

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 5 Feb 2023

Sermon Title : Love is Patient

Speaker : Rev Reuben Ng

Text : 1 Corinthians 13:4

INTRODUCTION

Genesis 1:27 in the Old Testament tells us that God created humans in His image. What does it mean to be created in God's image? 1 John 4:8 and 16 tell us that God is not just loving but "God is love". God is the personification or embodiment of love. As such, if God is love and He has created us in His image, one of the best ways to express God's image is to love. When we grow in this aspect with God and allow Him to transform us in becoming love then we would be growing closer to what God created us to be.

As we embark on our journey of being transformed to be a church that loves people genuinely, there will be moments where God's truth will shine in areas of our lives where we have buried away. But God loves us so much that His truth will shine into those areas which may cause us to be very uncomfortable. However, we must not close ourselves off to God's beautiful work of transformation but to be aware that God is doing that to carve away areas that need to be removed. It is not done to cause us discomfort or pain but done with great care and gentleness for that masterpiece of God's image to be revealed – the image that is love.

Love is Patient (1 Corinthians 13:4)

According to the commentary called the United Bible Society's handbook to the New Testament, when Apostle Paul wrote this text, he was not giving a definition of love but portraying 'love' as a person. Hence, from 1 John 4:8 and 16, since God is love, it would mean that God is patient because love is patient and we are called to be transformed into this as well.

Meaning of "patient"

In some translations, this word carries the meaning of "long suffering" – a situation where one is unjustly treated despite not doing any wrong, yet not showing resentment, retaliation or seeking revenge.

- Matthew 5:39 – Jesus told His disciples that they should not resist an evildoer but to turn the other cheek if someone struck them. This does not mean going around offering to be struck again and again. In fact, they could understandably be offended if they were unjustly treated when they had done no wrong. Jesus

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was telling them to hold no grudges, not to retaliate nor to get resentful or plot revenge – that is being patient, which also means long suffering.

- 2 Peter 3:9 – God is "...patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance". God and His patience are eternal. God can rightly be offended when people blaspheme or argue against Him or even when Christians disobey His Word. However, He holds no grudges, does not retaliate or take revenge. In fact, He too offers His other cheek again and again because He wants all to come to repentance, for He is love, and love is patient/long suffering.
- Matthew 18:21-22 – When Peter asked Jesus how often he should forgive a brother or sister who sinned against him, and if it was as many as 7 times, Peter was already being generous in forgiving. This is because the rabbis based on scriptures had traditionally taught that a person with a forgiving spirit would forgive another person as many as 3 times. However, Jesus answered in verse 22 that Peter had to forgive 77 times, or in other translations 70 x 7 times which would mean a total of 490 times. The lesson to learn here is not about counting the number of times to forgive but Jesus is telling Peter to keep forgiving and not hold grudges, retaliate or take revenge. We too are called to hold that posture and attitude of never holding anything against anyone.

Matthew 18:23-25 – Parable of the unforgiving servant

Following this answer, Jesus then told the following story on forgiveness:

There was a king who wanted to settle his accounts and so called everyone who owed him money to come before him. He called this particular slave who owed him 10,000 talents, which is equivalent to 60 million days' wages. It was impossible for the slave to repay this debt, so he threw himself onto the floor and begged his master to "be patient/suffer long with me". The master showed compassion and let him off even though he had originally wanted to sell the slave's wife, children and everything he owned to recover the debt. After receiving forgiveness from his master, this slave went out and choked a fellow slave who owed him about 100 days' wages asking him to return the debt he owed. As this other slave could not pay him back, he also threw himself on the floor asking the slave who had been forgiven by the king to "be patient/suffer long with me". Unfortunately, the slave who had been forgiven 10,000 talents did not show him the same compassion but threw him into prison. When the king got word on this through the other slaves who witnessed what had happened, he was upset and very furious. He pulled the slave he had forgiven into his presence and called him an evil slave. The master then said that because he had not done to the other slave what his master had done to him, he would suffer. He was thrown into prison and was tortured. Jesus ended the story with a warning in verse 35 that His Father in heaven would do the same to us if we do not forgive and be merciful and compassionate as He has been with us.

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REFLECTION

Let us ask ourselves these questions:

- Am I holding any resentment toward someone else?
- Am I wanting to retaliate against someone else?
- Am I waiting for the right time to take revenge?

If any of these answers is “Yes”, God who is so gracious and faithful to His children will not allow us to miss this opportunity to have that aspect of our lives made right.

CONCLUSION

We often “slap” God when we disobey God or say things about Him or to Him when we are angry, frustrated or hurt. However, God has compassion on us. He is love and love is patient and patient is long suffering. God has forgiven us all our sins and so in response we should show the same compassion and forgive the debts that others owe us. Let us come to God to commit to be patient, choosing to be as He is – long suffering. Let us call on God and allow Him to chisel away that part of our lives that needs to be transformed, in order to reveal the masterpiece that He had created us to be.

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A. Review Sermon Application

Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.

- 1a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk?
- 1b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?

2. Appoint someone to read 1 Corinthians 13:4 aloud slowly.

a. Have you answered "Yes" to any of the questions below?

- Am I holding any resentment toward someone else?
- Am I wanting to retaliate against someone else?
- Am I waiting for the right time to take revenge?

b. What do 1 Corinthians 13:4, Matthew 5:39, 2 Peter 3:9 and Matthew 18:21 say about your response?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

- 3a. Reflect on your interactions with others in the past week since hearing this sermon.
- (i) Was there an opportunity for you to forgive someone?
 - (ii) How did you respond?
- 3b. How has knowing “patient” can be defined as ‘long-suffering’ instead of just ‘waiting for a long time’ impacted you?
- 3c. How has Jesus’ warning in Matthew 18:35 spoken to you?
- 4a. (i) How is Jesus patient/long suffering in His relationship with you?
(ii) On a scale of 1-10 with 1 being the worst, how well do you embody patient?
- 4b. What is one part of you that God needs to transform or chisel away to better reveal the image of “God is patient”?
- 4c. How can your group members help or encourage you to achieve 4b above, in the following week(s), until your next meeting?

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C. Testimonies, Prayers and Action

Purpose: Give glory to God, seek Him and embody His Word.

5. Share your personal testimony on how the Holy Spirit enabled you to be patient or how someone in the faith community had been patient with you?

OR

Thank Jesus for being patient, loving you even though you are a sinner who treats Him unjustly even though He had done no wrong.

6. With a prayer partner, bring all that have been shared to God, committing your lives for God to shape and mould you in His likeness. Ask God to chisel away parts of your lives that do not reflect His image, so that you can be transformed.

Pray for your group and our church to be a community that reveals the image of Christ, to be patient as we show love to one another so our love will overflow to the people and community around us.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. Everlasting God – Chris Tomlin [\(28\) Chris Tomlin - Everlasting God \(Lyric Video\) - YouTube](#)
2. Thank You Jesus for the Blood – Charity Gayle [\(28\) Charity Gayle - Thank You Jesus for the Blood \(Lyrics\) - YouTube](#)
3. Tabernacle – Awaken Generation [\(28\) Tabernacle lyrics by Awaken Generation - YouTube](#)

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