

THE WAITING GOD

2 Peter 3:1-15

Introduction

If patience is a virtue, it is one virtue modern man has lost. In this “up-to-the-minute” world there are very few things for which we are willing to wait. Somewhere in our headlong rush into the future we have forgotten how to wait. Dear God, please grant me patience. And I want it right now.

In direct contrast to this is the testimony of scripture that the Almighty Creator of the universe is a God who waits. For a people who have lost the meaning of the word it is sometimes hard to understand.

I. **The Mystery of God’s Patience**

A. God’s patience was hard for the early church to understand.

1. God had made certain promises about the future and, as yet, nothing had happened. Scoffers were beginning to arise saying, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised?” (v. 4).
2. Some Christians were growing impatient, and some were actually considering falling away from the church.

B. Peter writes to correct their mistaken notions about God’s “slowness” to act.

1. He points out that God does not see time as we do. To the eternal Creator “a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day” (v. 8).
2. God’s patience does not imply His powerlessness. His is a power which intentionally withholds itself for the benefit of man.
3. God’s patience does not imply His abandonment of His children. The parables of Jesus make it clear that God’s patience is purposeful. Jesus frequently tells stories of a farmer or master who travels to a far country leaving his goods in the hands of servants and who, as often as not, delays his return, waiting to see what His servants will do in His absence.

C. When we pray for God to do something and do it now, we need to remember that His perspective on what needs to be done and when may be quite different from our own.

II. **The Meaning of God's Patience**

A. God waits with a benevolent kindness that lets us share in His work.

1. At the heart of our impatience with others is the idea that "I could do it better and faster and better myself."
2. Think of how tempting that thought must be to God! There is nothing that we can do that God could not do far better and much more quickly. Yet He invites us to participate in the unfolding of His saving will. If we are impatient with God, how much more impatient He must be with us.

B. God waits because His coming will end all things.

1. This text is set against a throne of judgment. When He finally comes, He will come to judge. There will be a finality to it which will end all opportunities for repentance.
2. Instead of resenting God's patience we should rejoice in it. It continues to give us and those we love the opportunity to escape His judgment.

C. God waits because He loves us and wants us all to be saved.

1. The church has asked for God's coming many times in its history. But God has waited, and millions more have responded to the gospel.
2. It is really not God who keeps us waiting, but those who keep Him waiting by their resistance to His saving truth.

Conclusion

With every tick of the clock of eternity that God in His patience allows He is saying, "I love you and I want you to be saved." He stands at the door and knocks waiting for us to answer. We have made Him wait long enough.

Illustration

Martin Luther could not understand how God could be so patient with men. He said that if he were God and the world had treated him as it treated God, he would have kicked the wretched thing to pieces. I'm glad that Martin Luther was not God.

George Bernard Shaw was once asked what he would have done if he were in charge when the great flood came and his reply was, "I would have let them all drown!"

A man's car stalled in the heavy traffic as the light turned green. All his efforts to start the engine failed, and a chorus of honking behind him made matters worse. He finally got out of his car and walked back to the first driver and said, "I'm sorry, but I can't seem to get my car started. If you'll go up there and give it a try, I'll stay here and blow your horn for you.

Annual cost of running red lights (in medical bills, car repairs, etc.): \$7 billion.
Average amount of time saved by running a red light: 50 seconds.