

News and Notes

There are several who need our visits and prayers. Terry Czirr is still fighting the battle with liver cancer. Carole Wyrick continues her battle against several health issues. Carmelita McCoy is battling deteriorating health due to age. Carolyn Doyle is recovering at home from recent surgery on her foot. Along those same lines, Ann Hurd is recuperating from surgery for the second time on her feet. Jan Patrick entered the hospital suffering from stress and was kept for tests. Please remember all these with cards and visits.

Fall Gospel Meeting

Lynn Huggins from St. James, Mo. will be preaching our Fall meeting for us. The dates are a little different this time. October 8-11. This is a Thursday thru Sunday meeting.

A way to forgive and forget

Clara Barton said when reminded of an instance one had done her wrong, "I distinctly remember forgetting that." Hey, it might just work for us as well; to determine to forgive and forget.



September 20, 2009

THE PERFECTION OF PATIENCE By Jim Stauffer

We are told in James 1:2-4 that trials will prove our faith and develop patience. We are then told that patience will enable us to be perfect (complete) lacking in nothing.

A little enhancement of our understanding of that promise might serve us well as we strive please our Lord in this regard.

There are two words that are primarily used to denote patience in scripture. The first of these is hupomone which means literally "an abiding under" according to Strong's Dictionary of Bible Words. Strong's also explains hupomone as "the temper which does not easily succumb under suffering." The second word is makrothumia which is defined by Strong's as "to be long spirited or long tempered." Strong further states that makrothumia is "the self restraint which does not hastily retaliate a wrong." Hupomone is opposed to cowardice and despondency, while makrothumia is opposed to wrath and revenge according to Strong's. Hopefully this will help us understand what God is requesting when he urges us to have patience to overcome and have our faith perfected.

This is to work in our lives as it did in the lives of the Apostles. Jesus promised them if they 'endured to the end they would be saved.' (Mt. 24:13) This is explained as 'winning their souls' in Luke 21:19. Going back to James 1 we see in verse 12 that the perfection he speaks of in verse 4 will allow us to receive the crown of life.

This attribute prevails in everything we do. Of course we are 'called to follow in the steps of Jesus' as far as suffering for His cause is concerned. (1 Pet. 2:21) We learn this through the longsuffering Christ demonstrated by extending His mercy to

Lenexa church of Christ 7845 Cottonwood Lenexa KS 66216 913-631-6519. Send a Copy to a Friend. Evangelist: Jim Stauffer. MEETING TIMES: Sunday - Bible Classes: 9:30AM, Worship Services 10:20AM & 6:00PM, Wednesday - Bible Classes 7:00PM. Map showing location near Cottonwood, Lackman, Mill Creek Elementary School, Pflum, 79th Street, 87th Street, 95th Street, 435, and 35.

Saul of Tarsus while he was a persecutor of the church. (1 Tim. 1:16) This same longsuffering is to be practiced by us in our preaching of the word to others. (2 Tim. 4:2)

At the end of the book, James illustrates the need for the Christian to trust in the power of prayer by the example of Elijah the prophet. The passage tells us that even though Elijah had similar physical needs as we do, he told Ahab, an evil king there would be no rain on the earth until he (Elijah) said so. It would be 3 1/2 years until such time as Elijah would pray to God for rain.

Now you wonder what patience and endurance and longsuffering has to do with this story. Elijah needed the rain to survive just as all the other Israelites. While Elijah was testing the nation with a long drought, he had to trust in God to enable him to survive as well.

First, he was sent to the Brook of Cherith where he was fed by ravens as God promised until the brook dried up. Elijah had to trust in the initial plan of God to follow His instructions. He had to endure the difficulties of life to be a part of God's plan to bring about the return of the nation of Israel. Think about the difficulty of living this way. Dependent upon God to feed you by sending ravens with your food. Sometimes we are upset when we go to the pantry or refrigerator only to find out there is no more of our favorite treat.

When that source of water dried up, God sent him to Zarephath to the home of a widow who would feed him. Isn't it interesting that God sent Elijah to Sidon where the idol god Baal originated? The home of Jezebel, the wife of Ahab. Isn't it ironic that Elijah would be sustained in the land of the wife of the king who sought his life? When he approached the widow for food she was preparing to feed herself and her son their last meal before dying. Elijah explained to her that Jehovah had promised to prevent her meal from being depleted if she would help him. The unlimited jar of meal would certainly serve to strengthen her belief in Elijah as a man of Jehovah. However, that faith was shaken when her son died. Elijah prayed over him and he was restored to life as an answer to the prayer of Elijah and she said, "Now I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of Jehovah in thy mouth is true."

Finally, God decided it was time to send rain on the earth again. It was His judgment that every lesson that would be learned had been learned from the drought. It was now time for the final lesson delivered at the end of the drought.

Elijah sent the prophet Obadiah to see Ahab and tell him Elijah was on his way to see him. After his initial fears were assuaged, he went to deliver the message of Elijah. The message was to bring the prophets of Baal to Mt Carmel for a demonstration of the power of their god. Elijah would be there to represent Jehovah in the contest to determine which god had the power claimed by his adherents.

As we all know, the prophets of Baal could not successfully call down fire from their god, while being chided by Elijah that maybe he was asleep or on vacation. Yet when Elijah petitioned Jehovah, he demonstrated beyond all doubt He had the power. He sent sufficient fire to consume the sacrifice, the altar and the water poured into the trenches around the altar. This must have been a very impressive sight. The people immediately acknowledged the power of Jehovah and pledged their allegiance to Him.

Now you say, what does this lesson have to do with patience? I say it clearly illustrates the attributes of those who have patience.

The people of God had followed their leadership (Ahab and Jezebel) into idolatry and forsaken the Lord. They did not have the patience, endurance and steadfastness to trust God to lead them. They did not trust His judgment on what their life should be.

On the other hand, look at the patience of Elijah. See what he endured to carry out the will of God. He lived in isolation from his people to bring about their restoration to God. He willingly paid this price to carry out God's instructions.

My question is, "how did that work out for the people?". And, "how did that work out for Elijah?"

Maybe we struggle to understand what James means by trials. Maybe we just do not grasp the picture of patience as taught by our God through His revelation. It is time we did.

There will be times when we must forego our desires in order to carry out His will. Jesus told us to deny ourselves and take up our cross.

Can we see how Elijah trusted in the plan of God? He did not even know the entire plan but followed the instructions as they were given. Because he did, he was fed at the Brook of Cherith, and in Zarephath. He was safe from the threat of Ahab. God protected and cared for him.

He trusted in the power of God. He was fed miraculously and supported by the deliverance of the power of God in sending fire to consume the sacrifice.

Because he trusted in God's love and power, he was able to perform a difficult task. The result was God's pleasure with his faithfulness and the restoration of his people to God and himself.

The only way we can develop this kind of patience is as James says to withstand the trials of our faith. If we fail when tried our patience is not strengthened. We must determine who is the god of our lives. Is it Jehovah or is it the mammon Jesus spoke of in Matt. 6:24. He says we cannot serve two masters.

As Elijah said to the people, "How long go ye limping between the two sides? If Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him."