

May 6, 2018

## ***What kind of people ought we to be?***

***"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."*** II Peter 3:8-9

***"Since then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory...since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator...as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."***

Colossians 3:1-14

Who do you think you are? Who do I think I am? Living as those who are being saved by the grace of God in Jesus should, I think, force us to answer that question for ourselves moment by moment. Our biggest struggles as we try to live the lives we ought to live; to be the people we ought to be, is to overcome our own selfish, pride-filled ways. Perhaps nowhere is this more obvious in our lack of patience with others.

How often in the course of a single day do we become impatient with someone? For most of us, I think, this is a constant challenge. Someone isn't fast enough, or smart enough, or nice enough. Someone doesn't know what we want, doesn't understand us, or doesn't serve us and we get impatient and sadly, show it with our anger and rage.

Why are we so impatient? Simply stated, we all struggle with our pride. The truth is we believe we are so important and so smart and so right that everyone around us should do what we want, believe the way we do, and serve us absolutely and immediately. Of course most of us would not say these things about ourselves, but our behaviors, our actions and attitudes, proclaim them all of the time.

Someone disappoints us because they did or didn't do what we wanted them to. We become impatient and angry with them, either behind their backs or to their faces. Why? Because, on some level we think we are too important to not get our way and get it now!



Humility is a hard, hard choice for most of us. Humility is not some 'aw shucks' thing we do when someone compliments us. No, humility is the ability to let go of our personal belief in our own importance. Someone disappoints us, lets us down, keeps us waiting, doesn't meet our every need, and because of our inflated egos we get impatient, become angry and let go our rage. When we ***"...have taken off (our) old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator..."*** we let go of our belief in our own importance.

As Paul would command the believers in Philippi, ***"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the***

*same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant..."*  
(Philippians 2:3-7)

When we, like Jesus, make ourselves nothing, then patience will not be so hard. Until we empty ourselves, until we chose to let go of our own inflated egos, we will struggle to be patient with others. God is patient with us and so, in turn, we must learn to be patient with others.

