

Be Patient, the Lord Is Coming - Part 2

by Alistair Begg

This sermon emphasizes the importance of patience in the face of injustice and suffering, and encourages believers to wait confidently for the Lord's return.

Duration: 41:14

Scripture: Acts 17:31, Romans 2:4, James 5:7, James 5:9-11, 1 Peter 1:3

Topics: "Lord's Coming"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not living separated from God in eternity. He highlights God's compassion and mercy towards humanity, urging believers to show the same kindness, tolerance, and patience towards others. The preacher also discusses the return of Jesus Christ, emphasizing the unpredictability of the day and the need to focus on its centrality and reality. He encourages teaching children songs that convey important lessons and provides examples from the Bible, such as the farmer, to illustrate the importance of patience and hard work.

Transcript

The following message by Alistair Begg is made available by Truth For Life. For more information, visit us online at truthforlife.org. As we prepare to turn to the Bible, gracious God, we ask that you will give to us clarity and a deep sense of understanding, so that in finding out the truth of your word, we may bow before it and live in the fullness of it. For Jesus Christ's sake we ask it.

Amen. Please be seated, and I invite you to turn again to the verses that we were in this morning, which is verse 7 of James chapter 5. It's page 856 in our Pew Bibles. I think it's profitable for me just to read them again.

Some were not present this morning, and so they don't have them in mind. James 5, verse 7. And be patient then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains.

You too be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The judge is standing at the door.

Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's

perseverance, and have seen what the Lord finally brought about.

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy. Well, as we return to this, I say again to you, let us beware the paragraph break that is there in most of our texts between verse 6 and verse 7. It is vitally important that we recognize that what James goes on to say, beginning in the 7th verse, he says in the context of all that he has just said in verses 1 to 6. In other words, the response of these believers to oppression and to injustice is to be governed by their understanding of God's sovereignty, and particularly understanding of the fact that the next thing on the calendar of God, if you like, is the return of Jesus himself. That is the significance of the third word in your English text there in verse 7, be patient then, or it could also be be patient therefore, allowing us to make sure that in our study of this call to patience, we do not divorce it from that which has already been said.

The cries of the harvesters, we have learned, have reached the ears of God, and he will, in his time, ensure that the oppressors will be punished. And so, James says, in light of the fact that you know that this is a dead certainty, you must guard against becoming impatient, faint-hearted grumblers. Now, I want to look at this with you, because I think that here we have three straightforward temptations that he urges his readers to avoid.

We'll follow that with three examples that he gives, and so on. But for now, notice these three temptations. The first is obvious, isn't it? The temptation to impatience.

So, when the Bible gives a positive, an imperative like this, be patient, what he's saying is, don't be impatient. He could have said it either way. The temptation is to impatience, and the requirement is of patience.

He mentions it consistently here, twice in verse 7, then again in verse 8, and in verse 10, and in verse 11. And although he bounces between two Greek words, and in certain instances you will find it as perseverance, and elsewhere as patience, the inference remains the same. And what James is alerting his readers to is something that we're all familiar with, if we're honest, and that is the danger that is represented to the people of God in the face of injustice.

One of my great heroes politically is Winston Churchill, and in the most recent work that I read of him, written by someone else, they said that one of the things that marked Churchill out more than anything else was his absolute hatred of injustice in any shape or form. It absolutely fried him, and it caused him to intervene in causes most unlike him, and yet all because of injustice. And I don't think any of us like injustice.

We don't like it when we see it. We certainly don't like ourselves if we're ever involved in it. And the temptation to try and take matters into our own hands in the face of injustice is as real for us today as it was for the initial readers of this letter.

Be patient. Impatient. Impatient with whom? Well, it's possible that they were growing impatient with God, isn't it? Because they had a time scale, and God wasn't operating according to their time scale.

Have you ever felt that way? You're impatient because God has made a promise, but he doesn't seem to keep it in the time that we would like. And so we find ourselves, completely wrongly, growing impatient with God. He needs to do something, and he needs to do something immediately.

In the same way, we may grow impatient with those who are the source of injustice, which is probably the most likely element that is represented here. Faced by the rich oppressors, realizing how well they seem to be doing and how poor these believers were doing, they would be tempted very severely to take matters into their own hands. And for impatience to reveal itself in their becoming avengers and retaliators.

They had read the psalmist who prophesied that the rich are going to be set down from their seats and the mighty are going to be disrobed of their evidences of power. And now a circumstance like this confronts these believers. And they find themselves saying, if God is not going to bring these people down, maybe we should just go and bring them down.

If God is not going to do something here to deal with this oppression, maybe we'll just go and do something about it. That's not so far removed from the 21st century, is it? The bombing of abortion clinics, the intervention in the civil processes of life, the attempt to forestall justice or to initiate a form of justice that runs round the rule of law itself. Now, we understand that this has a particular ring for the believers who are reading it, but it is a real ring for us as well.

Loss of patience far too easily gives rise to vengeance and to vindictiveness, produces a form of vitriol and anger, which is not to be any part of the Christian believer's testimony. Or, I suppose the other side of the coin would be that instead of it producing anger, it simply produces apathy. And people become unbelieving, they become despairing, and they are completely disinterested in what is going on.

Well, that's the first temptation, to avoid impatience. And along with it, secondly, faint-heartedness. If you look at verse 8, you too be patient and stand firm.

If you have an authorized version, it says something like, and establish your hearts, or establish your hearts. Be patient and establish your hearts. Now, the issue is obvious, isn't it? Because what is it that strikes fearfulness into the human heart? What is it that brings anxiety to us, if it isn't uncertainty about eventual outcomes? It is the uncertainty about the eventuality that makes us faint-hearted in the experience of the condition.

So, for example, if you knew for sure that the diagnosis you were about to receive would result in treatment and complete healing, so that you would live for another hundred years, the diagnosis would ultimately hold no alarm for you. The inconvenience, the fearfulness attached to whatever the condition was, or whatever treatment was necessary, would actually be lost sight of, because of the fact that at the end of the line, we knew, guaranteed, certainly, that we would be cured, that we would be healed, and that all would be well for the foreseeable future. But given that we have no knowledge of that, then the anxiety may produce the kind of faint-heartedness that James warns against here.

The verb in the Greek actually conveys the idea of tying something down, or making something secure. Phillips paraphrases it, resting your hearts on the ultimate certainty. Resting your hearts on the ultimate certainty.

So, you see what James is doing. He's saying, although right now you may be oppressed, although right now things may not be the way that you would wish them to be, you need to rest your hearts in the ultimate certainty. I'm warning you, I'm urging you to make sure that you don't grow faint-hearted, that you don't grow weary.

And the way to handle this is to look to that which is absolutely certain. And what is absolutely certain, he says, is that the Lord will come. He will come in power and He will come in glory, as his colleagues say in the rest of the New Testament letters.

And what James is doing is reinforcing really what the writer to the Hebrews does quite frequently in the course of Hebrews. Hebrews 10 and verse 35. So, do not throw away your confidence, he says to them.

It will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised. You need to know that you will receive what He has promised.

And then he goes on and he says, He who is coming will not delay. That's the certainty. But my righteous one will live by faith.

And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him. But, he says, this is the come on, you see, of the leader. This is the encouragement of the pastor.

But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed. Brackets, are we? No. We are those who believe and are saved.

And in the midst of such affirmations, the temptation that accompanies the temptation to impatience is the temptation to a loss of heart. And what James is affirming is not that we should get caught up in various theories concerning the timing of the return of Jesus, and we'll come to that in a moment, but rather that we should focus on the promised fact. He, the Lord of glory, will return.

Third temptation to be avoided is grumbling. Grumbling. Be patient and stand firm because the Lord's coming is near.

Don't grumble against each other, brothers or brothers and sisters. It happens all the time, doesn't it? Pressure from the outside comes to a family or to a business, and suddenly, the people frustrated by their inability to tackle the oppression that comes from without, start to blame everybody within. Well, I think this... Well, if you hadn't... Well, why didn't you... Well, if you had... And all of a sudden, the cats among the pigeons, and all the people who are supposed to be united against the common enemy have started to grumble against one another.

That's one of the roles of parents. To constantly... However many children you have, frankly, you only need one. But if you've got more than one, they may grumble not simply to themselves, but to grumble against one another, and they will grumble about one another, and they will grumble in front of others as well.

And it's not nice. It's ugly. It's distasteful.

It's usually unfounded. And it certainly is not the kind of thing that encourages people to come back for another visit to your home on a Tuesday night. Just recognizing the problem is to get a jump start on it.

Because, you see, whenever the tide turns against the people of God, there is a strange dimension in humanity that even finds a weird comfort in blaming those who plainly aren't responsible for our predicament. We know that it wasn't you, or it isn't you. But we can't get to them.

And so it just makes me feel better to get to you. Well, no, says James, you mustn't be doing that. And the warning of James is akin to the words of Jesus in Matthew 7. Judge not that you be not judged.

Don't get into such a grumbling affair. And he said much, hasn't he, in this letter about the tongue. And grumbling is one of the misuses, the abuses of our tongues.

I wrote down in my notes a quote with which each of us are now familiar. It just seemed to me apropos. Where the writer, whether it was Charles Simeon or John Newton or someone like that, he wrote in his journal, I resolved never to do anything that I wouldn't do if I knew it to be the last hour of my life.

And I made a mental note to say to myself, I need to change this or put an addendum to it for me, which reads, resolved never to say anything I wouldn't say if I knew it to be the last hour of my life. Those of us who are verbal, those of us who are vocal, face this temptation daily and gravely. And so James utters this straightforward directive because God takes grumbling seriously.

I'll just give you one cross-reference to reinforce this. I'll quote to you from 1 Corinthians 10, and I'll read the preceding statement so that we have an idea of the location of God's concern about grumbling. This is 1 Corinthians 10, 7. Do not be idolaters, as some of them, whereas it is written the people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry.

We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and one day 23,000 of them died. We should not test the Lord, as some of them did, and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble, as some of them did, and were killed by the destroying angel.

It's interesting, isn't it? They say, well, I'm not an idolater. I'm not involved in sexual immorality. How about grumbler? You see, there is both a warning and an encouragement in directing us to these temptations.

I know you're very tired of me saying, in Scotland we used to sing. They perhaps put that on my tombstone. I have a little player, an iPod, and you can hang it over it and people can just plug it in.

Listen to all the hymns they wish I'd never told them about. But I'm constantly amazed at how much essential biblical truth was reinforced for me in my growing years by little songs. Not all genius songs theologically, but the song that immediately came to mind went like this, and we would sing it as children.

Come leave your house in Grumble Street and move to Sunshine Square. For that's the place where Jesus lives and all is happy there. Teach your children songs.

From the temptations to be avoided, then to the examples to be followed. Three examples, they're there in the text. Number one, the farmer.

Having given the exhortation to be patient, he then gives the illustration. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its precious, valuable crop, and how patient he is as he waits for the rains to come. There's a lot of hard work involved in arable farming.

Some of you have grown up on farms, and you know that to be the case. The farmer and his helpers do their part. They work as hard as they possibly can, but when all of their part is done, they have to wait.

And they have to wait, in this instance, for the rains to come in autumn so that the seed will germinate, and then, in the springtime, for further rain, so that that which is germinated and sprouted may now be brought to maturity. And what they're waiting for is valuable, you will notice. It is precious.

They're waiting for a crop, which in subsistence level farming is peculiarly precious, because life depends upon it. They're not just growing multiple crops for the well-being of the community, but for the small

farmer, that which he grows will in part be the food for his own table. And so he waits, and he waits patiently.

And so the point of application is clear. And you believers, says James, you need to wait also patiently. You need to wait in confident expectation that Christ will return just as He has promised.

And then secondly, the prophets. The prophets, verse 10. Brothers, as an example of patience, particularly in the face of suffering, take the prophets.

What did they do? We're told. Who spoke in the name of the Lord. There were, of course, false prophets who did not speak in the name of the Lord.

They healed the people's sins lightly, or at least they tried to. People liked them. They would ask them to come and speak and sing to them and so on.

Tell us more of this material. But the prophets, the true prophets of God, who spoke in the name of the Lord, they were not popular. They were not popular.

They were not raising the huge crowds. They were saying what God told them to say. And as a result of that, they are a classic example of the suffering which comes from such obedience and of the patience that James calls for in their experience.

I won't turn to these passages, but if you're making a brief note, let me just give you, for example, for your homework, Elijah in 1 Kings chapter 18, Jeremiah in that classic story, remember, of him being put down into the cistern, into the dry cistern in Jeremiah 38, the response of people to Amos in chapter 7 and so on. In fact, it's so comprehensive was the reaction of people to the prophets that when Stephen gives his great historical sermon before he is martyred, he actually looks the Jews in the eye and he says to them, Was there ever a prophet your fathers didn't persecute? Was there ever a prophet that they didn't persecute? He said, Think about it. And so James employs this.

And once again, the echo of the words of Jesus when you look there at verse 11. As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. Where do you think James got that from? Well, probably just from Jesus.

Don't you think? Again, Matthew 5. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. And then a third example is the example of Job. We've all grown up, haven't we, knowing about... That was the thing that's usually said at weddings.

I haven't heard it said here, but in the UK, if somebody's offering a blessing, as it were, to the couple, they say to them, and as you step out into life together, we wish you the wisdom of Solomon, the patience of Job, and the children of Israel. Well, it's the patience of Job which is our example here. And when you read the story of Job, you can't but marvel at his patience and his perseverance, especially when he couldn't understand, especially when his friends weren't making much of a job of helping him out either.

But if you go to the book of Job, and you just dip into it, you will find with relative ease that jumping out at you are all kinds of soundbites that will reinforce the reason for James employing Job as an illustration of patience. For example, Job chapter 1. And Job tore his robe and shaved his head and fell to the ground in worship. And he said, Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall depart.

The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. May the name of the Lord be praised. And in all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

What a wonderful example of patience. Chapter 2. And in verse 10. Well, look at 9. His wife said to him, Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die.

Well, that's what you want in a wife, isn't it? And here's the only response for such a foolish idea. He replied, You're talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God and not trouble? God is a sovereign God.

Are we only going to accept good from Him and not trouble from Him? And in all this, again, notice the summary statement at the end of 2. In the end of verse 10. In all this, Job did not sin in what he said. And then you can go on through.

13. Though He slay me, yet I will trust Him. And right at the very end.

My ears had heard you, but now my eyes have seen you. I had heard all about you. I knew all about these truths.

But when I started to lose things, when I started to lose my stuff, when I started to lose my health, when I started to lose my business, when I lost the affection and the companionship of my children, then what I had heard with my ears became what I now saw through my eyes. And so he says, I repent in dust and in ashes. Well, we need to finish, don't we? Those then are the three examples for us to follow.

And then finally, just two truths that undergird all of this for us. Two truths of which we need to be reminded. Truth number one, the Lord is coming.

The Lord is coming. We noted this morning, and we reinforce it, that He mentions this with frequency in the space of these few verses. And in His emphasis, He ties in with the rest of the Bible, particularly the rest of the New Testament.

Because nothing is stated more frequently nor more emphatically than the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the New Testament alone, it is mentioned some 300 times. More actually than any other aspect of Christ Himself.

The return of Jesus then, we need to acknowledge, His second coming, is without doubt a main thing and a plain thing. The return of Jesus is absolutely foundational to the Gospel. The good news of the Gospel concerns the birth, and the life, and the death, and the resurrection, and the ascension, and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in power and in great glory.

The return of Jesus Christ is an integral part of the faith once delivered to the saints for which we are, says Jude, to contend. In light of the fact that it is so central, it is a matter of concern to all of us who think that that which is central should so easily and quickly become peripheral on account of a tampering with the essential truth in a way that creates a disinterest in the absolute factuality of it. What I mean by that is this.

There are all kinds of views concerning the timing of the return of Jesus. Concerning the territory that is involved in that return. Enough views, enough views to create confusion and indeed to induce conflict amongst those who are equally convinced of the integral nature of the fact of the return of Jesus itself.

You don't need me to rehearse this. Many of you are the same vintage as myself. You grew up devouring the late great planet Earth.

Some of you were doubtless in an airport in America and saw it on one of your earlier travels in the 60s or the early 70s. I can't remember when it was. But it was the best-selling, fastest-selling book in all of the U.S. airports at the time that it came out.

The late great planet Earth. And we devoured it, didn't we? I did as a young person. I said, wow, now somebody explains all this to me.

Now I know what these locusts are. I never knew that the locusts in Revelation were Russian helicopters. I had never known that.

And that was a tremendous help to me then. And it has secured me in many a rough day since. Of course it has not.

Of course it has not. My first immediate encounter with it since moving here in 1983 was in 1988. Those of you who were alive and thinking at the time will remember this.

A man by the name of Edgar Wisnant. Wisnant, I think it is. I'm not sure you pronounce it correctly.

From Little Rock, Arkansas. Produced a book listing 88 reasons why Jesus Christ must return in 1988. People immediately brought this into me in the office when I was down on Stone Center Road.

And I tried as graciously as I could to thank them for it and file it. But I did pay attention to it. I thought I would look at some of the reasons.

I looked for the book tonight. I thought I could read some of them to you. But really, what's the point? Because he said that Jesus was definitely coming back either, interestingly, on the 11th of September 1988 or the 12th of September or the 13th of September.

He's not alone. A Roman Catholic priest in the 19th century wrote a book detailing the end of the world which was going to come in 1847. He was given permission to publish the book and it was published in 1848.

But before you all get so smug, remember Y2K. Remember some of the things you told me about and those letters you wrote to me agonizing for my well-being and my safety. All the suggestions about how I had to buy out Walmart in toilet rolls and generators and all manners of things.

Nobody made a worse job of that kind of stuff than the Branch Davidian sect. And surely one of the sorriest emblems of the kind of confusion and conflict to which I refer was represented in that weird and wonderful siege of that compound in Waco, Texas. And the tragic death of 82 people who had bought into the dictatorial leadership of that character who was wrong and who was bad.

But you see, we cannot allow that kind of stuff to take us away from the centrality and the reality of the return of Jesus. What we need to do is make sure that we don't speak to excitable people, simple people about the day without emphasizing again and again the utter impossibility of the prediction. I know that it is perplexing and frustrating to some of you when I finally give to you what I'm about to give to you again now, my great summary view on the return of Jesus Christ.

And I want to affirm four things for you. I'll just give you the words you know. I've added a word.

It used to be three. I've now gone to four. What can we say with absolute certainty about the return of Jesus? Number one, that it is a day that is secret.

It is a day that is secret. Mark chapter 13 and verse 32, Jesus makes it clear that no one knows this day or the hour or the time or so on. Therefore, you may not care to join me, but I have no interest in listening to anyone who claims to know the exact timing of Christ's return.

I regard all such speculation as groundless and foolish and unhelpful. And I only have limited time left in my life to read books. Those will not be part of my reading.

Secondly, the return of Jesus Christ will be sudden. Will be sudden. As lightning comes out of the sky.

Matthew 24. Like a burglar who comes in the night watches. Matthew 24.

It will be just another day at the office for people. Just another day in the fields. Just a routine getting up and going to work.

People will be having their weddings that day. People will have surgery for that day. People will be planning a visit for a root canal that day.

People will be dropping their children off at school on that day in the way that they did the previous day and the way they expect to do on the following day. But there will be no following day. Because it will be just as sudden as that.

Murray McShane, in preaching in St. Peter's when he was only in his twenties, had a Bible study and he would ask his Bible study every so often, you know, do you think the Lord Jesus will return tonight? He went around and asked them individually and every one of them said, no, no, no, no, no, no. And then McShane loved to say, in such an hour as you think not, the Son of Man will come. Secret.

Sudden. Incidentally, it's precisely because we cannot know the exact moment of His return that we need to be ready every moment for His return. Third word, spectacular.

That's my new word. Spectacular. I added that because no one is going to be in any doubt.

It won't be like His first coming, where people were going around inquiring, where the shepherds had seen some kind of manifestation of God's glory, but they had to go and check. Let's go and see what this is. The wise men had made these journeys and had arrived at the palace of Herod and so on.

Is there somebody here called the King of the Jews? We've heard some things. We've seen some things. It won't be like that at all.

Then it was ignominious. Then it was inconspicuous. When Christ returns, it will be conspicuous, it will be universal, and it will be instantaneous.

The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ will transcend all the events of space and time that have ever taken place in all of space and time. That is surely the only way we can understand the drama as it is given to us in apocalyptic language in the book of Revelation and so on. And fourthly, the return of the Lord is a day that will bring separation.

Separation. Matthew 24, you can read it again. And they were working in the field and one was taken and another one was left.

And some were in the house and one was gone and one was left. Again, the 60s. Remember Larry Norman? Some of you.

He had that song. He used to play it at youth meetings all the time to encourage us. Life was filled with guns and war and everyone got trampled on the floor.

I wish we'd all been ready. Children died. The days grew cold.

A piece of bread could buy a bag of gold. I wish we'd all been ready. Well, that will be the cry of some, won't it? It's the cry of the five foolish virgins in the parable Jesus told.

A shout of joy. A cry of anguish. When Christ returns in every knee, bows low.

What then of this day of His return? A secret day? A sudden day? A spectacular day? A day of separation? So what about it? Well, there's two fundamental implications of that. One is moral purity and the other is zealous evangelism. Everyone who has this hope within him, says John, purifies himself even as Christ is pure.

The way that you can tell if somebody is really interested in the return of Jesus is by their life. If someone's living an immoral life and they want to give you a book about all the drama of the return of Jesus, they don't even believe in the return of Jesus. Because if they believed in the return of Jesus, they would never live the way they live.

And you can also tell that someone is concerned about the return of Jesus by their commitment to evangelism. The kind of passion that goes with purity. The passion that says, I beseech you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

That sits your uncle down, or sits your son down, or sits whoever it is down. And not in a way that is dictatorial or unkind, but seizes the opportunity to sit down and say, as best I understand my Bible, and in case I never have an opportunity to say this to you again, there is a day coming and the judge's feet are at the door. And when he comes through that door, it is over.

When he walks on the stage, the play is done. And we have lived separated in time, but I do not want to live separated from you in eternity. That's the final element of the instruction.

And it's the final sentence in verse 11, isn't it? The Lord is full of compassion and mercy. Why would we speak to people that way? Why would we be concerned about them? Because God is concerned about them. Romans chapter 2, verse 4. Do you show contempt for the riches of His kindness, tolerance, and patience? Not realizing that God's kindness leads you towards repentance.

His kindness, His tolerance, and His patience. God is slow to anger and abounding in love. And He has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the man He has appointed.

And He has given proof of this to all men by raising Him from the dead. Well, we must stop, so let me just give you the total quote from which I've been referencing C.S. Lewis today. I wonder, writes Lewis, whether people who ask God to interfere openly and directly in our world quite realize what it will be like when He does.

God's going to invade, all right. And when that happens, it's the end of the world. When the author walks on stage, the play is over.

For this time, it will be so overwhelming that it will strike either irresistible love or irresistible horror into every creature. It will be too late, then, to choose your sides. It will be a time when we discover which side we have really chosen, whether we realize it.

Oh, Father, we offer up our study of the Bible to You as a sacrifice of praise. We want to honor You in our thinking and in our reading and our studying and in our praising of Your name. I ask that You will bring to Yourself those who as yet remain in their unbelief, that they will throw down the arms of their rebellion and bow before You, embracing Jesus as Lord and Savior.

And for those of us who profess to follow Christ, we want You to stir us up by way of pure remembrance. We want to remind ourselves that we've been born again to a living hope, that our posture is a posture of watching and waiting and hoping and praying and looking forward to Your return. And in that anticipation, we are known not by our ability to articulate our view, but by our willingness to keep short accounts with sin and to honor You in our lives, in the secret place of our lives where no one knows what we are, but You do.

And then that we might honor You by bringing the very compassion which You have shown to us to bear upon the lives of those who as yet do not trust Christ so that Your kindness shown to them, even perhaps through us in some measure, may be a means of their repentance and faith. Help us. Fulfill Your purposes in us and through us, great God, we pray.

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