

Sunday June 5, 2022

First Lesson: Romans 8: 14-17

Gospel Lesson: John 14: 8-17, 25-27

Sermon series: Fruits of the Spirit: Forbearance Effect

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We are continuing with our sermon series Fruits of the Spirit, which is based off of Galatian 5: 22-23, that names the fruits of the Spirit to be love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control;

- Where the idea is that now that you and I have been doing weeks of spiritual pruning together in our previous sermon series, so that we might grow in our faith and spirituality; my preaching goal in this sermon series, is for us to take each spiritual fruit, and examine them weekly, so that we can ensure that they keep growing to their full potential in our lives and the community that surrounds us.

- So this week, we are going to look a little closer at the budding fruit of forbearance in our lives.
- So to define forbearance, it essentially means to have patience.
- Furthermore, in our Galatians chapter 5 passage of scripture, that includes the fruits of the Spirit, most of the translations actually use the word patient instead of forbearance.
- In our class this past Wednesday, *Applying the Sermon to Life*, one of the questions raised was if there was a difference between forbearance and patience?
- Because it seems like there should be a difference doesn't it?
- For when a person hears the word patience for instance, most of us probably think of the virtue that enables us to wait.
- So for example, many of us have **to show some measure of patience**, when we are

waiting to be checked out by the cashier at a grocery store, or like Keera and I had **to have some measure of patience**, as we were waiting for her number to be called at the DMV.

- Patience is typically required for instance, when you and I are waiting for the server to bring us our food at a restaurant;
- As a side note, if anyone suffers from the very serious condition of hangry-itis like myself..... then we know that having patience in this particular instance is especially hard....(yeah I totally made that condition up; but I know many of you know what I am talking about)
- So again patience is a word, that we typically associate with some of those tedious moments that comes from our everyday lives and exchanges within the world; that typically involve our to- do lists of the things that we are trying to get done and get through in the world;

- Patience is something that a lot of us, **if we are honest with ourselves**, recognizes this to be a virtue, that we could **all be more skilled at**;
- But let's face it, the world in which we live in, makes it that much harder to become more efficient and successful in this area of patience, for think about it...there is an app for everything, designed for us to be able to access whatever we need at the drop of a hat;
- For instance you can order toilet paper through an app;
- You can even order one bottle of water from a store and nothing else... through an app!
- So you see Church, we live in a world steeped in consumerism; where often times, there is this overt emphasis on getting things out to the consumer in a record speed fashion; often with just a swipe or touch of our index finger;

- Which although many of us perhaps benefits from being the consumer in these situations; let's face it...life...**real life just does not work this way.**
- For **there is not an app** for instance, to end mass shootings.
- **There is not an app** that will end the senseless violence that surrounds us and consumes us....
- **Oh how I wish** there was an app that would give us world peace;
- **Oh how I wish** there was an app that in one swipe, we could reform our government, reform our cities, reform our climate, reform some of these corrupt leaders out here who places money over the dignity and safety of human lives;
- **Oh how I wish** there was an easy solution Church, where all it would require is a swipe of our index finger on our phone, to heal this world

and make it a better place; at the same time eject any person with power who does not have this same goal in mind, out of these positions of power....

- But the reality is that as technologically equipped this world really is, **there is no app for that.**
- Therefore when the Word is referring to the word patience or forbearance which is indeed synonymous; the spiritual definition for both words patience and forbearance Church; that can be used interchangeably, is not referring to this idea of passive waiting.
- This word in the Bible of patience or forbearance, **is not referring to** something that might involve a quick solution or an easy resolution for that matter.
- The word forbearance/patience my friends, when it is mentioned in the Bible, is referring to

a Spirit-led patience, which involves so much more.

- For Spiritual Patience is talking about what it means to endure long suffering.
- The definition of long suffering: having or showing patience in spite of troubles, especially those caused by other people.
- So to put it in our context as a world... Battling through an illness for a long time but doing so cheerfully... long suffering.....
- As a side note one of the best examples of one who understood the art of long suffering that a lot of us knew, was sweet Margaret Fuller, a long term member who passed away some time ago before the pandemic,
- Nevertheless, Margaret would have these conversations with me, that revealed some of her personal challenges and experiences.

- However that did not stop her from always having a smile and an encouraging word for others—
- In fact, clear up to the week before God would carry her home, Margaret was in Church trying to make her way to walk towards me as she always would for Holy Communion... but I knew that something that day wasn't quite right because that particular morning, she wasn't as steady on her feet to walk to me... so I walked to her instead, to give Margaret the elements of God's love and grace one last time and she smiled weakly towards me... and I remembered thinking to myself in that moment... I didn't know how to put the words to it then as I can right now... but now I can, for looking at Margaret who I learned later was supposed to be in hospice but came to Church instead... I



was looking at a loving breathing example of what longsuffering was at it's finest;

- You see Long suffering is knowing how to show grace in the midst of hate;
- **Longsuffering is being** able to forgive when it is impossible to forget....
- **Longsuffering is** loving your enemy in spite of themselves;
- **Long-suffering**, from the Greek word “makrothumia,” means “**long-tempered**” or **patient**.
- You see Contrary to popular view, a person who is long-suffering is not weak or meek.
- Instead, he/she is strong in character and bold in resisting rash reactions.
- So again Church, Spiritual forbearance involves more than passive waiting; it is active forbearance.

- It is a deliberate willingness to put up with disagreeable things in pursuit of higher goals.
- And oh We should all be ever so grateful that God is the epitome of long-suffering love.
- For the best example of patience in the Bible is God.
- For a number of times, God is described as being “slow to anger” (see [Exodus 34:6](#); [Psalm 103:8](#)).
- And for me Church, this phrase captures what true patience is.
- For patient people of love and light do more than just wait.
- They actively restrain their rightful anger and frustration....
- And they do this, for a higher purpose;
- They seemingly put up with things that they know are even wrong at times, but instead

recognize the importance of focusing on the bigger picture;

- So you see Church, showing this type of patience, is not operating from a place of indifference or apathy or even fear for that matter,
- On the contrary, people like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as another example, can teach us better than most, in his work in the Civil Rights Era and work on Non-Violence that we will slowly begin to unpack in the weeks to come — that in this spiritual forbearance that I am naming, people that operate from this place, are showing restraint, **until the Holy Spirit** gives them the Word to move;
- They are showing tempered restraint, **until the Holy Spirit gives them** the instruction on the best way forward;

- For the reality is that this corruption that surrounds us, did not occur over night;
- Therefore we cannot expect this crisis we are in as a world, to dissipate miraculously over night;
- But what our scriptural texts are naming to you and I on this Pentecost Sunday;
- Which is a commemoration and celebration of the receiving of the Holy Spirit by the early church;
- Where John the Baptist prophesied of the first Pentecost when Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire ([Matthew 3:11](#));
- And Jesus confirmed this prophecy with the promise of the Holy Spirit to the disciples then and to us disciples now;
- What is being named through our Scriptures and is being reiterated in this sermon Church, is this idea, that God's Spirit that is active and alive before us and is simply waiting,

- **The Spirit is Waiting** on you and I to respond to it's presence;
- **The Spirit is Waiting** on you and I to acknowledge it's presence;
- **The Spirit is Waiting** Church for us to be like Thomas and notice the wounds in its wrist;
- **The Spirit is Waiting** for us to reach out and touch the holes on it's side.
- **The Spirit is Waiting** on you and I kin-dim of God on Earth as it is in heaven..... to align ourselves to it's Holy existence;
- **The Spirit is Waiting** on you and I to make our business about God's business;
- To open up our eyes and recognize that we are our sibling's keeper;
- To be able to acknowledge that we are here to continue the work of bringing good news to the afflicted; to bind up the brokenhearted, to

proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners.

- **The Spirit is Waiting** on us to be in a mental and spiritual space, where we can put on the full armor of God as Ephesians 6: 10-18 so that when the day of evil comes, you and I may be able to stand our ground.
- And so at this point some of you may pipe in and say, “Kirstie, I lack patience in the everyday things in my life...how does God expect me to be successful in this spiritual forbearance that you speak of?”
- And this is where our First Lesson of Romans reminds us that **you and I** are indeed adopted into this Spirit that I have been naming;
- **You and I**, as Children of God’s love and light, have been freed from the spirit of slavery that is attached to that chronos clock that we all seem to be preoccupied by;

- You see I have named this idea before of chronos time versus kairos time;
- Where Chronos refers to chronological or sequential time, Kairos signifies a period or season, a moment of indeterminate time in which an event of significance happens;
- Where although our temporal lives are based off of a time clock of 24 hours a day, 7 days a week;
- Our eternal lives and the image we were created in; the Imago Dei that is contained within all of us;
- **You and I were designed** to seek and operate and trust in the Kairos time, where God's activity resides;
- You know Alex Steadman, who has expressed a call to pastoral ministry, and will be doing his first Introductory sermon on July 3 for both services;

- He said something profound in our class this past Wednesday, as it pertains to one verse of the 23rd Psalm, the 4th verse;
- The section of the psalm where it says, *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me...* as a side note this is the only time you will ever hear me use the KJV translation ever...but for some reason, this psalm just sounds more promising in this particular version for me;
- However, what Alex profoundly named in this sentence of a psalm that most of us knows so well, is that why the psalmist is able to have no fear in this instance of walking through the valley of the shadow of death, is because of the psalmist making the mental shift of walking through His Chronos time to get to his Kairos;



- In other words, so many of us are like Philip in our gospel; who is operating so much in the Chronos of his life, that he is missing these powerful Kairos moments that are right before him.
- I know that I am bouncing around a lot but I hope you are following me in my train of thought; but in our Gospel of John today, this is why I believe Jesus is somewhat challenging Philip right now;
- Jesus is saying to him and us who are stuck and dictated by our own Chronos time and moments, in John 14: 9 Jesus said; “Have I been with you all this time Philip, **and you still do know know me?”**
- You see Church, my aha moment, thanks to Alex’s profound connection that he has shared with us all; is that **as long as you and I stay**

stuck in the Chronos, we will continue to be dictated by our fears;

- **As long as you and I** stay stuck in the Chronos, we will remain in this state of eternal restlessness;
- So the charge for all of us, is to keep walking through our chronos until we get to the kairos;
- We must approach each day, asking for the Advocate who is already here, to guide us into these kairos moments that are right before our very eyes;
- Which **requires you and I** to be willing to step out of our comfortable silos and bubbles, to really see the people that is before us;
- **It requires you and I**, to sometimes abandon our to do lists even just for a moment; to take the time and trouble and patience, to really glean what the Spirit is trying to show us in these moments;

- And you know in Acts 1:8 when it says; But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth,”
- This lets us know that when you and I finally choose to submit to this Advocate that is always among us, the Spirit will give us power to take those next steps in these Kairos moments, to be who God called us to be!
- And You know this vision that I am naming, happened with our class this past Wednesday that was supposed to end at 6:30 pm.
- And you know how us Methodists strive to begin on time and end on time;
- But this past Wednesday, **it was obvious that** there was something more for from this class for us all to glean from in our time together;

- **It was obvious that** as a group, that if we were to have left that class right on time; that abiding solely in the Chronos, would have caused us to miss an important kairos opportunity.
- So **as a group**, we decided to stay a little longer,
- **As a community**, we pressed in on these scriptural texts that I am presenting to you this morning just a little longer,
- **As a new formed family**, we conversed together just a little longer,
- We looked into each other's eyes and aligned our Spirits together;
- And the Kairos opportunity that came forth was so palpable for us;
- Somewhat like the story in Acts 2 in 2022;
- Where suddenly from heaven, there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled

the entire space of Black Fellowship Hall that we were sitting in.

- Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among us, and a tongue rested on each of us.
- All of us were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak to these scriptures in our own unique way, as the Spirit gave us the ability.
- It was a powerful Kairos moment for our small community;
- **From there**, I knew Alex was ready to take his next step in discovering his way as a leader in this community,
- **From there**, I felt a newfound Spirit of boldness, to be able to preach some really difficult topics up here and I believe, in fact I know, that this Word will not fall on deaf ears or apathetic souls;

- **From there**, I felt that we all experienced another tangible example of the Advocate being real and the Advocate being here.
- This my friends and family and more is the Forbearance Effect right before our very eyes, in all of its infinite possibilities!
- When we discover how to move through our Chronos to get to our Kairos!
- Amazing Grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me;
- I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see!