



## **Summer Fruit-Part 4**

### **Fruit of the Spirit: Patience**

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Well, if I were to ask you, do you think people are more patient now than they used to be or less patient? I just wonder what you would say. It seems obvious, right? Our attention span is so short. They say the average attention span in America is six and a half seconds. I mean, the most viewed nine out of 10 videos online are less than two minutes long. I mean, we want it now. I mean, the COVID thing happened and we couldn't get Amazon to ship me something in two hours, we were having, at least I was, like, what's going on? The world's falling apart. I can't get this odd, weird thing in a day. We have a click it and get it technological world that is not helping, not only with our attention span, but with our patience. We're not very patient people. We don't like to wait. If I say the letters D-M-V and you start to have ticks. You know, Costco in December, you got to be at Staples Center at seven o'clock on a Friday. I mean, none of those things will make you feel good because we don't like to wait. And unfortunately, our lives are full of waiting. When I was a kid and used to say, can't wait for summer. And then in the fall, I'd say, can't wait for Christmas and I can't wait to get a new bike and I can't wait... Dad had a great line and it was simply, "You're going to have to." That means there's no way around it. Right? You can't speed time up. I opened up my Bible then as a Christian later in life and saw God saying the same thing. You're going to have to wait. You're just going to have to wait.

But unlike just kind of sucking it up and, you know, gritting it out and just doing it, it's something different when the Bible uses the word patience. To wait is one thing, obviously, that's the description of the time interval between you wanting it and you getting it. But the concept of you being patient means you're waiting with a particular quality. Right? To wait well, we might say, is to be a patient person. And because the Bible says there's way too much at stake if you don't wait well, and I think that's a good thing for us to spend some time doing today, is to think about the risks of all that. We'll get to that. But I think we need to start as we continue our series on Summer Fruit, which is about the Fruit of the Spirit, so we don't need to turn there because you know it. It's the Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, and the fourth one in this list is patience.

So that's the word we want to think about. Not just the word, but the concept - patience. How do I have that? It starts with a perspective, a perspective that we've got for us in Psalm 90. So grab your Bibles or your devices and get yourself to Psalm 90. It's the oldest psalm in the Psalter. We refer to it not too long ago from this platform where we looked at the fact that the context is helpful to remember that Moses got the very undesirable plan of leading a group of people who have been decreed to die in the desert, which is not a nice thing to do. It's a bad thing. It's a hard thing. Here you are at the city of Kadesh Barnea, the front door to the Promised Land of Canaan. You're told to go take it. I mean, you've been told that since you got out of Egypt and all the guys, they all wimp out and they say, "No, we don't want to take it. It's too hard and we don't believe God and we don't trust God." So God said, fine, then. The average lifespan at this time, by the way, was about 120, 110 years old. It is the precipitous drop of the environment in the world and genes and all the rest as we see the longevity start to dip hard after the flood and the real different world we have. In this psalm it talks about people dying at 70 and 80. That was huge. A



bit like saying everyone starts dying at 30 and 40. It was like a big rocking statement in the end of the chapter. We won't get to the end of the chapter because that was contextually what Moses was dealing with, is that people were destined to die because God said, I'm going to deal with the next generation. So if you're under a certain young age here and you really had nothing to do with the decision, you get to be the next generation that under Moses goes into the promised land. But you adults, you are, you're going to be done. Now, there are lots of things you got to do, lots of stuff we read about the book of Numbers, a lot of decisions to make. Got to feed your family. Got to deal with temptation. But when it comes down to it, this generation is not going to go into the Promised Land. So Moses stands back in this prayer that is recorded. The oldest psalm that we have. This is the 15th century B.C., right? Most of the things in the Psalms around the 10th century B.C. And here we have the oldest psalm talking about something that's very helpful when you think about really old things that the God that is now is the God that was then, and God's plan as it unfolds sometimes is unfolding a lot differently than we would like it to. It unfolds a lot slower than we'd like it to.

If you are taking notes, which is always a great idea. We remember things better. It's good to record it. You might want to come back to it. I think the first thing you need to remember when we think about patience is you "Have To Get Used To God's Timeline." You have to get used to God's timetable. You have to get used to the way God does things. God does things a lot different when it relates to us in our generation, this want it now, click it and get it world we live in. It's that God has got a lot of things he's working out that go beyond this week, this month, this year, this church, this city, this generation. God's doing a lot of things, a big lot of things. See, when I say the DMV is going to make you wait. Right? You think, well, God shouldn't make me wait, because God, I hope, is not the DMV. Right? The inefficiency... If you work at the DMV, I'm so sorry. You know that people don't like going there, right? You're probably closed right now anyway. But the DMV, we would say, wow, the inefficiency of all this, it's no good. Well, DMV may make you wait because it's not run the way that I think we could run it if we gave it more thought. Man, I'm digging a deeper hole for the DMV people. I'm sorry. But we think God's making us wait for good reasons. Right? God's being is way more like if you're a contractor on a site and you're going to build 145 over here and the general contractor is saying, "No, no, no, you can't go in and do that yet," because there's a sequence to this. When he says, "No, stop doing that job and I need you to take a break and your lunch is now going to be, you know, all day, or maybe you are going to be on break for a week now because we got to have this other team come in and do this." All of that waiting on a construction site with a master builder and an architect and a contractor, well, that waiting is different than waiting in line at Costco in December.

So we need to know that God is making us wait because he's a big God. He is a God who has a long attention span. He is a God who has purposes he's working out over a period of time. So with that in mind, knowing the historical context, let's look at the first few verses here of Psalm 90 to get that sense of what we need to learn. If we're going to be patient people, we need to get used to God's timing. It starts with this, "Lord," as Moses prays, "you have been our dwelling place." We think about that. "I trust in God. He's my refuge. I trust in you." No, "in all generations," like when Abraham left Ur of Chaldees 600 years before Moses. He had to trust God because he's leaving that place in Mesopotamia to go to the land that now you were just at the front doorstep to. When



he said in your seed, all the nations of the world will be blessed, I mean, that plan that was 600 years ago. I want you to think back 600 years. Well, you weren't around. Well, think of what you've learned about 600 years ago. It was a different world 600 years ago. That plan that he trusted in saying, "OK, I trust you. Well, I don't even know any kids," made him wait for that even in his life. Then he had the child and we had Isaac and Jacob and Joseph. All this plan is working itself out and now it's Moses' turn and now he sits back and say, "Now, this generation's kind of fumbled the ball. So it's going to go to the next generation." God's working out his plan. "You have been our dwelling place in all generations." Everyone has to look to God. God's the only one who can provide us what we need. God is the only one who has a plan that's good, that's working out. You should be called according to his purpose. And if it is, as Romans 8 says, God's going to work all things together for good because he's got a plan. "Lord, you've been our dwelling place not just in our generation, but in all generations." Matter of fact, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world from everlasting to everlasting you are God." I think, wow, what an amazing statement that is. As we sit here in a paved parking lot in a tilt-up business park in South Orange County, and I think, OK, I want to go back through the generations and think. Like when we bought this building across the street, you have the title report and all these aerial photos. If you bought commercial property you know, that big, gigantic report you get. It starts with aerial photos of what the place looks like now, and then it goes back and then it's like when it was just being built and then it was graded, you know, or even when it was built, there was no toll road. You see this stuff and you keep going back and going back until I get to the bottom of the report where it's just these grainy black and white photos of cows, you know, on hills. I think, you know, all the important stuff and all the money being exchange and all the concerns about entitlements and permits and all that. It was like permits that that cow would just came and just ate. It was just a whole different place. God had a plan and was utilizing this property in his glory was being expressed before we ever got here to see his glory expressed in the plan that he's carrying out in our generation. God has plans in every generation and it's been going on and on "before the mountains were formed." Let's think of that. You look down, our biggest local mountain, Santiago Peak here, Saddleback Mountain is what we call it here, our locals call it that, at least, and you think, OK, that mountain, "before that mountain was even formed." I'm thinking about the pre-flood world of Genesis, Genesis 6. What did the coordinates on the map on this place, if we could take an aerial shot of this, what do we have here? Well, I think we have different topography, but that's a different discussion about geology and history and the flood. But I'm thinking to myself, there was a day when Santiago Peak, as I think as it was being formed, it was under ocean water because God had deluged the world and whatever was above had flooded the world. I'm thinking these coordinates right here where we're sitting right now when Santiago Peak was flooded and I'm thinking, what was God doing while his attention was on just wiping out an entire generation of people and saying, I have a purpose and a plan and it's going to end here in Genesis 8 and we're going to start over in Genesis 9. We're going to start with this one family. When there was a barge floating on the other side of the planet and God was working out his plan with a floating zoo and a family. Right? We think, okay, our little plans and our little concerns, I mean, God was doing his stuff. God had his plan. God was working out history long before the mountains were even formed. Or even before, I guess, when I couldn't come to coordinates on a floating sphere, a six septillion ton rock floating through the vacuum, the cold vacuum of interplanetary space. You think about what this sphere was when God tossed



it out with the word of his power and put an orbiting satellite called the moon around it. When you didn't have a sphere and you couldn't point to this place on a map when the world wasn't even existing, there was God and he had a plan. God was working that planet forever "from everlasting to everlasting," even before there was material matter. So there wasn't even time as we know it. Right? You can't have space and time, through that whole conundrum of what we think of in terms of time, linear time. Before any of that, there was a God and he had a plan and he had stuff going on. What about us? Well, we think it's all about us. Right? I mean, I have things I want God to do. Think about things on your prayer list. I want God to do this. I've got this problem, fix this problem. I've got this plan. Do this plan. God do, do, do, do - me, me, me. Well, he says one generation. Next generation.

I mean, not to devalue the fact that we're not Psalm 8 and it's amazing God would even think of us but really think about it. He can say to people, this generation, we're done. You return man to the dust. You say "Return, O children of Man," you're done. going to go to the next one. "For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday." What did you do yesterday morning from about nine to noon? Don't tell me you're sleeping. Let's try noon to three. What were you doing? What were you doing? Think about that. What did you have for lunch? What did you eat? Where did you go? What was it like? Did you like what you ate? Did you eat too much? Did you not eat enough? Did you have to snack in the afternoon? What were you involved in? What did you accomplish? Did you go to the store? What was your purpose? Think about all of that and how real, and you can even imagine, you can smell it, you can feel the feelings. It's just like yesterday. See, for God a thousand years ago, in medieval times on this coordinate on the map and everywhere around it, all over the globe, it was like yesterday. To think about when that peak was being formed underwater. I want you to think about the fact that God thinks about Noah and when Noah prayed that, I don't know, the giraffes would control themselves or, you know, I don't know, whatever he was concerned about and God was responding to Noah's concerns, all of a sudden now we recognize that was like us thinking about yesterday morning. I mean, God is so much bigger than our lives and our problems and our crises and the riots in Portland or Seattle. Think about it. God - big. Us - really small. "Yesterday when it's past, or as a watch in the night," just a four-hour segment of time in the evening. "You sweep them away," speaking of the flood, "as with a flood; they're like a dream." People are like "grass that's renewed in the morning. In the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and it withers." Do you want to be patient? It starts with your theology. Do you understand the eternity, the immutability and the purposeful sovereignty of God? That's how we need to think. What is it that God has in plan in the big picture? I don't have time to turn there either, and I wish I did, but if you're taking notes you should jot it down. In Ephesians Chapter 1 verses 4 through 11, Ephesians 1, 4 through 11. God has a purpose. You need to patiently recognize you're one cog in this big plan. Are you important to God? Yes, I get that. But God wasn't waiting for you to be born so he could get to work on your prayer list, you know. See what I'm saying, so he could deal with Compass Bible Church? Does he love us? Of course. Are we part of his plan? Yes, we're part of his plan. We are a part of his plan. When I'm going, "God, why didn't you fix this problem? I got an insurance problem. My job, my issues, my relationships, my church, my world..." I get that all of that is important and God knows even the hairs on your head. But you got to think big if you're going to be a patient Christian. It starts with you knowing God's timetable and God's timetable is different.

I don't want to belabor this first point, but could you turn to James 5, please? James Chapter 5. Just to show you a passage that I think helps because it reminds us the world that God created should teach us every day that the big picture of God's eternal plan is going to feel a lot like the things we have to deal with all the time. I started getting an avocado on my Subway sandwich, which I know I shouldn't. It's part of my gaining my 19 pounds during COVID, my COVID-19, I call it. Sorry (audience laughing). But avocado, I know you can tell me, it's not that bad. I mean, don't encourage me. But anyway, I got my avocados on there. I love avocados, love them. I remember my grandpa back in North Long Beach had an avocado tree, 100 feet, it was big and coffee can on a stick and we get haas avocados. I learned to love avocados, put them on my sandwich. And I think to myself as I pay an astronomical amount and, I mean, it was just a quick fast food place but it's like, "You charge me that much for a little tiny eighth sliver of an avocado?" I just want an avocado tree. That's what I want, like my grandpa had. "So can I have that pit when you're done with it, lady? I'm going to take that home and I'm going to have my avocados. I not going to have to pay you anymore for avocados." So I go on the Internet, I figure out how to sprout that little thing in a jar with toothpicks. It starts growing little tentacles. It's like, "Yeah, it's sprouted. I can't wait for my avocados." Put that thing in the backyard, water it every day. They say they take 10 years to get avocados. I remembered my grandpa's tree and I thought when I was young and having, you know, grown up and lived here in Southern California, it's hard and you think these thoughts when you live here. I thought if I ever have a backyard, I'm going to plant an avocado tree. Well, it took me many years of married life to finally have a backyard, but I had a backyard and I remember talking about it, thinking about it, chatted about it. And I thought, how long until I get avocados? I can keep buying them, I think. I thought I don't even know if I'm going to be in the house for 10 years. I've been in this house, I think, for 14 years now. I kick myself every day. I could've planted an avocado tree. But I got a problem. I am impatient. The Bible says, can you look at stuff like that? Do you want grapes? I want to grow your own grapes. Stop by Home Depot, you can get a grapevine this afternoon and you can go plant. It's going to be years until you can get grapes. You go to Big Sur, you see those big redwood trees. I want a big 300-foot redwood tree. It can take some time. Hey, I want to have lunch with you after church in New York City. Let's go to New York. I don't care if I had a private jet, which I don't. But if I did, sitting there at Orange County Airport, it's going to take me, what, 20 minutes to get the airport? I mean, take me time to throw some things in the plane. It's going to take some time to get a clearing from the control tower. It is going to take some time to take off. It's going to take some time to get there. Even if I have a super super... I got the last Concorde. Right? I'm going to wheel it out from a hangar at Orange County. Still, it's going to take us some time to have lunch in New York. I'm going to eat on the plane. Let's just put it that way. Why? Because the world is built in a way that you don't get what you want when you want it. They want to send a rover to Mars, which of course, we have. Even in the orbit when we got Mars as close to Earth as it gets, and I got the best rockets that money can buy. And I call Crazy Elon, I say, "I need a rocket. I'm going to get to Mars. Let's just get people there." Do you want to talk about a long flight? It's not like flying to London to get to Mars. They say about 115-days is as fast they can get there. I mean, that's a long trip. I hope I have business class at least. Right? 115-day flight. Why? Because the world's made that way. The world is made where you cannot have what you want when you want it. God's saying, look at the world. Look at verse 7. Look at the world, James 5. You need to put all that together in



your mind and think why are you being so unreasonable with God? Think people. It says, "Be patient." The same word that we see in Galatians 5:22, the Fruit of the Spirit. Be patient.

Not only is it a gift that God grants through our relationship with the Spirit, he's telling us to exercise it, purposefully, volitionally decide I'm going to choose to be patient. "Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord." Do you want to talk about patience? Wow. The coming of the Lord. The coming of the Lord.

Think about the time reference here. The coming of the Lord. This was written in the 1st century, the mid 1st century, the coming of the Lord. It was promised that the one would come from Abraham and bless the world through your offspring, Abraham, "all the nations of the Earth will be blessed." That was written, if you know your biblical history, in 2,000 B.C. How long until he showed up? 2,000 years. God said everything's right on schedule. Galatians 4:4. "In the fullness of time God sent his son." So God said, this is the right time. It's my plan. Christ can come. He comes. He lives. He dies. And then he says to the guys, "I'm taken off. I'm leaving." It's called the Ascension, but taking off. I'm leaving. And they're like "Ahh... What about all the promises of the kingdom and blessing the whole world? Is now the time you're going to restore the kingdom in Israel?" I'm quoting Acts 1. Do you remember what Jesus said? "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons that the Father has appointed in his own authority. But you know what it is for you to do? Wait here in Jerusalem. The Spirit of God's going to come on you. When the spirit does, you're going to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and the ends of the Earth." That's going to take some time for us to travel there, Jesus, that's going to take time. How long ago was that statement made? 2,000 years ago. God makes a promise. Actually, we can go back to the time, we can't even figure out when it was in the Garden when the fall took place, God made the promise then. "I'm going to take the enemy and all of his consequences and we're going to crush the head of Satan." That's what we're going to do. How long have you been waiting for that? The Bible says, hey, how long does it take to get an avocado to start sprouting fruit? That's nothing compared to God's timing. "Be patient, therefore, brothers until the coming of the Lord." Now, could it happen today? Absolutely. But you've got to think about how the world works. "See how the farmer," that's a, by the way, a second person imperative. That is a command. You need to think about it, look at it. "See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it," he's got to wait for the fruit, "until he receives." Not only does he have to wait for the fruit, he has to wait for the means by which the fruit is produced. He's got to wait for the "early rains and then the late rains. You also, be patient."

Do you know what you've got to do? Stronger heart. You've got to be a little bit more sturdier. You got to be stronger. You've got to think about the fact that you may not be able to click it and get it this afternoon. "Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand." Yes, that's the promise of God. At any time he could burst through into space and time and we could see the whole kingdom age begin, the sequence at least begin. We can have that happen. He could come back today. He says that that ought to really be a motivation for your restraint in how you speak. "Don't grumble against one another," verse 9, "brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door." It's not like God is far off on a trip and he's coming from Mars and it's taking him a long time. It's that he's right here. He can step into space and time at any



moment and he can fulfill his promise. But you've got to be, verse 7, patient until that happens. Be patient. In the meantime, just know it could happen at any moment. But if you want some fortification, establishment of your heart, think, he says, verse 10, of the "example of the suffering and patience brothers," take for an example of that, "the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord," when Moses was saying and God was saying through him, there is going to be a prophet that I'm going to raise up that's like you and he's going to be the perfect prophet and the leader, the messianic prophecies of the 15th century B.C.. There it is. And we had to wait. And we had to wait. And we had to wait. He said, be patient.

The prophets would say something and they would stand back and know it's going to take some time. Matter of fact, think of them. "We consider those blessed who remain steadfast," verse 11. Not only that, we've heard of the steadfast of a guy named Job. "You've heard of the steadfastness of Job," the patience of Job. "You've seen the purpose of the Lord." That should be underlined and highlighted in your Bibles. That is the point, that we know that we're waiting, not because we're waiting in an inefficient line at some government agency where it could be run better. God is running everything perfectly. There's a purpose. There's a time. There's a sequence. There's a calendar. And how the Lord, ultimately in his plan, it is a good plan. It is compassionate and it is merciful. That would be a good section of memorized right there, wouldn't it? James 5:7 through 11. God is a God who's got a plan. What we need to be is patient. Can you, number one, get used to God's timing?

Number two, and I won't take much time on this, but can you at least know this? That you can "Never Doubt God's Promises." You'll never be faithful and patient in your life. You'll never have that fidelity to being patient unless you understand the timetable of God, which is much bigger than our timetable. And number two, that his promises will be fulfilled. And we've said really enough about that, even in that passage. God has a promise, but there are pressures for you to doubt it. Number one, because you're not designed well in your flesh to wait. As a matter of fact, you're designed to be impatient and irritable. That's how your fallen flesh is designed. It's designed, it was cursed with a purpose, not by the will of the nature of your body or the world, but by the will of him who subjected it to that futility. That is the reason you have the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:20 preceding 5:22 where the Fruit of the Spirit is listed saying that the works of the flesh are evident, and one of them is that you can't handle it, that you have outbursts of anger, that you say, "I can't take it anymore." So we know there's a lot of internal pressure. There's a lot of external pressure when people look at us as they always have as Second Peter Chapter 3 says and they say, "Where's the promise of his coming?" Or you want to put it personally in Psalm 42, not just the eschatological picture, but personally in your life. Psalm 42:3, "My tears have been my food," the psalmist says, I'm sad, I'm crying, "day and night while they say to me all day long, 'Where's your God?'" Where's your God? Your marriage is tanking. Your business is tanking. Where's the good and merciful compassion purpose of God? Look at what's happening in your church. Look what's happening to your small group. Look what's happening in your society. Look at your nation. Where's the good and merciful plan in all this? That's what they say. They say externally, the pressure in our lives and in our own flesh. Like, we can't take it. But God is trustworthy. He's made promises. I don't have time to turn you to this. But Hebrews 6, I quoted it often lately verses 13 through 18, Hebrew 6:13 through 18. You and I need to know that



God's promise, he wants us to be confidently assured he will keep his promise. Just like your kid when you tell him you're going to do something and they're so young. Time to them is such a big issue. You know it's coming but it's days away or months away, or weeks away and they want it now. You've got to say just my promise is good. It's going to happen. You get so frustrated so quickly with your children. I just wonder how God must feel when we act the same way.

You want to know the perspective, just to round out the second point, not doubting God's promises? Let me just give you this verse to look up later. Psalm 27:13 and 14. Psalm 27:13 and 14. Here is the resolve you and I should have. "I believe that I shall look on the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living!" I believe it. I believe his promises and I believe it's coming. Therefore, he turns to everyone watching and he says this, verse 14, therefore, "Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage." As James says, "Establish your hearts. Be strong. Take courage. Wait for the Lord." I would add, really, let's add the word patience because it's waiting well. Wait with that kind of perspective. "I believe I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living!" Do you have things that are making you fret right now? Are you able to say today, "I know God's got a good purpose? He promised that he did. And it may not happen today. It may not happen this week. Things may fall apart even in our generation completely. But I know God's got a good, merciful plan. I trust him. I don't doubt his promises."

All right. I talked about this in the intro. There is a consequence and a risk to you and I being impatient. I just want to spend two minutes talking about that. That's an exaggeration. More than two minutes. I want to show you in two categories. One, there's a theological impatience that can damage your life. I want you to, at least, I put it this way, number three, "Fear the Damage of Impatience," fear it. You should fear bad things that you could do and God could impose on you as a consequence, and you should live in fear, it says, in First Peter 1. So the fear, that's not the fear of servile punishment. I'm talking about the fear of me going, "I don't want to make that mistake because bad things will happen. Here's the first thing, your theological impatience and maybe the first two, you're like, I'm not a part of that. But number one, "People Want Heaven's Treasurer's Now," because God said "store for yourselves treasurer in heaven. It's always out there and it's coming and it's in the future and all the things that you want, those are coming. But don't worry so much about it here and now. Don't store for yourself treasure. Now, I've got to have enough treasure to pay your mortgage and if you get a lot, that's great. Be generous. Don't hope in it. But we're looking forward to those treasures. A lot of people are theologically impatient. They say, I want all those treasures now. They quote Bible verses about heavenly treasure. They quote Bible verses about the ultimate coming prosperity of our future. But they want it now and they become prosperity preachers and people fall into being prosperity preacher supporters. It derails their Christian life. It derails their hope. It decimates them in terms of their expectation. They become disillusioned with their Bibles because they have been theologically impatient and victims of prosperity preachers.

How about this one, it sounds ridiculous, but it's meant to sound ridiculous as I state it. I put it this way. There is a theological impatience to want the resurrection health now. I want resurrection health now. You think that's silly. I just spent some time with some Pentecostals that were all about the health and wealth gospel. They sat there talking to me about the health that



they are looking at in the Bible that I am saying is related to our resurrection bodies, our eternal First Corinthian 15 bodies and they're talking about it now. They're getting people to give them money so they can get up on stages and talk about health and that that's God's will for their life. And I'm thinking, as I always say from the platform, every faith healer dies. And that's a problem. Right? When someone says, what did he die of? My father always used to say this all the time. And they said, you know, they say, "Oh, nothing serious." He would kind of smile. "Well, if you died, you died of something pretty serious. That's a serious thing." And that's the deal. Every faith healer dies of a serious thing and that is your health has failed. So we need to know that that's a future thing. The Bible's very clear, the Bible's clear in John 3:16. "God so loved the world and gave his only son whoever believes in him will have everlasting life." That is a gift that's coming and it's in the future and that everlasting life is going to continue. But it's then, it's not now.

"Okay. Well, I'm not in those camps. I didn't send any money to any faith healers or any prosperity preachers, Pastor Mike." Okay, how about this one that is tempting the church in our era? I put it this way. We want the Messiah's society now. We want the Messiah's society now. That's what we want. Let me read it for you. Isaiah Chapter 2 verse 4. The Messiah is going to come. "He will judge between the nations, he will decide disputes for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares," implements for gardening, "and their spears," that are killing each other with, "into pruning hooks," so we go fishing, "nations shall not lift up swords against nation, neither shall there be war anymore." We read those verses, and we start something that's not the prosperity gospel and it's not the faith healers. It's called today social justice in the name of Christianity. That's what we want. Here's the thing. I want you to have money, I want you to be healthy, and I'd like there to be justice in your life and equity and fairness. I want all that. But when the Church gets derailed and later disillusioned by seeing that, hey, the treasures of heaven are not for now. Hey, and the health of the resurrection body is not in this life. Oh, and guess what? People beating their swords into plowshares and their implements of war into fishing tools, that's not now. As a matter of fact, Jesus said just the opposite, in this world "nation is going to rise against nation," and there will be wars. We're taking our efforts and our sermons and our money and our personnel and saying what we want is justice in the streets, and we quote Bible verses, guess what? The Church, because of their theological impatience, they end up being completely disillusioned. Because guess what? If you want to look at what social justice in the Church today is doing, look back 100 years to the social gospel in the Church in America, and you'll realize if we can learn anything from history, this is not what God promised for now. Our objectives are wrong. Our goals are wrong. Do I want us to be at peace in our homes? Absolutely. Do I want justice in our church? Absolutely. But you know what, I can't do is present myself a theological, impatient desire to have what is required for the Messiah's arrival, required with the Messiah's arrival to have that now. That's what I want to work on, spend my money on, effort, preaching on. I'm going to work on. That's the goal. Justice in our society.

How about people who just want Christ now and I'm all for that. I want to have Christ now too. But when the disciples said, "Can we have the kingdom now? Can we have you now? Are you going to stick around?" He said, "It's not for you to know the times or the seasons." It's not for you to know the time. It's not for you to know. It's not for you "to know." What it is for you is "to do." The spirit of God working through you, Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, ends of the earth. You



work today on your job. And when he comes back, may he find you busy and faithful. Not you at a prophecy conference where you said, "Yeah, I nailed the date. It was 2021." That's not what Christ wants to find is that you nailed the date in a prophecy conference. He said you can't figure the date out. You can't.

That's not the goal. So the date-setters again leads to disillusion. Ask what Harold Camping did for the Church when he told us when Christ was coming back. Find out what the people in 1988 when they wrote the book "88 Reason's Christ is Coming back in 1988." Did that help us or hurt us?

Jesus said, stop with your theological impatience. We will not have heaven's treasures now. We will not have resurrection bodies health now. We will not have the justice of the Messiah society now. And you know what? Christ's going to come back, and if you're not coming back now, he'll come back tomorrow. But we're going to work on what God has called us to do. That's theological impatience. Fear the damage of those things. I could go on and on about the damage to the Church of those things.

How about the personal impatience? Personal impatience and there's plenty of it. The Bible says Proverbs 14:16, "One who is wise is cautious." He's cautious. He's thoughtful. The opposite of that is being rash and impulsive and reckless and thoughtless and not thinking about the consequences of what I do. Impatience leads us to be rash and impulsive. Now, in your small groups, maybe this'll be a good homework assignment, to think of examples of that in Scripture. I'll give you one just to get you started. First Samuel Chapter 13. The key of it is verses 8 through 13. When Saul was supposed to wait after this situation of all the pressure of the people wanting them to get on with their business, and Saul was told to wait until Samuel showed up and he waited the appointed amount of time. "And you know what, Sammy? You're not showing up. So I'm going to do this thing." He's impulsive and rash. He makes a decision. On that day, because of his impatience. Think about it. He's the king of Israel, the covenant people of God. Samuel says today the kingdom is ripped out of your hands. Your impatience has cost you your job. Because of that, he said, I'm going to give it to someone else. A man after my own heart. David is going to be anointed real soon in this story and he's going to take your place because you are rash and impulsive. You didn't think about the consequences. You had to have it now. Rash decisions. We could go on all morning about the things that that causes. It cost him his job. It cost him his life eventually on a battle on Mount Gilboa.

How about this: rash words. Listen to this verse. Oh, man, this verse we should all memorize because it's a problem for all of us. Proverbs Chapter 12 verse 18. He says, "There is one whose rash words are like thrusts of a sword." That's nice. You don't want to go and talk to a guy out here in the courtyard after the service is done who's wielding a sword around. The Bible says that's what some people's words are like. It just comes out and you've probably done it. A dagger has just slipped right out of your mouth and you were like, "I wish I could just get it right back in my mouth." Maybe you're wise enough to know. Maybe, you know, you would like to live with, like in radio, we have that eight-second delay button. Right? Something happens, someone cusses on the line, and then we would just erase the last, say, eight seconds. That's nice. I now think in



Google Mail. Right? You can send something and get it right back if you do it in a certain amount of seconds. I would like my words to be like that. Right? But then I'd have to be smart enough in the eight seconds to know that that was not right. The problem is we can't get any of our words back. It says there are people whose rash words are like the thrust of a sword. "But the tongue of the wise," it does just the opposite, "it brings healing." They're thoughtful. They think about the consequences of their words. Some people I know, they in 20 seconds figure out what eight godly men in 20 hours can make a decision about, and they've got something to say about it. There they go, thrashing about with their words, causing damage.

I know we think about impulsive words, impulsive decisions. But, do you know your words can be rash with God? You might want to jot this down. Ecclesiastes Chapter 5 verse 2. Ecclesiastes 5, it says, "Do not be rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, because God's in heaven and you're on earth." I mean, think about who you're talking to here. I don't think we often think about that. We think, "Oh, of course, God wants me to pour my heart out." There are friends you have in your life. There are friends that you have in your life who would like to say, "Say whatever you want to me." But, you know what? Don't say whatever you want to them. I guarantee you, do not say whatever you want. You do not want impulsive and rash words, even with someone who's invited you to pour your heart out to them.

If I said I got a very important person, maybe the person you admire the most and you're going to have lunch with him today at one o'clock. I told you right now who it was. They're right back in here at one o'clock, they're going to come out, you're going to get in a car, you're going to go to... I bet, the most important person, not that anybody really respects anybody in our modern day. But let's just say we were 50 years ago and you highly admired someone. And you said, I want to do lunch with him. I bet you'd spend the next two hours thinking about what am I going to say? What kinds of words should I bring? What topics should I bring up? What should I avoid in terms of my conversation? Because you'd be so concerned about the importance and value and honor and esteem you have in your heart for them. Well, when you bow down to pray, I think it'd be good, as the Proverbs say here, to not be rash with your mouth even when you talk to God. "Let your heart not be hasty to utter a word," which includes promises in the context of making vows that you don't mean. "God, I'll do this if you do that." Be careful with the things you say, even to God. There's a lot of damage that happens from impatience, both theologically and personally.

Proverbs 14:15, "The prudent gives thought to his steps." Give thought. Think, slow down, consider your ways. Think about your impulsive tendencies and know that you can't even believe your own impulsive thoughts. Do you know that? Realize that. "I can't even believe what I think. I have to slow down and think, is that thought that I even have a thing that I should even believe? That word I want to say, is that even something that I won't even believe." Fear the damage of impatient words. I've heard a lot of impatient words recently and I think, man, we have got to rethink what it means to consider the damage of words that are spoken hastily, of decisions that are done in haste.

So what's it all about? It's about our word "Makrothumia." That's the Greek word "patience," in Galatians 5:22. Makro. I only say it in Greek because you know those two components. Makro.



Makro means big, right? And then you have the word "thumia," we get the word thermometer from it. Heat. You say makrothumia. There are two ways to understand that. Both of them have to do with something unpleasant. Heat, in the sense that I'm getting angry. Sometimes it's translated "to be slow to anger." It takes me a long time before I get angry. That's a great thing. That's makrothumia.

Then there's also the sense in which long-suffering, sometimes is translated that way. That means I can suffer for a long time with little provocations that might pile up. If someone says like the straw that broke the camel's back, I can just not break in those situations. Long-suffering, patience. I say it that way and look at it from both perspectives, because in the Bible, we see them both. What we're asking for, and I'll put it this way, as a summary statement and then I'll break it down into two parts. We need to ask for the power to carry on. By carry on, I mean, do the right thing and not sin. I want to ask God, give me power, that's the fourth point I put down on my outline, ask for power to carry on.

Now in two ways. The first way I can illustrate this way, if we're together this afternoon and you're wearing flip-flops and we go to lunch and there's a big table there that we're about to sit, and as you're scooting yourself in, you slam your toe bad. You jam it right into the corner of that table. And you're with the pastor now, which I hope that means something, that you would think, "I need to restrain my words right now that might naturally come out of my mouth." I need to be long suffering. I need to not have in my mind the things that I might feel and think come out. I mean, I don't want to react. I don't want to tip the table over and yell and scream.

Here's a passage that may help in this regard. Matter of fact, turn there with me if you find it, it will be the last passage I'll turn you to, Proverbs 19. Proverbs 19. Proverbs 19, here's the idea of the one side and the one aspect, the one angle of makrothumia, patience. That's the Greek word for patience. Look at verse 11. "Good sense..." because they're not rash. They think about it. They're not just impulsive. They're considering the consequences. "Good sense makes one," this is Proverbs 19:11, "makes one slow to anger." I'm slow to get mad. Matter of fact, it'd be great to act like you didn't even stub your toe. It'd be good to just try to overlook the whole thing. "It is a glory to overlook an offense." It'd be great to be like, I mean, it's just not in my mind an issue. OK, that'll be a good thing.

"Kings," who kind of get away with everything, "their wrath is like the growling of a lion," like they're roaring at everything. Inversely, and this is interlaced with lots of different concepts in this text, but yeah, it's "favor," oh, it's good. "It's like to dew on the grass." But man, his anger, it can be bad. So when you stub your toe, I guess what I'm saying in the first part of this is you're praying for powerful restraint. God can give you the power to restrain your natural impulse when you've had some big provocation that you say, here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to write this letter. I'm going to confront this person. I'm going to go and do this thing. I'm going to change this deal. I'm going to quit this job. I'm going to move out of town. You need to say, wait a minute, the big provocation, I got power to restrain my feelings. I'm going to say, OK, I'm going to feel the feelings but I'm going to restrain the expression of those feelings. The works of the flesh, just the opposite - fits of anger, outbursts of anger.

Then there's something else we're going to see in verse 13. "A foolish son is a ruin to his father." Speaking of families here and we're interlaced with a lot of different ideas, "and a wife's quarreling is a continual dripping of rain." It's like, oh, yeah. Now that is a different kind of pain. Matter of fact, in this passage, you're going to see it's the slight pain that piles up. It's the kinds of things where I just can't take it anymore. It's the next straw that men say, "I'm going to break the camel's back. I'm done. I can't, I'm not going to go on anymore." It's the difference between stubbing your toe on the end of that table leg and you getting up this morning because you just got out of the shower and you tried to put your sock on really fast and you threw your shoe on and the, you know how it is when the sock gets folded? It's like super uncomfortable. You have to walk a long way from the car to the restaurant where you're meeting me. Then the whole time you're there under the table and your foot, you're moving. Then I say, let's go for a walk around the town center. You're like, okay, and you're walking and just hating it. It's like, "I can't stand it. It's like a pebble in my shoe." Makrothumia is when I feel that provocation, and it's not the big explosive thing that makes me want to lash out. But it's that continual dripping.

It's that thing like I want to sleep every morning. Look at verse 15, "Slothfulness cast into a deep sleep and an idle person will suffer hunger. But whoever," look at this, "whoever keeps the commandment keeps his life; he who despises his way will die." What's the point? Every morning when you feel like sleeping, you say, no, I got to get up again and I got to go to work. "Well, I don't like my lackluster job and my wife, you know, not what I thought she'd be. And my neighborhood and my neighbors." And then you're going through, just droning through it, you know. It's that old "Joe Versus the Volcano" movie. I just don't know why that came to mind, but if you saw that, it's like I just can't take it anymore. I just can't take it and I'm done. The quitting, I want to quit. Patience, by the way, is not someone who's had some crisis, who just doesn't happen to blow up in response and do something rash. It's the person who goes through the daily grind day after day, week after week, year after year, and they hang in there. It's the powerful, not just restraint, it's the powerful perseverance. If I want to break down what we're asking for in our prayer life and aiming for, its powerful restraint and its powerful perseverance. It's the power to get up and do the right thing. It's like this, Psalm 25:5, "Lead me in your truth and teach me, you're the God of my salvation," you're the authority, teach me what to do, "for you I'll wait all day long." I want to do the right thing. I know it's supposed to be a good thing to be faithful in my job, be faithful to my wife and be faithful in my church and to do the things I'm supposed to do. But I'm just going to keep doing it, even if I don't feel it, even though I'd rather sleep in, even though I'd rather live somewhere else, even though they've got a better life and a better marriage and a better car and a better house and a better everything, I'm just going to keep going. I'm going to do whatever comes next. I'm going to do it faithfully. And that's waiting well, that's patience.

Hudson Taylor, you know that name, Hudson Taylor, famous missionary to China? He was asked with a group of missionaries, what are the three most indispensable things for a missionary? As he's speaking to all these people, I'm assuming it was missionary candidates and missionaries, he's famous for this when he said, "patience, patience and patience."



And I thought about that having gone to Bible school and having to read a ton of missionary biographies in my class and other classes. You know, I would read about Adoniram Judson, and I'd read about William Carey in India. I would think about the mission's work even in places like New Zealand and Tahiti, and West Africa. And, you know, a lot of these places just quoting those, it took seven years in Burma before they had their first convert after faithful service for seven years. It took 14 years in West Africa. They went and they took the gospel to Tahiti and faithfully shared the gospel. They went 16 years before they had their first convert. Some of us would quit after 16 hours. Right? And I think Hudson Taylor knew what he's talking about. It's patience, patience, patience.

When he said, you don't worry about the coming of the Lord's timing, just know it's coming. But you go do the work I called you to do. Be missionaries in this sense, and that's what we are, in Jerusalem, Judea and the ends of the earth. It's going to take you the rest of your life to fill out God's purpose for your life as an ambassador of the message and all the other things he's asking us to do. And what you're going to need is patience, patience, patience. That's our prayer. That's our goal. And that, the Bible says, is a promised Fruit of the Spirit. I hope you're seeing more of it in your life this year than you did last year. Let's pray we see more next year as well.

Pray with me. God, we need patience in our day. If we've ever needed it, God, we need it now. I'm asking you, please, to grant us supernatural patience. It's not going to happen, as the Bible says, unless we purpose to do it, to be obedient, to be patient until the coming of the Lord. Like the farmer, he's got to be patient not only for the fruit, but for the early and the latter rains. There's a lot of building blocks in your plan and your purpose, you're unfolding it, not like the inept people that we might see in an organization that we wished were overhauled from top to bottom, but the perfect master builder who says to the subcontractors, "You've got to wait. Not now. Sit down and wait until I call you." We have to do it at the right time, in the right way, in the right place. When you even in situations, never fulfill our desires, like the people who were dying in the wilderness in Moses' day, may we say that you've been our refuge, our shelter, our dwelling place in all generations. We trust you because before the mountains were even formed, you were there from everlasting to everlasting and your purpose was being worked out. God, we trust that you are a God who is going to use every circumstance to work out for good as a master builder, working everything out after the counsel of his will. We praise you for that that we can trust and pray to a God who has that mindset. The master builder, the architect of all things, a God who is merciful and gracious. Let us believe that today, even if we're made to wait.

In Jesus name. Amen