

Patience, Perseverance, Enduring, and Waiting



I Will Shake All Things (Part 9)
by Derek Prince

I'd like to turn to the end of James for a few moments. I want to point out to you how closely endurance is connected with preparation for the coming of the Lord. James 5, just reading verses 7–11. Now the word that's used here mainly is patience. And let me offer you a little English lesson for which I make no extra charge. There are three related English words: patience, perseverance and endurance. They're related but they're distinct and all of them have their place in Christian experience.

Patience is derived from the same Latin root which gives us the word passive. Patience is essentially doing nothing.

And then there's perseverance which you could interpret as doing something and persistently doing it, going on and on and on doing it. Not stopping.

And then there's endurance which is the word we're mainly dealing with. And the Greek word means remaining under. So you're under all these pressures and endurance is remaining there. It's holding out against them but it's not trying to escape from them.

So we have these three aspects of Christian conduct: patience, perseverance and endurance. And they're all involved in the preparation for the coming of the Lord. So I'll read these few verses from James 5:7:

> "Therefore, be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord."

You know, I find that for most men servants of the Lord, patience is the hardest thing to achieve. I think women are better at patience than men. It doesn't mean they're good. But I mean, I had been a Christian at least thirty years before I realized that my besetting sin was impatience. I wasn't even convicted of it. And when I began to deal with it, dear Lord, I began to realize what a hold it had over me.

All right, we're going on.

> "See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early

> and latter rain. You also be patient, establish your hearts for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the judge is standing at the door. My brethren, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord as an example of suffering and patience."

I run into quite a lot of people today who want to claim to be prophets. But I'm not sure that they're following the scriptural pattern because there's nothing very glamorous about being a prophet according to the Bible. It's painful. It means isolation, persecution.

If you want a description of what it's like to be a prophet, I think you can find it in Hebrews. Since we're there, Hebrews 11, the last 2 verses. This is the prophetic ministry.

> "They were stoned, they were sawn in two [that was Isaiah], they were put to death by the sword, they went about in sheepskins and goat skins, destitute, persecuted and ill treated. The world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground."

How many want to be prophets?

You see what I'm saying? What's needed? I don't hear you. Endurance, that's right.

We'll go on now with what we were reading here. We'll go back to verse 10 of James 5:

> "My brethren, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord as an example of suffering and patience."

Not an example of glamour but of suffering.

> "Indeed, we count them blessed who endure. You've heard of the perseverance [notice that word] of Job, and seen the end intended by the Lord, that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful."

If you go through those verses you'll find the theme is patience, perseverance, endurance. And that's the pattern for the people of God who are preparing for the return of the Lord.

All right, we're coming to the next, this is number three. This is worse still! Do you know what it is? It's waiting. The importance of waiting is almost totally overlooked in the contemporary church—at least by the kind of people I mix with. And yet it's a central part of our preparation for the return of the Lord. Hebrews 9:28:

> "So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time apart from sin for salvation."

To whom will He appear? To those who eagerly wait for Him. Now, some translations don't put in the eagerly but it's a double preposition in the Greek. I think eagerly accurately represents the real meaning of it. It's not just waiting for Him but it's eagerly waiting for Him.

Then in 1 Thessalonians, a very remarkable passage, chapter 1, verses 9 and 10, which is speaking about the testimony of the unbelievers to the experience of the Thessalonian Christians. 1 Thessalonians 1:9–10:

> "For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turn to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come."

So these people turn to God as a result of the ministry of Paul to do two things. And there's no suggestion that one is more important than the other. To serve the living God and to wait for His Son from heaven.

You see, as Christians we are all to serve but we are also called to wait. And I've spoken to Christian ministers and workers in many places, I sometimes ask this question, "Which takes more faith? To work or to wait?" And never have I ever had anybody answer it takes more faith to work than to wait. The real test of faith is waiting. And, it's a test to which we will all be subjected because we are called to turn from idols to serve God, to wait for His Son.

This is a verse in Isaiah 64, verse 4, which is so vivid in this that I like to quote it from the NIV. Chapter 64, verse 4. This describes one unique aspect of the true God. It says:

> "Since ancient times, no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any god besides you who acts on behalf of those who wait for Him."

What's the one unique, distinguishing characteristic of God? He acts on behalf of those who do what? Wait for Him. Thank

you.

All right. Turn to John 9:4. Jesus says:

> "We must work the works of Him who sent me while it is day. The night is coming when no one can work."

Do you understand that? There is coming over the earth a night of darkness when work will be over and we'll only do one thing; which is, wait, that's right. We'll wait content if we've done our job. But it will be intensely frustrating when the night descends and you say, "But I should have done this, I should have done that, I should be there." Because, it'll be too late. The night is coming when no one can work. The only thing we can do is to wait and we don't know how long we'll have to wait.

You know what I've noticed about God's trials? He hardly ever tells you, "This is a trial and if you hold out for six months you'll be through." And some of us get to five months and twenty-nine days and we give up. We didn't know we only had one more day. Never give up! There's no precedent in the Bible for giving up. God determines how long the test will last, not we.

You see, waiting is one of the tests to which God almost invariably subjects the servants He intends to use. I'll give you just a little list. Abraham. "You're going to have a son who will be the head of a nation that will be unique in the earth." How long did he have to wait? Twenty-five years.

But Abraham became the man he was by waiting. He had to watch his wife pass the age of childbearing and still wait. It amazes me that Abraham is so highly rated in the Bible because, what did he do?

I've often asked myself what was it in Abraham that caused God to esteem him so highly that he was called the friend of God. I'm not sure that I really know the answer but I think one way he earned God's favor was by waiting. Some of you are going to forfeit God's favor if you don't wait.

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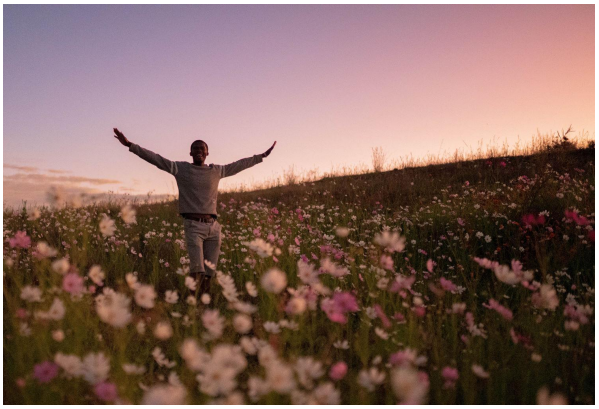
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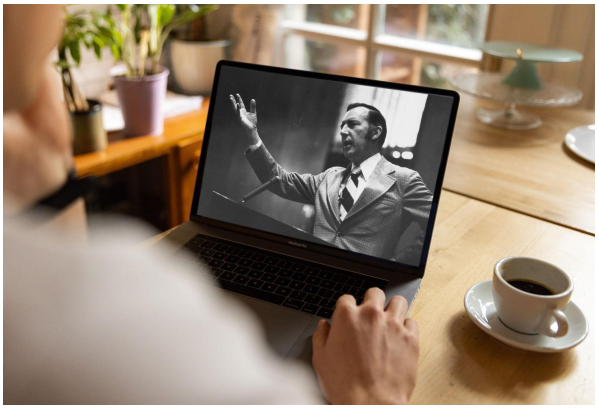
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