



Lecture 3

Supernatural Patience (Long-suffering)

The life of Christ

The believer in Jesus Christ receives the very life of God, His divine nature. This supernatural life is bestowed to every believer to produce the fruits of the Holy Spirit through obedience. God's generosity is demonstrated in the following Scriptures:

2 Peter 1:4

“by means of which [glory and virtue] there have been generously given to us the precious and exceedingly great promises in order that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped by flight the corruption which is in the world in the sphere of passionate cravings”.

1 Thessalonians 1:3

“remembering unceasingly your work produced and characterized by the faith which is yours, and your toil motivated and characterized by your divine and self-sacrificial love, and your patient endurance under trials which finds its source in your hope which rests in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God, even the Father.”

JESUS SHINING THROUGH US

1 Peter 3:9

“not giving back evil in exchange for evil, or verbal abuse in exchange for verbal abuse, but instead, on the contrary, be constantly blessing, since for this very purpose you were called, that you might inherit a blessing.”

A long-suffering person does not retaliate or punish, but rather has the capacity to exercise grace towards anyone, even enemies. This person will enjoy the fruits of a life dedicated to Jesus with joy, peace and a fulfilled life, i.e. the abundant life Jesus promised us.

Longsuffering is not simply suffering for a long time, but is a specific word used in the Bible. That word, combining the Greek words for "long" and "temper," more fully means to be slow to anger; as believers we can overcome anger by the power of the Holy Spirit and the love of God.

SLOW TO ANGER

Psalm 103:8

**“The Lord is compassionate and gracious,
Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness”.**

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By the grace of God, we can forgive and even love our enemies.

Matthew 5:43-44

“You heard that it was said, You shall love your friend and hate the one who is hostile to you, hates you, and opposes you. But, as for myself, I am saying to you, be loving with a divine, self-sacrificial love those who are hostile to you and hate and oppose you, and be praying for those who are persecuting you.”

DON'T BE IMPATIENT WITH GOD

I have personally experienced getting impatient with God as I expected prayers to be answered “in my time.” There have also been times where I have expected God’s swift intervention in particular situations, or His provision in difficult financial times. One thing I have surely learnt is that God is never too late. He cares for us and He intervenes in His infinite wisdom.

I also have seen throughout the years how many Christians lose heart and get impatient with God. This can cause the following:

- 1) Doubting God and consequently giving up, not having faith to receive from God in His time
- 2) Confusion, leading to ongoing doubt
- 3) Double-mindedness, resulting the blessing from God being hindered

James 1:6-8

“But let him be presenting his request in a trusting attitude, not in an expression of that hesitation which vacillates [between faith and unbelief and inclines toward unbelief], for the person who vacillates [between faith and unbelief] is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind;⁷ for let not that individual be supposing that he shall receive anything from the presence of the Lord,⁸ [being] a dubious, undecided man, vacillating in all his ways”

4) Waiting on God requires humility and unwavering faith. In the case of healing of the body or of the soul, for example, many Christians have lost their blessing because of giving up and not being willing to wait on God. In many cases there is ignorance, not knowing God’s Word accurately; this will lead to unbelief. Healing often occurs gradually and it requires us to be patient and trust God. The key is keeping the seed of the Word of God in our hearts and expecting results no matter how long it takes.

It has to be God’s timing, not ours. God knows best what is good for us and when.

I have seen some Christians getting angry with God because He does not do what they expect from Him. Instead of coming from a heart of humility and submission to God, they are self-centred and short-sighted, becoming frustrated if God does not answer them in the way in which they expect or demand.

In the counselling room I have witnessed too many times how some Christians think they have the right to get angry with God because “their will” is not done. Whatever happened to seeking God’s will?

Our heavenly Father knows what is best for us. Trust is essential in experiencing God’s blessings. When we put God first, we will go from blessing to blessing.