up, the more we mature and become like him -- for he produces within us the fruit of the Spirit and inspires a love and service for others

that is blessed by God, just as he has blessed others who by patient faith have received his promises. Listen...

### **and Reading Reading Hebrews 6:1,7-12**

You already know that you must be sorry for your sins and turn from them. You know that you must have faith in God. So let us leave the first things you need to know about Christ. Let us go on to the teaching that full-grown Christians should understand. ... *Men's hearts* are just like the soil that drinks up the showers which often fall upon it. God makes it possible for that ground to give good fruits and vegetables. But if it gives nothing but weeds, it is worth nothing, and it will be burned. Even though we speak like this, beloved, we are fully convinced that there are more beautiful and excellent things, which flow from your salvation. For God, the Faithful One, is not unfair. How can he forget the *beautiful* work you have done for him? He remembers the love you demonstrate as you continually serve his beloved ones for the glory of his name. Our great desire is that you will keep on loving others as long as life lasts, and you find your hope fulfilled. Then you will not become spiritually dull or lose your enthusiasm but follow the example of those who fully received what God has promised because of their strong faith and patient endurance.

(Hebrews 6:1c,b (NLV), 7-12 (blended NLV, TPT, NRSV))

In this next song, patience is not specifically named out loud, but it is clearly implied as it speaks of how everything is preparing and growing but is not complete until its season has arrived. Let's stand before the sermon and sing

### **Music # 707 Hymn of Promise**

### **Sermon Releasing the Power of Patience**

I've noticed around town that drive through food places are tending to have much longer lines than they used to, have you noticed that? It makes me wonder if any of us feel like comedian John Pinette, who talked about lines even before covid started. Normally, he says, he is a patient easy going person with a happy, charitable-like demeanor. But as a person who can cover his eyes and can read a menu left to right, right to left, top to bottom, bottom to top; something happens to him when standing in line behind people who are in fast food restaurants. He gives an example of standing in KFC and people in front of him are pondering --- and asking questions --- and pondering -- and he thinks "It is KFC, they have chicken..."

and they have chicken, or they have... chicken” and then with each delaying question about ingredients and choices and sizes -- “How big is your medium, is it medium?” he gets this high-pitched voice building up inside him and explodes in his head: “Get out of line!”

Someone wrote, “impatience is the result of being delayed from having the world be the way we think it needs to be right now”, and “the intensity of our impatience tells us how much we think we need to immediately achieve our agenda.” If we are delayed while on a leisurely color tour drive, (if the color ever comes – see, right there, impatient, right? 😊) The intensity for most of us is minimal if we get delayed in traffic while trying to do a color tour or leisurely drive -- unless you are one of *those* kind of drivers.... but if you are racing to the hospital for an emergency - then almost all of our anxiety levels will raise a lot with any kind of delays trying to get there for emergencies.

Some people consider impatience a good thing – a motivation to progress, an incentive to positive action. In this series, our desire is for God’s Spirit to grow his qualities in us. What is God like when it comes to patience and impatience?

In the Old Testament, the God’s people were often described (as we heard in the reading) as a people who were arrogant, stubborn and disobedient, refusing to listen and failing to remember God’s miracles... but then comes the oft repeated phrase: But God is a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger (patient) and abounding in love. Therefore he did not desert them, even when they... committed awful blasphemies; and this happens throughout the Old Testament. (See, for one example, Nehemiah 9:16-18)

The book of Judges reveals it as a perpetual cycle. You could put it on a clock. (Start at the top and which each phrase move around the clock face) The people did evil, received the consequences of those bad choices, they cried out to the Lord and repented, the Lord heard their cry and he sends a deliverer who restores the nation to prosperity (back to the top of the circle). After which, these re-blessed people did evil, and receive the consequences, and it just goes right around the circle again until they are restored again and do evil again.

Pastor Mark Altrogge blogged that you’d think God would have just dumped them... after so many slaps in the face. But he was patient with their sins and amazingly anxious to end their well-deserved suffering – he quotes what could be the catch phrase of that historical period.... they [repented] and served the Lord, and he became impatient over the misery of their consequences. (Judges 10:16).

God was patient with failure and rebellion, but impatient to bring relief when they returned back to him.

Jesus affirms this same godly trait in the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) Do you remember that story? I'll sum it up quickly – it is a story that individualizes that national cycle of the Judges. The youngest son demanded his inheritance, took his blessing, left and wasted it in wild living, he became destitute, he came to his senses decided to return and beg his father for mercy. While all this was happening, the prodigal's father has been searching the horizon day after day after day – after day after day, after day after day, after day after day (how many times do I need to say it before we realize that that's being patient) day after day, and then when the humiliated son *finally* appears on the horizon, the father [impatiently] rushes to greet him and restore him and throw his arms around him and celebrate his return with a great big party. Some people mention that this is the only time in the Bible when God was in a rush – although, by what I just said in about Judges seems to contradict that, so take it with a grain of salt; but it is one of the few times God is characterized as being in a hurry, and not the way that he is impatient – to restore. But In Jesus' context of telling the story, he also throws in a sub-plot of the older brother's attitude -- a sub-plot which was actually the main point of Jesus telling that story in that context... but we'll save that for another day... For our topic today, it reveals when God is impatient -- to bring forgiveness and healing and hope and help and restoration and blessing...

He is eager – that is the kind of word we usually hear instead of impatient, right?. He is eager, excited, filled with expectation, anticipation – like that classic -- really thick ketchup commercial – makes you wait and salivate even more.

When we think of impatience, we don't think of that, we think along the lines of trying to maintain our temper and dealing with stress and hanging in there through a crisis. That is how we usually use it today.

Imagine two people in a store. They have both stopped to get a beverage on their way to an important meeting for which they on the verge of being late. As they get into the 10 items or less line, they are preceded by a person who just jumped in the line with 25 items. (You all related to that, eh? 😊) Once all the 25 items are rung up, the person slowly examines the ticket. Then they pull out a couple coupons, that takes a minute to find. Then they dig around another minute for their check book and start to write it, double checking the amount with almost every stroke of the pen.

Both of these people who have gotten in line for a beverage are sensing the pangs going off in their gut because they know this meeting is coming up and they need to get it, pinging like the ticking of a second hand in their stomach. (“Get out of line!”) But one has learned strategies on how to deal with impatience, and the other one didn’t. So one keeps calm and collected and in what we usually describe as remaining patient.

The other hasn’t learned strategies to patience and reacts to every pang with a bit more anger, a bit more restlessness, and a bit more rolling of the eyes, a bit more eating away at his ulcer. Both get through the line and get to their meetings. One is peacefully prepared to begin. The other is a nervous wreck who takes the first 15 minutes talking to his co-workers around that table about his horrendous tale of the grocery store – now making all of them unprepared for the meeting because he has drawn them into his story instead of the meeting’s agenda.

### **The problem with impatience**

The real point is this: One went crazy, one stayed calm – and neither, by their efforts, quickened the events of their day by one second. Jesus said it, “Who among you by worrying can add a single moment to your life?” (Matthew 6:27 CEB) To adapt the word, but retain the principle: “Who of you, by *impatience*, can speed up the time of day by one second?”

And that is what we heard implied in our Bible reading as well as it talks about the need to first soak in the rain, and then act of what we’ve soaked up. It is not an instant acorn to oak tree moment, but a never ending life-long growth process...

I’ve mentioned before Steven Covey’s rule of the farm before – and maybe you remember it but I’ll give it to you again -- maybe a bit differently, which in today’s context could be called the patience principle. On the farm we see the laws of nature and the principles of work that determine the outcome of the harvest. In the social and corporate cultures, many try to cheat the system. A father brought his boy to a college prep class and told the teacher "I want him to take a streamlined course." "Fine" said the teacher, "but do you know what you want to grow?" "What do you mean?" "Well a squash takes three months, and oak tree takes 20 years."

### **Principle of Patience Law of the Farm**

Of course, what most people want is a 40-year-old oak tree in 3 days. Have you seen tree farms? They don’t start with little saplings, they have to sell full grown trees. We want the final result now, but patience is called for. There

### **Two sides of patience**

#### **1) There is a passive waiting**

are two sides to patience. The first is the waiting thing. An old train on a branch track crept slowly through the countryside. It stopped. The only passenger was a salesman riding the line for the first time. The conductor assured him, "Nothing to worry about. There's a cow on the tracks." Ten minutes later the train got under way and went for a couple miles but then ground to a halt again. The conductor came back out, "Just a temporary delay, we'll be on our way shortly." The exasperated salesman asked, "What happened, did we catch up to the cow again?"

There are times when patience is passive. It has to be passive. There is not much appropriate action we can do in the grocery store line that will accelerate the process. We just wait. If the train stops, we can try to get out and push the train, but is that going to help? No. There is not much we can do. We can want our very young children or grandchildren to be adults – and we can treat them as such before they are ready, but there is a very literal sense in which we can do nothing but wait for the chronological years to pass. There are times to wait on God when all we could do, should do, is stop and listen and wait for his timing to bring things to fruition. Once the seed is in the ground and all the cultivating is done, what do you do?

On the other hand, if we look in the Bible at the word "waiting"; you'll discover that it is often qualified with adjectives so that we understand it is not skeptical or apathetic, or lethargic, or passive. It is not hopelessly resigning ourselves to our situations. Instead, we wait with praise and joy and eager expectation, trusting in faith that God will bring his desires to pass *as we cooperate with his direction* day by day.

Cooperation is the other side of patience. The active side of patience. We want our children to be adults. There is nothing we can do to speed up chronological time. But if we want them to be a certain type of adult, (grown up and responsible and good citizens and those kinds of things), then it isn't merely a sit and wait and let time pass until they get old, is it?

If we want to be excellent at maturity, at a craft, at a career, at our volunteerism; we don't arrive at that excellence immediately, nor by simply passively waiting. Covey talked about a man named Stephan:

Stephan crammed his way through undergraduate school. He learned how to shortcut the system. If the teacher graded on lectures, he ignored the textbook. If the teacher graded on the textbook, he got Cliff Notes (Those very inaccurate



summations of books). He learned how to get the grades without learning all that he should. Then he went to graduate school and spent 3 months cramming to make up for 4 years of undergraduate cramming, and he ended up in the hospital with ulcerated colitis. He tried to force the natural process and found it doesn't work.

Even if he had managed to work through that without any physical side effects, what would it be like if he got into a career with all of his good grades, but not with a good sense of knowledge? Would you like to see a medical doctor that got his doctorate getting through school that way?

Can you imagine cramming on the farm? Forgetting to plant in the spring, flake out all summer, then you hit it hard in the fall, ripping up the soil, throwing in the seeds, watering, cultivating - and expecting to get a bountiful harvest overnight? Doesn't work that way, does it? [No.] Cramming doesn't work on the farm and it doesn't work in the rest of life. It may seem to work in the short term, sometimes, but it never does in the long run.

Many love to do something excellently, but few have the patience to do the day in day out work to develop the skills that eventually elevate us to that excellence. As Stephen Covey puts it, "Can you overcome years of a potato-chip, chocolate cake, no exercise, lack of sleep lifestyle and expect to successfully run a marathon by spending the night prior working out at the health spa?"

**Two sides of patience**  
**2) There is active working**

We want to develop skills; but we tend either to expect instant perfection -- and in frustration give up; or we see the perfection as so far off in time, that we don't bother with the daily work that will lead us to get to that place of excellence.

Patience is being able to endure and persevere -- but really with a positive attitude -- to eagerly and zealously do the daily work now – to consistently nurture and cultivate the seeds of our goals even while calmly trusting that God will bring to fulfillment the fruit, the crop, the excellence to come that will come to us down the road at the end of the season...

So strive for patience, first, with others. James says: Be patient ... Don't grumble against one another... The Judge is standing at the door! (James 5:7-9) Many times we lose patience with others because we are concentrating more on the things they do (or fail to do) rather than on who they are or what is their situation.

**Strive for Patience (SfP)**  
**with others**

A man's car stalled in heavy traffic. The light turned green. He couldn't get it to start. This frustration was amplified by a chorus of honking behind him. He finally got out of his car and walked back to the first driver and said, "I'm sorry. I can't get my car started. If you'll go up there and give it a try, I'll stay here and blow your horn for you."

Patience considers the person above the task that is moving slower than we'd like - to love the child even though the behavior is not yet up to what they want – they know it will get there; and they consistently work mercifully at transforming the behavior.

Paul puts it plainly to Timothy (1 Timothy 1:15): Christ Jesus came to the world to save sinners - of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his *unlimited patience*... this implies patience not only with others but also patience with ourselves.

Patience means having the mind-set that our goals will not be arrived at overnight - but having the persistence to plug away and move closer and closer to them as we wait for Christ. Continue to progress minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day, week by week, month by month, year by year until finally we can look back and see "Oh, we have matured," we don't notice it from day to day, but you do if you look far enough back. But then don't just stop and look back and *just* look back, keep moving forward and looking forward.

**SfP with ourselves**

During a Monday night football game long ago, one of the announcers observed that Chicago Bears star running back Walter Payton had accumulated over nine miles in career rushing yards. The other announcer remarked, "Yeah, and that's with someone knocking him down every 4.6 yards!"

Even the best get knocked down or fall down. The key is to get up and run again just as hard. That's patience.

Have patience with others, with ourselves, and also with God. If God says "I can make something great out of you, just give me 10 years"; our response is usually, "Why not now?" Right? And if God insists it is going to take 10 years, then for 10 years we bury our talents and our blessings and then expecting immediate gratification when the 10 year clock rolls around. That isn't how it works. Patience implies a goal to work toward down that 10 year road, and even as we wait for it in the future, it tells us to keep going on... Today's

**SfP with God**

text that was read for us today tells us to go on to perfection, to maturity. Don't give up, don't get sluggish, but diligently push forward toward the goal, day by day.

We enthusiastically plug away while we wait for God to work out the results in others and ourselves and in life. God is our hope; and eventually, that is from where our solutions will come.

Patience with others, ourselves, God, and then finally, patience with the culture. A traditional Hebrew story:

**SfP with the culture**

Abraham was sitting outside his tent one evening when he saw an old man, weary from age and from journey, coming toward him. Abraham rushed out, greeted him, as was their custom of hospitality, and he invited him into his tent. There he washed the old man's feet and gave him food and drink. The old man immediately began eating without saying any prayer or blessing, so Abraham asked him, "Don't you worship God?" The old traveler replied, "I worship fire only and reverence no other God." When Abraham heard this, he became incensed, grabbed the old man by the shoulders, and threw him out of his tent into the cold night air.

When the old man had departed; God called to his friend Abraham and asked where the stranger was. Abraham replied; "I forced him out because he did not worship you." God answered, "I have [tolerated] him these 80 years although he dishonors me. Could you not endure him one night?"

Can you allow the Holy Spirit to soak into your being so that you are patient with the culture, patient with God, patient with others, and patient with ourselves, so that we can say, I may not have arrived at spiritual maturity yet, but step by step, as I grow towards maturity, and whatever we have to face to get there -- it is already well -- with our souls. Let's sing...

### **Music It is Well**

**Prayer and Blessing** Lord, in these challenging days many of us are overworked, cluttered by too many things, too much to do, and too little time. We are driven to accomplish those spiritual growth disciplines that will make us what we long to become but are distracted by the urgency of overwhelming day in and day out tasks. We need you to guide us into how we can work on the important without neglecting what is truly urgent, that we may find peace in our current rivers of life in Christ; Amen. And now with confidence in you, we now go blessed and renewed by the Holy Spirit. Go with strength and courage to bear the fruit [of active patience] so that our lives will be instrumental in transforming and renewing the earth. Amen.