

Sermon Title: God is Patient

Text: Nehemiah 9:6-31

How many of us like to be patient/to wait/to suffer long? **“Longsuffering” is not a word we use much today, but it is an accurate depiction of patience!** Much of life is a lesson in patience/longsuffering! Like it or not!

As Christians, we understand the added dynamic of waiting on God & His timing! We know God has a plan & purpose in all things, but it’s not always easy to trust Him & be patient/suffer long as we wait for His timing to come!

Patience is a big part of our response to God, but it is also a big part of God’s response to us! Have you ever thought about the patience/longsuffering of God? How patient He is with us? Patient in working out His sovereign plan?

How important do you think patience is, as an essential attribute of God? How necessary is it that God is “longsuffering” in His response towards us?

We must not forget about the justice & wrath of God from last week! That when we turn away from Him, & choose sin, He is “Just” to wipe us out!

In His justice, He doesn’t have to suffer long our rejection of Him! But He does! **He chooses to slow His wrath, to show His patience/longsuffering towards us!**

2 Peter 3:9 – “The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”

- If God wasn’t patient towards us, in giving us the opportunity to repent, where would we be today? **Where would our eternity be?**
- If God wasn’t longsuffering towards us, where would our hope for growth, transformation, & God’s Kingdom advancement be in our lives?

God suffers long with us, b/c **He doesn’t wish that anyone of us would perish** He restrains His justice/wrath, or pours it out elsewhere, because **He desires to give us time to repent, and turn back to Him & His ways!**

Praise God for His intentional “slowness” in keeping His promise of judgment towards us! & praise God for **His forgiveness as an extension of His kindness!**

Nehemiah 9:6-31 is a great example of God’s longsuffering/patience towards His people! May we come to know the God who is also patient with us, while never presuming upon His patience b/c of His justice/wrath!

How did God show patience/longsuffering & bestow His favor on His people?

- **Vs. 6** - He created the world and preserved His creation!
- **Vs. 7** - **He called Abram and gave Him a new name & a new purpose!**
- **Vs. 8** – He established a covenant with Abraham & kept His promise!
- **Vs. 9** – He saw the affliction & heard the cries of His people in Egypt!
- **Vs. 10** – He performed many signs and wonders to deliver them!
- **Vs. 11** – **He saved their lives & destroyed their enemies at the Red Sea!**
- **Vs. 12** – He led them day & night by the pillars of cloud & fire!
- **Vs. 13** – He descended down to Mt. Sinai & gave them His Law.
- **Vs. 14** – He included in that Law a Sabbath rest for them!
- **Vs. 15** – He gave them bread from heaven, water from the rock, & **the means to possess the land that He promised to them!**

But how did God’s people respond to such favor from God?

- **Vs. 16** - **“But they & our fathers acted presumptuously & stiffened their neck and did not obey God’s commandments...”**
- **Vs. 17** – Instead of giving God praise & following His lead, they appointed their own leader to lead them back into slavery!
- **Vs. 18** – Rather than worshipping the one true God, they made a golden calf to worship instead! **They gave a created thing the credit for what God alone accomplished (blaspheme)!**

How would you have responded if you were God? **With patience/longsuffering?** What does Nehemiah declare about God’s response to them? About God?

- **Vs. 17** - **“But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious & merciful, slow to anger & abounding in steadfast love, & did not forsake them.”**
- **Vs. 19** – **“You in your great mercies did not forsake them in the wilderness.”** The pillars of His presence never depart from them.
- **Vs. 20** – **“You gave your good Spirit to instruct them & did not with hold your manna from their mouth & gave them water for their thirst.”**
- **Vs. 21** – **“40 yrs you sustained them in the wilderness, & they lacked nothing. Their clothes did not wear out & their feet did not swell.”**
- **Vs. 22** – **“You gave them kingdoms... peoples... land...”**
- **Vs. 23** – **“You multiplied their children & brought them into the land...”**
- **Vs. 25** – **“They ate & were filled & became fat & delighted themselves in your great goodness!”**

Read **Vs. 26**... What follows? A cycle of 1) God blessing, 2) Man’s sin, 3) God’s judgment, 4) Man’s repentance, 5) God’s restoration and blessing... Read **Vs. 31**

The same can be said of us today (vs. 6-18)! **The same is true of God’s response to us as well** (vs. 17-25)! How do we break this “cycle” in our lives? Focus more on God’s Judgment? Or more of God’s kindness revealed in His longsuffering?

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God suffers long with us, b/c He doesn't wish that anyone of us _____
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