

SERIES: SPIRIT OVER STRESS
SERMON: THE COST OF IMPATIENCE
9-26-21

OPENER:

STORY:

I heard this funny story of a lonely guy who decided that life would be more fun if he had a pet. So he went to the pet store and told the owner that he wanted to buy an unusual pet. After some discussion, he decided on a centipede, which came in a little white box to use as its house.

He took the centipede home, found a good location for the box, and then decided he would start off by taking his new pet to a restaurant to have dinner. So, he asked the centipede in the box, Would you like to go out with me to have dinner? But there was no answer from his new pet. This bothered him a bit, but he waited a few minutes and then asked him again, How about going out for a meal with me?

But again, there was no answer from his new friend and pet. So, he waited a few minutes more, thinking about the situation. He decided to ask him one more time; this time putting his face against the centipede's house and shouting, Hey, in there! Would you like to go with me to have dinner? A little voice came out of the box from the centipede: Patience man! I heard you the first time! I'm putting on my shoes!

ILLUSTRATION

Patience - It goes against human nature! We are not born patient, are we? A young married couple have a beautiful baby boy. When the child wakes up in the middle of the night and is hungry. He doesn't lie in the bed and think, "I know mommy and daddy are tired, so I'll wait until a more convenient time to let them know that I need something to eat." No, the child is developing a great set of lungs that gets his parents' attention—whether it's 2am or 2pm.

We struggle with patience. From driving down the interstate and coming to a long line of traffic, and knowing you're going to be late, to arriving at a long line at the grocery check-out. We become annoyed and irritated at delays like this.

**WE GET WORKED UP, STRESSED OUT, UPSET, ON EDGE AND AGGRAVATED. WE ARE IMPATIENT.
WE WANT WHAT WE WANT AND WE WANT IT NOW -
WITH NO DELAYS - NO WAITING.**

>Sometimes it's annoying strangers we have to absorb. Like the guy down the block whose dog barks all night.
>Or the server at the new restaurant that you can't seem to find when you need to order your food.
>And sometimes it's people in our own family. It's those nearest and dearest to us who really try our patience. Now, when two have lived together for many years, it usually happens that each has tones of voice and expressions of face which are irritating to the other." It's not that your spouse does anything all that wrong. It's just that he raises an eyebrow in a certain way that drives you crazy. It's the way she takes forever to tell a simple story.

Our world caters to our impatience. We live on a fast track, in a rat race. We're in a world of fast food, instant communication and immediate access to data, freeways, 10-minute oil changes, microwaves and 20 minute pizza delivery.

ILLUSTRATION:

We start middle school and we cannot wait to get into HS, we get into HS and we can't wait to graduate, we graduate we can't wait to get married, we get married, we can't wait to have kids, we have kids we can't wait to buy the new house, we buy the new house, we can't wait to get the RV, we buy the RV and we can't wait for the kids that we couldn't wait till they were born to get out of the house so we can use the RV that we couldn't wait to get.

**WE ARE ALWAYS IN A HURRY.
ANXIOUS FOR THE NEXT THING - IMPATIENT AND STRESSED.
NEVER FOCUSED OR STILL ENOUGH TO ENJOY**

WHERE WE ARE.

IF WE STRUGGLE WITH STRESS AND ANXIETY, WHAT WE REALLY NEED MAY NOT BE A VACATION - BUT TO GROW IN PATIENCE.

PATIENCE DEFINED IN THE BIBLE:

The Greek word for patience is makrothumia, which is a combination of two words. Makro means 'long' and thumia means 'temper'—long-tempered. Patience is the ability to stay calm and unstressed while you're waiting for an outcome that you need or want.

Patience is the ability to endure hardship or delay without complaining or losing it. Short-tempered -is the opposite.

Patience is: Endurance, staying power, tolerance, lack of complaint, persistence, fortitude and serenity

Patience is not: Annoyance, irritation, edginess, and intolerance

I. PATIENCE IS A GIFT OF GOD

Galatians 5:22-23 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control.

GOD'S SPIRIT MAKES US PATIENT.

PATIENCE GROWS IN US AS WE GROW IN GOD.

AS WE LEARN TO TRUST HIM-AS WE LEARN TO RELY ON HIM PATIENCE GROWS IN US.

GOD IS PATIENT!

Think about how many times God has been patient with you:

>How many times have you gotten on God's nerves?

> How many times have you come before him and confessed the same ugly sin, the same loveless behavior, the same stupid mistakes?

>How many times have you disregarded him, disobeyed him, disappointed him?

And yet, he's always been there for you. Never given up on you. Never lost patience with you.

When we look at Jesus with patience in mind, what do we see? We see him there on the cross, absorbing not just a few minor annoyances, but absorbing the accumulated evil of the whole world. Absorbing all that sin and suffering without passing it on, without inflicting it on others—and so, breaking the cycle of retaliation and vengeance in which this angry world is trapped.

When I take a long look at Jesus there on the cross, somehow the irritations and annoyances that bug me don't seem quite so bad.

WE MIGHT THINK IMPATIENCE IS A QUIRKY LITTLE QUIRK IN OUR CHARACTER, BUT TODAY WE'RE GOING TO FIND IT'S MORE SERIOUS THAN THAT.

HIDING UNDER THE SURFACE OF OUR IMPATIENCE IS A DEEP BOILING POT OF ANGER, SELFISHNESS AND A SPIRIT OF ENTITLEMENT AND SOMETHING DYSFUNCTIONAL ABOUT OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

I want to look at how important this character trait is by looking at the cost of impatience. To do that we are going to look at a Bible character named King Saul.....

THE IMPATIENCE OF SAUL

Story.....

King Saul was the very first king of the nation of Israel. After the period of the Judges, the nation demanded a king and even though it was God's ideal to have only himself as their king, the people persisted and God decided to grant their request.

The prophet Samuel anointed Saul as the first king of Israel. Saul was a tall man, muscled and good looking. He led the country to its first military victory in years over one of its oppressive neighbors. Everyone's happy. But there's a problem in Saul's inner life that is going to grow and spell disaster for him and the people around him. It's impatience.

Another oppressive neighbor taking advantage of the kingless Israelites were the Philistines. But now, with a king, the Jews have a new sense of boldness, and desire to throw off the oppressors and be free people under God. So they start border skirmishes with the Philistines.

Word gets to the Philistines that Israelites in full revolt and aren't going roll over for them anymore. So they say, we're going to teach these upstarts a lesson they'll never forget. Then the Philistines mustered a huge army against Saul's brand new regime.

Needless to say, the Israelites are afraid, and a large part of Saul's army loses its nerve goes into hiding in caves, holes, rocks, tombs and cisterns. Despite these worsening odds, Samuel has charged Saul to look to God for protection and victory and not trust his own power or his lack of it!

Samuel has told Saul clearly... to wait for him for 7 days and he would come and offer a sacrifice and invite God's blessing on them and victory would be assured. But he'd have to wait, with the Philistine army breathing down his neck, with deserters fleeing left and right and the remaining army shaking in their boots.

Every day that passes, every hour, another deserter runs away, and the chances of victory are growing slimmer and slimmer. Saul waited impatiently for 7 days and finally he took charge and said.....

"That's it, Samuel's not coming, bring me the burnt offerings and let's get on with it already! If we need a priest, here I'll play Samuel, let's, offer up the sacrifices, sing a few songs, pass an offering plate, close in prayer – then can we go already?! I'm losing men by the second, come on, come on! Let's go! Time's a wasting here, folks, if we need holy water sprinkled on us before we go to battle, here, give me the Evian bottle... let's GO!!!!!"

Do you see a problem right here? A little impatience perhaps? Yes, but the most important thing is that the impatience is pointing to Saul's heart. That's made clear in the next part of the story.

STORY CONTINUES.....

Just as Saul was finishing the burnt offerings, Samuel shows up...

1 Samuel 13:11-12 but Samuel said, "What is this you have done?" Saul replied, "I saw my men scattering from me, and you didn't arrive when you said you would, and the Philistines are at Micmash ready for battle. 12 So I said, 'The Philistines are ready to march against us at Gilgal, and I haven't even asked for the Lord's help!' So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering myself before you came."

What Saul is saying....

"... well, I just took matters into my own hands, I guess."

Many things are revealed in these excuses that relate to our own justifications for impatience:

First we justify impatience for the sake of being practical and reasonable.

- "I was losing my army after all, I just did what any sane person would do." When you think about our own impatience, how many times is it not justified under the same grounds: I was just being practical, God's timing isn't very reasonable.

So...

> I'll get that ill-advised loan because I have all these "needs" that just HAVE to be purchased.

> I'll quit my job and hamstring my family's finances because it's not reasonable to endure my boss anymore.

> I'll rush into marriage with this person I don't know really well because I'm lonely and waiting just doesn't seem reasonable.

Then, there's a second set of excuses for impatience that sound even better and that's using spiritual grounds.

Saul says, "I can't go to war before I've said my prayers! That would be wrong!"

>I know God wants to bless me with this or that, so I'm just going to go out and get it... I know that's what God would want me to do.

>I need guidance from God in this area, and so I'm going to lean on my horoscope or consult this mystic, because I need an answer right now, and I know that's what God would want.

>I have a vision from God to do great things, and God's not showing up when I expected him to, so I'm going to just push it along myself a little bit, play amateur Holy Spirit and manipulate people and circumstances to achieve great things for God!

AS SAUL IS SPUTTERING OUT ALL HIS EXCUSES THE REAL REASON COMES OUT OF HIM. HE SAID TO SAMUEL,

**"I TOOK MATTERS INTO MY OWN HANDS.
I FELT COMPELLED TO DO IT. I JUST HAD TO.
I NEEDED TO TAKE CONTROL OF THE SITUATION."**

IF WE COULD MATERIALIZE WHAT'S BEHIND OUR OWN IMPATIENCE - THERE IT IS - WE MUST TAKE MATTERS INTO OUR OWN HANDS.

THE CARE AND PROTECTION OF GOD WAS NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR SAUL AND IT'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR MANY OF US.

**WE CAN'T RELAX IN GOD'S CONTROL. WE MUST TAKE CONTROL FOR OURSELVES.
AND IN TAKING CONTROL WE VIOLATE OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND REAP HARD CONSEQUENCES.**

Think about we do because of impatience:

- we go looking for guidance in spiritualists and mediums, because we can't wait for a real God to give answers,
- we work ourselves through the weekend for security, because we can't trust God and wait until Monday.
- we're impatient with the weaknesses of our parents or bosses so we rebel against their authority because God's not reigning them in.
- we lash out in hate or resentment against others because we're too impatient to leave it to God to avenge.
- we lust and misuse our sexuality, because we're too impatient to have our physical desires satisfied in the Biblical context of marriage.
- we sink ourselves with debt that we don't pay back because the culture tells us we should have all this stuff and we can't wait until we have the money for them - we have to have them NOW!
- we are loose with the truth because we can't slowly develop authentic, real relationships, so we put on a façade, or lie.
- we envy someone else's job, spouse, house, car, and bitterness rises in us because God is not taking care of our needs fast enough.

All of that, from lack of patience. in case you didn't catch it, I just listed ways that we break every single one of the 10 commandments in the Bible because of impatience.

**WHAT'S BEHIND OUR IMPATIENCE IS A PROBLEM WITH GOD.
WE THINK GOD IS NOT ACTING FAST ENOUGH.
HE'S NOT MEETING OUR NEEDS.
HE'S NOT STOPPING THAT BAD THING FROM HAPPENING.
HE'S NOT RESCUING US FROM TROUBLE.
AND SO WE TAKE MATTERS INTO OUR OWN HANDS.**

Samuel looks at Saul and says,

Samuel 13:13-14 13 "How foolish!" Samuel exclaimed. "You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you. Had you kept it, the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. 14 But now your

kingdom must end, for the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart. The Lord has already appointed him to be the leader of his people, because you have not kept the Lord's command."

Saul, that was a fool thing to do... this experience has uncovered a heart that is hard toward God, untrusting, without faith, a heart that refused to continue to trust God's love even when it got hard. As a result of you not waiting on God and trying to become your own god, your kingly rule is already falling to pieces. Your dynasty must end and the Lord will chose a new king who will be a man after his own heart."

**SAUL LOST HIS KINGDOM FOR A LACK OF TWO TO THREE HOURS OF IMPATIENCE.
THIS STORY IS MEANT TO TEACH US THE IMPORTANCE OF WAITING ON GOD.**

**THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP WE CAN TAKE TO DEVELOP
PATIENCE IS TO GIVE GOD CONTROL OF OUR LIVES**

As we grow in our faith, we learn to trust more and more that God really is in charge of this world and our lives, then patience is the fruit that grows as a natural result of our relationship with God.

EVERY TIME YOU AND I LOSE OUR PATIENCE WE'RE SAYING, "I'M IN CONTROL AND GOD'S NOT!"

WE'RE TAKING GOD OUT OF THE DRIVER'S SEAT AND PUTTING OURSELVES IN IT.

WHAT PATIENCE DOES:

1. PATIENCE WAITS

Romans 8:25 But if we look forward to something we don't yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.

Our life is full of seasons. You are either planting or you are harvesting. You are either waiting or getting. This is the rhythm of life.

ILLUSTRATION:

Rainy in the tub. God does that with us.

2. PATIENCE CONTINUES TO DO GOOD

Galatians 6:9. So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.

Waiting on God also means continuing to do good. We commonly associate patience with doing nothing. It's one thing to relax, but it is a harder thing sometimes to carry on under stress; to endure, to have a great weight on your heart and still keep doing the right thing. To wait is hard, to wait while we continue to "do good " is and even bolder statement of trust.

3. PATIENCE DOESN'T GIVE UP

2 Chronicles 15:7 But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded."

Again, patience is about trust. Do we trust that God will reward us if we remain faithful, obey and not give up?

4. PATIENCE BRINGS PERFECTION

James 1:2-4 (NKJV) My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Sometimes God will put us in a waiting period. While we're waiting for some blessing, family or friends or health or work or success or desire, we're getting totally focused on Jesus Christ. Why? So that you learn to seek him, to cry out for him.

In that time of waiting we gain something of more worth, than what we are waiting for. We learn to radically trust the Lord. That is its own reward.

ILLUSTRATION:

ABRAHAM AND SARAH

**AS ABRAHAM AND SARAH LEARNED TO WAIT ON GOD IT PERFECTED THEIR FAITH.
AND THEIR PRACTICE OF PATIENCE WORKED A PERFECT WORK IN THEM AND IN THE SITUATION.**