

The Amazing Jesus His Patience with God's Timing

Intro: This year we're taking time once a month in a lesson to reflect upon the amazing character of Jesus. There are so many things about him that we need to admire and imitate. Already we've talked about the need to imitate his prayer life, to imitate his compassion for people in their suffering, his forbearance with his disciple's failings. Let's consider today Jesus' patience with God.

Most of us don't like to wait. We're used to getting things we want instantly; and so when we are forced to wait we get annoyed or frustrated. We all jokingly talk about the lady who said, "Lord, I need patience and I need it right now." We probably all hear ourselves in that story. That's what makes the example of Jesus so amazing.

Jesus knew that He was the Son of God and that He would ultimately give His life in sacrifice for the world; yet we see him constantly accepting the time-table of God for the events in His life. His life was lived under the shadow of the cross. Yet He was concerned that people should understand his ministry and therefore he exercised great patience, being directed by the Father in the priorities and timing of his ministry.

The Gospels often reveal Jesus' sensitivity to the timing of God.

Jesus revealed patience as to when to reveal his miraculous power.

If Jesus knew He was the Son of God, it is not hard to imagine that he might have, like us, rushed to manifest his power to others: "Just wait until they see what I can do!" Yet Jesus showed patience:

Presumably Jesus could have begun his miraculous work immediately after receiving the Spirit at his baptism. A few months later Jesus was attending a wedding feast in which the host ran out of wine for the guests. Mary, sympathetic to the host, brought the matter to Jesus as if to suggest that he should do something about it. But notice Jesus' response:

*And Jesus *said to her, "Woman, what do I have to do with you? My hour has not yet come." (Jn. 2:4)*

Jesus was waiting on God to reveal the time to perform miracles; only when He heard from Him would He act, even though it was his own dear mother who asked!

Jesus revealed patience as to when his Messiahship should be declared to others.

If Jesus believed that He was the Messiah of the OT, why not tell everyone as soon as possible. The reason: the people were not ready. Jesus was not the Messiah they were looking for. Consequently the gospels reveal that Jesus would not allow people to reveal his secret.

And He healed many who were ill with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He was not permitting the demons to speak, because they knew who He was. (Mk. 1:34)

And He warned them to tell no one about Him. (Mk. 8:30)

What a report the disciples could have given when they came down from the mount of transfiguration having seen Jesus in His heavenly splendor!

And as they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man should rise from the dead. (Mk. 9:9)

Jesus was waiting on God to reveal the time for men to know who He was the Christ.

Jesus revealed patience as to when his life would be given for the sin of the world.

Have you ever considered how hard it would have been to wait for the cross?

If we know that something very painful or uncertain is coming, we don't like to wait for it. Many times I've talked with people who were about to have a major surgery. They almost always say the same thing, "I wish it were already over!"

Jesus lived under the shadow of the cross. He knew that an excruciating death awaited him; and he could have easily said, "I want to get this over with!" Yet we see him instead accepting God's time table:

His brothers mocked his claims to be the Christ and they urged him to go to Jerusalem and declare it to the people there. Jesus of course knew that such a declaration in the capitol city was a death sentence:

*Jesus therefore *said to them, "My time is not yet at hand, but your time is always opportune. (Jn. 7:6)*

John reveals that God did have a plan for when Jesus died and his enemies were not able to seize him because the time was not right.

They were seeking therefore to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. (Jn. 7:30)

Jesus revealed acceptance when the time of His death arrived.

It's interesting how when we are confronted with painful things in a distance want to rush to get them over with; but when the moment arrives for the pain to begin, we want to hold up and wait. Could any of us not then not blame Jesus in the shadow of the cross for saying, "Let's put this off a little while longer."

Would He not have passed many a crucified man writhing in agony on the public roads going in and out of Jerusalem; and as he glanced up at them thought to himself, "I'll be there someday." It must have been horrific to imagine it. Yet when the time arrived he accepted it.

Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. (Jn. 12:27)

*And Jesus *answered them, saying, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. (Jn. 12:23)*

THESE things Jesus spoke; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee, (Jn. 17:1)

Even Gethsemane, when the anticipated pain and sorrow of the cross most powerfully came upon him, he said:

"Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done." (Luke 22:42-43)

We could truthfully say, Jesus was never out of sync with the purpose of God. He listened. He waited. He watched. He submitted to that plan.

We need to imitate Jesus' patience.

One of the great challenges we have is patience with God's timing. We want to be changed in an instant. We want answers to prayer immediately. We want trials to go away in a hurry. We want answers when we ask the questions.

We sing about it:

"In his time, in his time, He makes all things beautiful in his time.

Lord, please show me every day as you as you keep me in your way that you'll do just what you say in your time."

Oh wait, meekly wait and murmur not!

Yet while singing about it, we are often impatient and complaining. It's as if God knew we'd have a problem with that. Thus the Scriptures urge us to patience acceptance of God's timing, especially in times of hardship.

Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. (Jas. 5:7-8)

In our study of Genesis we saw how God's people often had to wait for many years to receive what God had promised them.

How can we show true patience?

Patience is an act of faith. Patient faith manifests itself in four important steps:

Be humble

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight." (Proverbs 3:5-7)

We need to affirm that God knows more than we do; and that we don't have to have all the answers right now to believe that God is working through us.)

Be dependent

Believe that God is able to accomplish what He plans for us.
*strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might,
for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; (Col. 1:11)*

Be submissive

Be obedient to God even when circumstances are difficult;
keep doing what is right!

*Do not fret because of evildoers, Be not envious toward
wrongdoers. For they will wither quickly like the grass, And fade
like the green herb. Trust in the LORD, and do good; Dwell in the
land and cultivate faithfulness." (Psalm 37:1-3)*

Be hopeful

Know that the day will arrive.

*But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we
wait eagerly for it. (Rom. 8:25)*

Conclusion: By Jesus' amazing patience he carried out the plan of God for our salvation. Because He was willing to wait, we can have the hope of eternal life. But he shouldn't have to wait on us to respond to His love and sacrifice.