

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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Stunning Love

PART

2

TITLE

Love Is Patient

SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 13:4; Colossians 3:12-14



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Well the big story in the Bible it begins for the words, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” What’s interesting is what we find in the first few pages of the Bible actually gives us reason to honor mothers this day.

It’s fascinating what takes place in that God created us to live with him, to be in a right relationship with him. He gave us a soul that we could know him, we could talk to him, and that he would speak to us, and we would be able to understand his will and his word.

There was clarity, there was peace in life, it really was a remarkable time that we read about. And then the Bible says that God wanted to protect this peace, and so what he did was he gave an instruction that actually restricted us from the thing that he knew would destroy us. And we looked at his restriction and instead of seeing a heart that was protecting, we looked and, for whatever reason, we saw a heart that was restricting our pleasure.

And so it says in the Bible that mankind, we sinned against God and we broke fellowship with Him; and immediately that peace vanished. This tidal wave of brokenness, literally, swept over the earth. And you get to the third chapter of the Bible and what happens is God comes and he holds people accountable, and he tells us what life is now going to be like.

He gives out the consequences for our rebellion, and it speaks about strife, and it speaks about shame and insecurity, and also speaks about the fact that we would die. Right in the middle of that list of consequences, God gave a promise and that is that one day there would be a man that would be born woman, who would come, who would be our final rescuer; the one that we should all be longing for.

The entire Bible is supposed to be read on lookout for this man that would be born of a woman. And what’s interesting is this, at the very end, the very last sentence that God says, “Now these are the consequences”. Do you know the very next sentence? It says that Adam looked at Eve and he said, “You will be the mother of all living.”

Now this is remarkable to me. That the first point of good news in the entire Bible, once we sinned against God, was that he would send a rescuer. But the very first medicine that he would give to us as we waited for that rescuer was motherhood. That we would have somebody in our life that would perpetuate life, somebody in our lives who would sacrifice, and who would be patient with us, and who would love us, and who would show us mercy and compassion and nurturing.

And so as a church family, we look at Genesis so we look at you and we say, “Thank you.” We honor you, we honor him. You see, every single woman in this room whether you are a young, young girl, whether you’re a mother, or a grandmother; we simply want you to know that we honor you.

And the reason we do is because you were created in the image of God, and you have been blessed with strength, you've been blessed with ability, with creativity, with wisdom, with beauty, and ability that is absolutely essential to humanity. Not only living life, but enjoying life, and enjoying family, and enjoying culture, and enjoying the coming Kingdom of God.

The women in this room, as well as the men, are not only essential, but you're a blessing to us. And we know that, and we recognize that and so I want to just honor you; we're so thankful for you, for your grace in our life.

And this is for those of you who are mothers of biological children and those also like Deborah who, in the Bible, who instead of looking at her kids, it she says that she looked at her role as a leader over an entire country in a political role. And she says that, "I Deborah arose as a mother for Israel."

Someone who would nurture the people, someone who would care for the people, and so young and old, we honor you for what you contribute not only to our personal lives, but the culture, and to the kingdom that is to come. And so, yeah, [inaudible 00:05:10], absolutely; we are grateful for you. And I know that on a day like this, there's a wide array of emotion that's conflicting, and so I want to pray for us and ask God to meet those needs. So would you join me.

Father in heaven, we look to you today we honor you, as we seek to honor women. It is a gift and we recognize it, and I pray for those in the room who have memories, they're thankful memories of a mother who was so kind and gracious to us.

I thank you for those in the room that are joyful that they are a mother. I pray for those in the room that were grieved because of a loss of a mother. I pray for those in the room who are feeling pain, maybe even envy, because they've not yet become a mother of their own children.

I pray Father for the single mothers in the room who are tired, maybe lonely, exhausted. And, God, I can also pray for those in the room who know that they're imperfect mothers, and so they feel a measure of pain in ways that maybe they've fallen short of the kind of writer they want to be, maybe that you want them to be.

I pray Father that you would deal with every single person in this room, including myself, and that you would address us where we need. As we look into your word, 1 Corinthians 13, as we look at this list of what love actually is, we want to represent you in the world.

And we want to do it accurately, and so would you fill us with your spirit, would you speak through weakness, and through all of the distractions that we bring into this room together. Would you help us now we pray in Christ's name? Amen.

So in your Bible, I would love for you to head over to 1 Corinthians chapter 13, we're also going to be in Colossians chapter 3. So if you can multitask, so you can turn to both of those places; if not, then just go to 1 Corinthians 13, we'll be there first.

Corinth was a city in the ancient world, which is where we get the word 'First Corinthians,' it's the first letter that Paul wrote to the church in Corinth. And Corinth was a pretty amazing city, it was sort of the Las Vegas of the ancient world. It was a place that was full of indulgence, and sin, and immorality, and sexuality was on full display in Corinth.

But it had something else in the city which was fascinating, and that was it was this urban center of commerce and industry that was really attractive to ambitious, talented, young, old professionals that wanted to come and see to test out their skill in the world; and so it was a place that a lot of people gathered.

Well the Apostle Paul, he sees Jesus resurrected from the dead and he wants people to know, in every city, that they can be forgiven of all of their sin, that that promised Messiah from Genesis that he had come; his name is Jesus. And he's died on a cross, and he's risen from the dead, and now he wants to tell everybody that they can be forgiven, and that they can enjoy a relationship with God.

And so he goes into Corinth, he preaches that Jesus rose from the dead, and many of these ambitious, talented people they come to faith in Christ. A church is actually formed, and Paul feels so compelled that he has to get to other cities that he leaves Corinth. He wants everybody else has who's never heard the gospel to be able to, so he leaves this church and the church does something that's so natural that we all do, and that is they reverted back to their old self.

Oh they had faith in Christ but, practically, when they were trying to live life and work out their relationships, is they began to lean on everything they had leaned on in order to become the amazing, young, ambitious, talented person that they were.

And here's the deal growth, spiritually, it can't be expedited; it's a patient process. Sometimes patience, it just stinks, we just don't want to do that, I want it now, I want to grow now, I want to be patient now, I want it to be easy now, I what about my relationships thrive now.

And so they did what we normally do and that is this: because patience, and because love, and because character, it can't be expedited, they just redefine spirituality to say, "Well no, it's not an internal thing that creates fruit in our life, we'll just create an external form, and we'll judge each other on the basis of if we fit our external mold." And the external mode was what do we do for God in serving him? What do we know about God? And what rules do we keep so that other people look at us and go, "Wow that's a really moral person?"

And so the whole book of Corinth ... This whole church and the book that Paul writes to them, it's a rebuke, and this is the rebuke: Paul listens to accounts of what's happening in the church and he says to them, basically this he says, "Because you can't control your old nature, you're just redefining what maturity looks like. And as a result of that, you're abrasive, and you're not kind, and you're not loving, and you're not patient. And yet you would know a lot of stuff about God, and you make all kinds of rules about God, and you serve before other people, and so by that you've said, 'I'm mature, look at me.'"

As a result of that, there was this distorted image. We've all seen sources and shadows, let me show you one of them right here. So what you see here, obviously, is a shadow of a handrail. If you were actually were able to see the handrail, it wouldn't look that jagged, would it? It would be straight, and yet the perspective that we get when light touches that handrail, and then it cast it oversteps, is it looks like it's all distorted; and this is Paul's point.

He says, "Listen, the greatest man who ever lived is the greatest who ever loved, and the greatest to ever love stood on this earth and he said this, 'By this all men, all people will know that you're my disciples, if you have love for one another.'" And so Paul looks at their lifestyle, they're suing one another, they're forming factions, they're fighting with one another, they're getting drunk at the Lord's Supper. I mean, it's an absolute moral train wreck within the church and Corinth.

And so he comes to him and he says, "Guys, let me show you a better way to live. It's going to take time to actually get there, because we're not just working on the externals, we're working on the internals. But if you do this, something will happen, which is irreplaceable." And that is you'll stop confusing your kids, and you'll stop confusing the world when they hear how much you know about God and yet you're still so abrasive to them. How you just taught Sunday school, and yet you yelled at them all the way home.

And so he says, "Let me show you a more excellent way away." A way that takes a long time, but it's worth it." And this is what he says, he says "Look if I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but have not love, I'm a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I have all faith as to remove mountains, but I have not love, I'm nothing. And If I give away all I have, and I can lift my own body up to the burned, but I have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient and kind, love does not envy or boast, it is not arrogant or rude, it doesn't insist on its own way, is not irritable or resentful, it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things, love never ends."

So we're going to take two months, and we're going to look at those words in verses four through seven. Last week we looked at the entire chapter, and today we want to tackle three words, 'Love is patient'. And I want to encourage you to be patient with our pace, okay? I realize you're like, "Seriously, you're going to take all this time? It's one paragraph, just get on with it." But isn't it just what we need if we feel impatient with the pace, to learn how to be patient people? Patience actually comes from two Greek words that are put together, makrothymía, is the word makro means long, thymia means suffer.

So some of your Bibles it says, instead of love is patient, it says love is what? Long-suffering; it's long-suffering. In other words, love has a really long fuse. Now you look at this fuse right here that's lit, and this is a reality. Anytime you're dealing with the word 'patience' as it relates to people, you have to deal and compensate, in the equation you have to put 'anger'.

Anger is part of it; there's no anger, there's no need for patience. That's when it's needed you see; it's a long fuse. There is a spark, there is an impulse, someone does something to us, it irritates us, it causes suffering, it causes suffering from someone else, that causes concern; all of a sudden we light up.

And here's the thing, patient people, they have a very, very long fuse that gives them time to respond in a healthy way so that they don't explode, so that their mouth doesn't explode, so that their facial expressions don't explode, so that their fists don't explode.

You see, when people are patient, what it means is they're compensating for anger. This is what anger is, anger is actually that ... I'm sorry, patience is anger under the control of grace. Let me say a different way, okay? When it says, "Love is patient." You could also say it this way, "Love maintains control ..." We're angry, but "Maintain control in the face of prolonged suffering and irritation."

So love being long-suffering, but it doesn't mean is you make someone suffer for a really long time, okay? It's when they're making you suffer, is that you're able to still respond with self control, and kindness, treat them like you wish that they would be treating you.

And so you can see that this has all kinds of applications with siblings, with marriage, with friendship, at work, when we see injustice in the world. Jesus says, "If you want to be my disciples, and if you want to show yourself that you're my disciples, if you want to represent me, this is one of the features of your life is you're going to have a short fuse." I'm sorry a long fuse, not a short fuse.

You're going to be patient with people. So what I want to do is I want to show you two individuals or these kinds of people. Then he says, "This is what I want you to be patient towards." And then we're going to look at how do we work with the Holy Spirit to become more patient over time.

So the audience or the one who receives our patience, Jesus spoke to in Matthew chapter 22, and this is what he says. A man walks up to him and he says, “Jesus, what’s the most important commandment?” Jesus says, “Well, the first is this, you gotta love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, strength.” He says, “This is the first and greatest commandment.”

And Jesus never sinned with his mouth, or anything else, but he never sinned with his mouth; so he never said anything he didn’t mean. Man asked for one question, and he gave him two answers. He goes, “But you know, I can’t talk about love for God unless we also talk about love for people.” So he says, “The second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

And so by doing this, what Jesus is doing is he’s saying, “Now this is who I’m calling you to be patient towards. The first is this, is that God calls us to be patient with him.” With him. If we’re to love God, and love is patient, then that means that we’re to be long-fused with God.

Psalms 37:7 says, “Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him.” And the reason that we all struggle, when we struggle being angry with God ... let me just ... Have you ever been angry with God, or been impatient with God? Have you ever said, “God, I’ve been praying for this and you still won’t do it”

If something bad ever happened, you look at God and say, “What gives? How come you’re doing that? How come you’re allowing that?” Then he says, “Look, I want you to be patient with me.” And the reason that we struggle with patience towards God, or love towards God is this, is we tend to judge God by the middle of our story instead of the end; the reason is because we don’t know the end.

But just think about this from scripture. Now I know a lot of you have read a lot of the Bible, some of you haven’t read very much. But there’s a man, his name is Moses, God comes to Moses and he says, “Listen, I’m going to call you to do some really important tasks, I want you to lead my people out of slavery into a land, you’re going to be their leader.”

And he says, “Look, who am I, and who are you, and who has the power to do this kind of thing?” And he says, “I tell you what, Moses, put your hand in your pocket.” And he sticks his hand in his cloak, in his pocket, all of a sudden he pulls it out, and his hand’s leprous. Now just imagine if that’s the only verse in the Bible that you have, what kind of judgments you’d make about God. Some of you, maybe that’s the first time you’ve ever heard that story like, “Really?” And if I formed an entire sermon and I said, “What a cruel god this is.

I can’t believe some people would actually want to sing to this person, and actually worship this person. He just says, “Hey listen, just put your hand ... All of a sudden, he tricks him and he just makes him leprous. Look, if that was the text, I’d stand here before all of you and say, “Don’t put your hands in your pocket. Okay, don’t do that.”

Some of you, right now, you're saying, "Okay, well I know the rest of the story, so say the rest of the story. Why don't you tell them that God had him put his hand in again, and pulled it out again and it was now healed. And God did both of those miracles in order to show him, and us, that he has the power to liberate people from slavery, all kinds of slavery; from people and sin. Tell them that part."

Now why do you care so much that I finish the story? It's because you don't want people to make a judgment about God without knowing the end. Now here's the deal, we're all in the middle of our story; this is the worst time to scrutinize God's plan, this is the worst time.

Think if you just made an evaluation of God in the middle of Ruth's story; she loses everything. What kind of God would allow that to happen? Or Joseph, he just got sold into slavery by his brothers. How about Jesus, the only innocent man who ever walked the earth, he's crucified on a cross.

God why would you allow that to happen to your own son? You have to get to the end of the story. That same God rose Jesus from the dead in order to give you and I eternal life, so that we could be forgiven of all of our sin. You see, we're all in the middle of our story, so be long-fused with God.

Romans 8:28, "We know that for those who love God, all things work together for good for those who are called according to His purpose." You know it's interesting when my son was two months old, he was diagnosed with a significant tumor on his spinal cord; no surgery, he'd never walk. We didn't know if he'd ever walk. He actually does walk, but it was 18 months when he stood up, first time; we was going to have for a long, long time. You know last month, I went to his track meet. Now listen to me, yeah, it's pretty cool to hear this.

Had I told you the things that I told God when I first found out, I would scrutinize God before you in a way that was not accurate. And so if we're going to be loving God with all of our heart, we have to be patient with God with all the heart. And if we're going to be patient with God with all the heart, then we have to wait to scrutinize. Because one day it's going to be shown that everything that he allowed was for a purpose that was good, and pleasant, and perfect.

So God calls us to patient with him and, second, he calls us to be patient with others. We can't separate love for God and man, because he said, "The second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself." And what you find in this book of Corinthians, when they're suing one another, and when they're hurting one another, there's forming factions with one another, they're not thinking about each other, they're thinking about themselves, is that each one. ... Somebody inside, it's someone's anger, and it was the response that Paul was addressing.

So if we're to love people, we're supposed to be patient with them. Then what that means is we have to be patient when the people cause us anger. And if you say, "You know, anger just shouldn't be a part of your life." It's simply not true. In fact, if you don't get angry for the rest of your life, the Bible would actually call that sin. Let me show you why. Ephesians chapter four, verse 26 says, "Be angry and do not sin." And here's what he says, 'be angry' is actually an imperative, which means that there are simply times on the earth when it is right to get angry, and it is wrong not to get angry.

But he says and so anger should rise in our heart, and the reason is because anger is our protective arm towards whatever is threatening what we love. If you say, "I don't want anger." It means you can't ever love anybody. You say, "I don't want to worship a God that gets angry." Then you want to worship a God who can't love, because anger is simply the protective impulse, within our heart, that God put there. When we see something that ... You're threatening my child right now, I don't just act, I act because anger is compelling to act.

But he says, "Now when you get angry, don't sin." Because this is how God is. Psalm 7, verse 11 says, "God is a righteous judge, a God who feels indignation every day." Think about that for a second. Some of you haven't felt the indignation today, did you know God has? He says he looks down upon the earth and all these people that spurn him, that scorn him, that belittle him, that don't believe in him. And it says that he feels indignation, why? Because he loves his glory, he loves his son, he loves people, and when all of these things are assaulted, his love rises up; because his anger rises up.

And so what's amazing about God is he always responds in love. What does Jesus say? He goes, "Look, even people who don't love me and don't love God, they still get rain and they get sunlight too." He didn't say, "Oh, you don't love me? No rain for you. None for you." No, he puts rain on everybody's farm; sunlight, everybody gets it. And then even says, "Those who don't believe me, you don't believe my son? That's threatening something I love deeply." But this is what he says in 2 Peter 3:9, "He's patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance."

He's trying to give us opportunity, and so this is what's happening, when we feel love we're supposed to respond in like kind. God is never indifferent towards things that threaten his love, and we're not supposed to be indifferent either. Romans 12:9 says this, it says, "Let love be genuine." And then he tells us how is love genuine. He says, "Abhor what is evil." It means hate what is evil, get angry over evil, "And hold fast to what is good."

And so if we saw something taking place that was clearly wrong towards people, and I was indifferent about it, you may wrongly conclude, “Wow, look how patient he is and the face of injustice; he’s so patient.” But if it’s driven by indifference, it’s not love at all. Now let me tell you what love is, and what patience. Patience is when felt anger rises in our heart, but then that anger comes under the control with God’s grace, causing us to resist retaliation, causing us to pray for our enemies, causing us to treat others as we want to be treated.

And so we’re supposed to love God and man and, in doing that, we’re supposed to be patient. When we either don’t understand what one person is doing, or when the other is actually inflicting harm upon us. Now the question is what how in the world are we going to pull that off? I mean, this is an impossibility, this is what he’s talking about.

That’s why last Sunday, if you were here, I brought up a red ball, because our impulse is this all right, “He wants patience, I’m going to be patient.” It’s what we do, is we take our nature and we try to constrict it, “I’m going to be patient today, I am going to be so patient today. I’m going to drive patient, I’m going to talk patient, I’m going to work patient, I’m gonna be so patient today.” And all of a sudden you get tired trying to constrict it, so you relax and what happens? Your nature reverts back to its original shape, and you become impatient.

So here’s the big question of the New Testament. If Jesus rose from the dead, and Ephesians says we have the same power that it took to raise him from the dead to live a new kind of life in him, then how is it possible that instead of us trying to just manufacture white knuckle patience, how do we actually change on the inside so the patience becomes as natural as, now, impatience is?

I mean, won’t that be amazing? You get angry and, all of a sudden, your impulse is just patience, “I’m going to be patient.” That’s what heaven’s going to be like. I don’t know how we’ll getting angry there, but we’re going to be patient there, I know that right? Anyway, so how do we grow in patience? And this is where we turn to Colossians chapter three.

He says in verse one, “You’ve been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above.” So this is what he’s saying. The whole context of Colossians chapter three is Jesus rose from the dead, you believe in Jesus rising from the dead, his Spirit now lives within you, so how now do you grow?

And this is what he talks about, verse five, “Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, greed, which is idolatry. On account of these, the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked when you were living in them, but now you must put them all away anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another seeing that you put off the old self with its practices, and have put on the self which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Here there is not Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free but Christ is and in all. Put on, then, as God's chosen ones holy and beloved compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bearing with one another, and if one has complaint against another, forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all, put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony."

So how do we change? I'm going to give you a few applications here before we sing. And let me just say every single one of them, if there's one thing you're like, "I don't know ..." The whole point is slow down. We simply live too fast because we care about making money and doing something with our life instead of being personal. Everything I'm going to tell you, it takes time; character cannot be expedited, patience cannot be expedited; we have to go slow.

The first thing that he would tell us to do is to examine our heart. And that's because the first thing God always tells us to do is examine our heart. He never says here, "All right now, white knuckle it, get some patients, go get it." No, what he does is he leads us on a deep dive of our own heart. And he said, "I want you to examine your heart, examine your responses, you can't see your heart, but you can see the fruit that comes from that heart."

The fruit of the Holy Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness self control. That's the things that are born on our life, in our relationships, in our mouth. It's what we say, it's what we do, it's what we think when the Holy Spirit has full control over our life; it's what comes naturally.

So here's the question when you think about your life. How did you first respond, what was your first impulse the last time somebody pulled out in front of you, or someone was late to the meeting you called, were unprepared for it? What was your last impulse when your child, or spouse, or friend, or whoever disrespected you or disrespected someone else?

You see if you're like me, what you're going to find is that there's impatience within your heart, and this is the hope. I have some good relationships in my life, and you probably have some too. But just imagine that if we could all grow in patience, step by step, a little bit; think about how much sweeter those relationships will be.

So the very first thing he says is, "Look within, you got to look within. See what's in the heart." Second thing is this is he would tell us, "To ask God, or to pray, to renew our mind as we repent and obey." Now, there's a lot of metaphors in this point so try to hold on with me, okay?

When we trust Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, he leads us to a school where we grow. And part of being in this school is he looks at us, and we show up at the school, and we got our old clothes on and he goes, "All right, those clothes aren't going to work anymore, I want you to wear these."

And so what he does, throughout the process, is he talks about this put off these old things, and put on these new things. This is what he's talking about, it's a process of repentance where we turn from sin and obedience, when we put on the new character in the likeness of our Creator; this is how it works.

You're in a relationship they say something rude and, suddenly, anger flairs. Now what are you going to do next? You look down and you see that old shirt, it's interesting when we start, the old shirt feels more comfortable than the new shirt. We know how to do that shirt, we know how to respond, we know how to just crush somebody.

And so he goes, "Look, when you see all those old attitudes and all those behaviors, you got to put that off." That's what he said, "You got to take that off." Because then you put on a new shirt. Put on patient, wait long enough, respond in a healthy way.

And so, I want you to think about this for a second. It's true like anything else, the more skilled we get, and the more practice we have in looking down, of living slow enough in our relationships that when we're about to respond, that we look down at our ... And we go, "Wait a minute, I'm in my old shirt. I need to take that off and put a new shirt on. The new shirt, in Christ."

This is what happens. The more of accustomed you are with changing those kind of spiritual clothes, the more the new shirt will feel most comfortable; and this is the growth that we walk through with Jesus. And so the question is this. Well then how do you find the motivation in the moment? I want to crush somebody right now, they just made me angry; so, how I find that motivation?"

And it's interesting that Paul loves this metaphor of 'putting things off and putting things on' and so he talks about it also in the book of Ephesians. And what he does there is he connects these two with a bridge, and the bridge is this, Ephesians 4:23, "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind."

That's why the point is, let's pray that God would renew our mind as we repent and obey. And here's the point, "All right, you're saying a lot of words right now, make it all stick." When he says, "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind." What that is ... That's our imagination.

And so whatever captures our imagination, governs our behavior. Whatever captures your imagination, in the moment, is what you're going to act upon. So let's just say that you tell your kid, "No." And your kid responds, "You always say 'no', you're so selfish, you'd never do anything for my good." And anger erupts.

Now whatever captures your imagination, in that moment ... That's why you got to live slow enough to see what you're imagining. Whatever captured your imagination in that moment is going to govern the set of clothes you're going to wear as you respond; whether it's going to be old clothes or new clothes.

And if you can only imagine, in that moment, retaliation, and there's a good chance what you're going to do is not only deal with the person, you're going to carpet bomb everything. You're going to blow up not only that sin, but you're going to blow up the kid, and if there happens to be other siblings in the room, they get a piece of it too.

And I'm so angry, I'm going to get the mail, and there's the mailman and he gets a piece of it too and all, and we're just angry; we're dropping bombs everywhere. If you can only imagine, in that moment, retaliation and that's what we act upon, but if in that moment you can imagine redemption, striking the sin instead of the person.

An enjoyable night together with my child or my spouse or a friend, it's not just laced with tension because of how I respond so poorly right now, that what you're going to find is this, is that you're going to find the resources to put off rage and to put on patients allowing you to strike the sin and save the kid. You say, "Now what happens if the injury to me is simply too deep?" And that's why verse 11 is there. He says, "Here there's not Greek or Jews, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarians, Scythian, slave or free."

What's he saying here? He's highlighting the most intense ethnic and racial rivalries of the day. People who hate each other, there's walls, they're just constantly throwing bombs, they just look at each other on the basis of skin color or ethnicity. They say, "Man, I just can't stand you." And this is what he's saying, this is the new life in Jesus Christ.

Is it all that distorts our perception of people, it all goes away. Why, because we see everybody that's created in the image of God. We see everyone's important, we see injustice to any human being is absolutely out of place. And when we cooperate with the Holy Spirit, and we're angry what happens is he leads us to repent, he leads us to obey, he leads us to treat people like image bearers, he leads us to be patient with people. It's possible.

Third is this, is let's be slow with people. I gotta be quick here, but this is such a valuable point is people are so valuable; they're also very breakable. And so Paul says what? Bear with one another, bear with another. What that means is love needs time to discern an appropriate response.

Let me show you a verse, this is so monumental, I would love to have more time on this but I just don't. But this is what he says, he says "Admonish the idle, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak, and be patient with them all." I want you to think about what he said.

There's three different kinds of people, there's idle people; they don't want to work they want to be lazy. There's faint-hearted people; they want to work but, for some reason, there's just the lack of courage, or something that ... They're strong enough, they just can't bring themselves to do it. And there's weak people. Weak people are people that want to do it, they have the courage to do it, but maybe simply don't have enough strength to pick up the bucket.

So here's the deal. Idle people, faint-hearted people, weak people throw problems to us in a moment. If we live fast with people, this is what we'll do, we will not be discriminate in the response that we give; and so we'll mix them all up.

Each one of those people has an appropriate response, and so what we'll do is this. Idle people, they needed admonishment; they don't need help. People that don't want to work, the Bible says don't let him eat. And, all of a sudden, they'll be really inclined to work.

He also says this, he goes, "And you know, for faint-hearted people, what they need is courage." They don't need admonishment, they need courage; and so give them courage. Weak people are someone, "I have enough courage to pick up the bucket, I want to pick up the bucket, I can't pick up the bucket; so what they need is help.

If we live fast with people, what we'll do is we'll mix up the appropriate responses with the need because we're not being patient with anybody. But if we live slow, we'll give an appropriate response to the right problem that the person has, and it will better our relationships; but you got to move slow.

Last thing is this, is we got to keep our eyes on Jesus; at least one of them. And when I say 'one of them', the Bible says fix our eyes on Jesus, both eyes well. Yeah, well, do that too. Okay, fix both eyes, but make sure you put one on, and this is why.

When I'm looking at my wife, or I'm looking at my children, I'm looking at people that I'm working with. I am focused on somebody, and as I'm focused on somebody, I need to remember in my interactions with you, there's someone else's whose modeled the love for, and has given me love, has been patient with me, and I can replicate that only because he's first given it to me.

You see, Jesus Christ is remarkable, if you really think about it. Every single one of us have looked at somebody on the earth and said, "I am so done with you." Did you know that Jesus has never said that about you? Never once.

You know, we sinned against God and he felt anger, but instead of imagining retaliation, he imagined redemption; and so he sent his son to rescue us. He lived without sin, he went to a cross to die for our sin, he rose from the dead. But when he was on the cross, not only did he receive more of our anger, he also received the father's anger that was directed towards us.

And you know why he did all this? He did it because he's long-suffering, he's patient. 1 John 4:9 says, "We love because he first loved us." So what this means is this, is for those of you in the room who know Christ as Savior and Lord, you got to keep one eye on him, as you're keeping an eye on people in your relationships because you see how to treat other people by the way that he's treated us.

And if you've never trusted Christ, we welcome you to trust him today, because he is willing to forgive you of all of your sin, including your patience, he'll give you a new life, and he'll give you the resources so that you can live a new kind of life and experience life and relationships in a way that you never thought possible. So we commend you as a church family to Jesus, so let me pray for us okay?

Father in heaven we thank you for your kindness to us, the kindness that leads us to repentance. And we pray now Father, that as we sing to you, we want to acknowledge that you are the one who is worthy. We confess to you, Father, that we are deeply in need of your grace and we deeply want to represent you in the world in an accurate way.

So would you continue to work in our life to help us to become patient with people, patient with you? As we sing to you now and as we give, we pray that these gifts, our energy, our attention, our resources Lord that they would glorify your son. We pray all of this in Christ's name. Amen.



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