

# The Patience of Christ

by Steve Mays

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of patience in our lives, highlighting its connection to love, faith, and surrender to God's will.*

**Duration:** 34:56

**Scripture:** Luke 8:15, Romans 5:3-4, Galatians 5:22-23, Colossians 1:11, 2 Thessalonians 3:5, Hebrews 12:1, James 1:3-4

**Topics:** "Patience"

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## Description

In this sermon, Pastor Steve Mays discusses the importance of patience in our lives. He emphasizes that setbacks and difficulties are inevitable, but we should not let them stress us out. Instead, we should learn to be patient and trust that God is working in our lives. Pastor Steve gives examples from the Bible, such as Moses and Paul, who had to wait for years before God used them for His purposes. He encourages listeners to have the patience of Christ and to trust that God's timing is perfect.

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## Transcript

It's the 2010 Summer of Sermons with Steve Mays. When life is difficult, Pastor Steve Mays says, there's usually a better option than stress. You're going to have things that set you back.

I don't understand that, Steve. I served God with all my heart and I got a flat tire. Hey, hello, it's rubber, it's made by man, it's gonna go bad.

What are you gonna do? You gotta chill out. You're gonna have setbacks, be patient. Light of the world, light of the world Hope that shines in darkness, a voice that will be heard Light of the world, light of the world Hope that shines in darkness, so we'll follow the light of the world You know, in our fast-paced society of instant gratification, it's easy to see why our ability to be patient is diminishing.

Pastor Steve says, it's too bad because we need this virtue if we're to endure suffering, sorrow and setbacks in life. Today, Steve shares how, through patience, the daily annoyances can be used to make us better rather than bitter. Let's listen.

Let's turn to 2 Thessalonians 3, verse 5. If you're taking notes, you might want to jot down the patience of Christ, the patience of Christ. There's a great little illustration, a little story that probably says so much of what I want to share with you this morning about a dear lady that wanted to get some prayer in her life and she had been going through a difficult time with her husband and with her children and hoping that she

could have a little bit more patience at work. And so she came in and she met with one of the pastors and she said, Sir, I just need you to pray that I would have more patience in my life.

I'm going through some difficult times. I know that I don't always have patience and I really want God to give me that patience. And he, being a pretty wise pastor, he said, well, let's pray and ask God to help you.

And so they knelt down before the Lord and he said, Oh God, send her tribulation. Send her persecution. Add affliction into her life.

Send her much, much trouble and pain right now. And she couldn't believe what he was saying. And so by faith, she interrupted his prayer.

And she said, well, pastor, I said patience. I didn't say for tribulation. So stop, stop.

And him, being a pretty wise pastor, said, well, honey, the Bible says that with much tribulation comes patience. And so I want to talk to you this morning about one of the areas that you've all mastered in your life and that's patience. One of those areas that you have no problem with on the 110 freeway or standing around in the elevator or standing in line to get something.

In other words, you are the most patient person in the world. Your kids never bother you. Your spouse never bugs you.

The boss never asks you to do anything. And everything is done perfectly in your time. And yet we see that that really isn't true.

If anything that we need today in our world, in this society, is patience. We're about ready to lose it. So many fears and insecurities.

And people are angry. They're uptight because they have no peace or patience within their life. And we are a little bit out of control.

And we even have become a nation kind of overwhelmed with just being in control. My wife and I have been without electricity for five days and it's kind of been interesting. We had a fireplace and a couple candles and that was it.

And boy, I tell you, you just wonder and you hope and hope. And they blew this up and blew that up. And actually after three days you begin to understand that it might be this for the rest of your life.

And so finally the electricity came on and you realize that we don't have patience. And so we see here in a very interesting verse in 2 Thessalonians 3.5 And the Lord direct your heart into the love of God and to the patience waiting for Christ. And so I'd like to speak to you about one of these areas of God's chosen flowers, a very interesting fragrance within our life.

I believe that if you could really have the gift of patience that everything would begin to work out. I think that you would work better, love better, do things better and you would be nicer. You wouldn't be mean and angry.

In other words, it's not about you. We need this gift of patience. I'm going to show you why God had patience and how we need to copy Him.

And there's nothing more important than this incredible gift of patience. And Paul mentions patience here. He's going to pray for the church of Thessalonica.

And one of the prayers that Paul prays in verse 5, he says, And the Lord direct your heart into the love of God and to the patience of waiting for Christ. Now there are different translations in verse 5. And one of those is the New Living Translation, May the Lord bring you into an ever deepening understanding of love of God and the endurance that comes from Christ. And so they change it to the word endurance.

And then the Living Bible in verse 5, May the Lord bring you into an ever deepening understanding of the love of God and the patience that comes from Christ. And that gets a little bit closer to what we're talking about this day, the patience of Christ. And then, of course, the Amplified Version.

He says, May the Lord direct your heart into realizing and showing the love of God and into steadfastness and patience of Christ and in waiting for His return. That pretty much nails it. And so the Bible says, In patience you will possess your soul.

And God is looking that you would have the patience. Now before we go down this road and begin to define what the word really means, I think it's important to understand the nature of God in your heart, in your life, and in mine. And the best way to say that is probably out of the book of Hosea.

Because it's how God reaches out to a people who are constantly bent on backsliding. And Hosea, you remember, was one of those guys that God called to go out, grab a wife, and marry her. But she kept committing adultery.

And God kept saying to Hosea, Go back and get her and bring her back. And Hosea would bring her back. And Hosea would love her and minister to her.

And then he would wake up and she would be back being a prostitute again. And God said to Hosea, Go back again and pick her up off the street and bring her back. And you get the point, all of a sudden, that God wanted this marriage to work.

He was not going to give it up. And when we look at Hosea, we think, Well God, why don't you just dump that situation and start over? But God was trying to teach the nation of Israel that Hosea's wife was Israel and Hosea was God. And that God cannot and will not ever give up on you.

Therefore, God must be patient. And if you love people and you believe that God's called you to be a blessing, then you're going to have to deal in this area of patience. If you love your husband, you've got to be patient.

If you love your wife, you've got to be patient. If you love your boyfriend or whatever it might be, you need to learn to be patient. Because when you lose patience, you're going to drive your children out of the house.

And you're going to drive your husband or your spouse out of the house. And so it's the love of God that brings us to patience. And so we read, and you don't need to turn there, but a great example of God pleading for His kids in Hosea 11.

They sacrifice unto Balaam and they burn offerings. In other words, God is saying, this is what you're doing. You're sacrificing.

You are now burning idols and you have gone a-whoring after other gods. And then He said also in verse 7 of Hosea 11, My people are bent to backsliding from Me. In other words, Israel, all they know to do very well is to walk away from the Lord and be backslidden.

And we see that God is now pleading with them. And God begins to tell them a story about Himself. And we see that in Hosea 11 verse 1. When Israel was a child, then I loved him and called him as a son out of Egypt.

In verse 3, I taught Ephraim also to go and taking them by their arm that they would know that I have healed them. So here God is explaining, I have loved Israel, I drew them, I called them, I healed them. And then He said in verse 4, I drew them with cords of a man with hands of love.

And I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat upon them. And all He's saying is that when I look at Israel, I picked them up out of the ground, I washed them, I trained them, I gave them, I took the burden off of their back, I gave to them food, I healed their oppression, I have done everything to them. And this is what they give to Me.

They're willing to backslide, and they're willing to walk away. And all of a sudden, you kind of get the idea that God is now going to say, therefore, thus saith the Lord, I'm going to deal with you and punish you, saith the Lord. But He doesn't.

In verse 8, He says, How shall I give up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, O Israel? In other words, it is God's heart, as a parent heart, never giving up on their children. And I want to ask you a question. Have you given up on your marriage? Have you given up on your children? Have you given up on your friendship? But I'm afraid, in our society, if it doesn't work, you throw it away.

There's nothing about fixing it or praying over it or getting help or counseling. And I want to share with you that when you stop loving, you lose patience. And one of the great problems of why we are so impatient is because we have lost the love for that person.

Isn't it cool that God will never lose His love for you? So God's love is renewed every day. His compassion is renewed every day. And therefore, God can love you and forgive you and be patient with you because He loves you.

So the one thing missing in my life is a greater dimension of the love of God. And when I am impatient, it's because I'm not experiencing that love. When I'm loving, I'm able to give.

When I'm empty, I'm not able to give. So patient becomes an issue in my own heart and in our lives together. And God says, how can I ever leave you? And so we see that in the New Testament.

Christ was that patient servant. You remember how He ministered to His disciples. And yet, they rejected Him.

They ran away. Every one of them fled. Did Jesus condemn them? No.

Did Jesus say, that's it? No. Jesus found Peter and began to minister to his heart. He knew that Thomas was doubting Him.

And so He came to Thomas and said, touch me. He knew that they were hiding behind the door. He came in and began to minister to them.

He knew that people doubted Him. But He would not despise them. In other words, He went out of His way because of the love of God in His heart.

When you stop going out of your way to your children, or you stop going out of your way to your spouse or to your friends, something is desperately wrong inside. And the very next thing is you're going to lose heart, you're going to lose patience, and you're going to begin to throw them away. That's not how God does it.

The way that God does it is He loves you with an everlasting love. And when God loves you, you're able to love in a brand new way. And so we see very simply He loved His disciples.

But He also, Jesus, the Bible says that He loved people. He saw the compassion. He ministered with compassion.

He saw the multitude and was able to say that they needed to be filled because they were hungry. He saw those who were demon-possessed. He was willing to stay up all night.

And many came to Him. And as many as came, He healed. He was willing to talk with people and use their boats and use their things.

In other words, He didn't look at people the way we look at people. What can they give us? What do we need to stay away from? They're a pain. We don't want to get close to them.

He didn't do that. He loved people. Therefore, He found a way into their lives.

He didn't reject them or say, I don't like the way you do it or you ask too many questions. In other words, Jesus really loved people. And because of that, He could be patient with people, even those that really weren't around Him, like the twelve.

And to be around the twelve, they heard Him. They wanted His position. They didn't understand Him, but He didn't despise them.

He loved them. And then He was able to love people. He ministered to the multitude because they knew that when Jesus was there, He was going to feed them.

So they came, thousands and thousands and thousands. And people came to have their children healed. And people came to have things done.

And Nicodemus came. In other words, everyone came to Christ. And then we find that He loved even the enemies.

He had patience with them. Yes, they nailed Him to the cross. Yes, they despised Him, rejected Him, beat Him up.

But what did He say? Father, forgive them, because they don't know what they're doing. He understood what sin did. He understood exactly what was taking place.

They beat Him. Father, forgive them. They drove those nails in.

Father, forgive them. They spit at Him, cursed Him. And Father, forgive them.

In other words, His love was bigger than His pain. And I think that sometimes that we have a difficult time loving God. We accuse God.

You don't love me. We're not very patient with God. And secondly, we have a hard time with people.

Because they bug us and they can't give us. And all of a sudden, they don't do things the way we want it. And when it comes to the world, Hey, forget the world.

They're going to hell. Let's just go on and make sure that we're getting to heaven. It's sad.

Jesus said that you are to have the patience of Christ. And the only way that's going to happen is that you need to see that God is going to work in your life. And He worked, you remember.

He worked in Moses' life. He put Moses out in the wilderness for 40 years to undo everything that he had done in his life. And God was patient with Moses those 40 years.

And when it was time, God gave him a burning bush. And when it was time, God gave him the ability to lead. And when it was time, God sent him once again to Egypt and take him into the promised land.

But he was patient. God was more patient with Moses than Moses was with God. No doubt Moses said, Why am I here? What's going on? And yet God was going to work in his life.

And you say, Well, Steve, why 40 years? I'll tell you why. Because he had a deal with 2 million people who were unhappy for the next 40 years of his life. There had to be something very special about this man that could put up with all those people.

Because we don't like him. We drive away. Can you imagine living with him? No matter what he did, they said, We want to go back and suck onions.

They just had an attitude about Moses. But Moses was the man that God was after. And he had his difficult moments.

He broke the law and he couldn't go in because of his anger. But he was meek. And then I think the very same thing happened with David.

David was called by God. And Saul was in the way. God had taken the kingdom away from Saul because of his rebellion.

But Saul didn't give it up. And there are times in your job, in your position, in your dating relationship, you know it's supposed to happen. But it's not happening as quick as you want it to happen.

And I imagine that when God anointed David to be the sweet psalmist of Israel, David probably thought it was going to be next year. But it was another 30 years. And not only that, but God used Saul to chase David.

And David ran for his life for years and years and years. Why? Why? Because God needed an instrument to break David. That God needed something in David's life that would force David to cry out to God.

And so we have the book of Psalms because of Saul. And so we see that David had to learn patience. And so he becomes now the sweet psalmist of Israel.

Or Job. He had to lose everything. He lost everything.

And even his own wife said, curse God and die. What about that? That's terrible. And finally we see that God gave him back everything that he ever lost.

But you say, well why? Because God was seeking to prove to Satan the point that his servant loved him more than he loved Satan. And God will do things in your life to make you grow, to develop you, to bring this area of faith deep into your heart. He took Naomi out.

And all of a sudden we find that she buried her two sons and her husband. And as she was coming back, she said, don't call me Naomi, call me Mara, which means bitterness. But the moment she returned, God took her bitterness and began to bless it.

And that's what God does. He takes us through difficult times. He takes us through the desert.

He took Joseph for 13 years into the prison. And God had to work in this young man's life to the point that he could look at his brothers and say, you thought to do me evil, but God thought to do me good. And if it wasn't for you doing what you did, I wouldn't be here to feed the family of God.

And because of what happened, God put me in a position that I'm able now to see that I'm second in command and I will save the nation of Israel. You see, we don't see that. All we see is no one loves me.

They threw me away. And I have no doubt he went through difficult times. Got uplifted, went to Potiphar's house, had a wonderful time, and then all of a sudden he was thrown in jail because he was accused of going to bed with Potiphar's wife.

So here we have rejection and we have all these things. But check this out. He never gave up on God.

And God had to work in his life. Let me give you one more. Paul.

Paul got saved and God took him out to the wilderness, the desert of Arabia for three years. And God taught him by the spirit of the living God. And when God got done with him, then all of a sudden God took him back to a city, but God did not use him for 11 years.

In other words, we find 14 years went by before God used him. Why? Why would God do that? Why would God do that in your life? Why isn't God answering your prayers? Why is your life so difficult? Why is it so hard? And I believe that God's trying to teach you the patience. To be patient.

Because in that patience you're going to possess your spirit. And there's a great difference between endurance and patience. To endure means to say, I can tough this out.

I can get through this difficult time. I can get through this job. I can get through this marriage.

I can get through this horrible moment of my life. That's endurance. And that's important.

But I believe that patience says this, God, I want to give it to you. I want to surrender it. I want to hear your voice.

I want to hear your heart. In other words, patience doesn't fight. Patience now surrenders.

And that's what God was after in David's life, in Moses' life, in every one of the Bible characters, God was after one thing and one thing only. He wanted to take them and deliver them from themselves so they would surrender, so they would hear his voice and do his work. And sometimes it's more difficult for some of us than others.

And so encouragement says, Lord, increase my strength. God, give me the heart of iron. Patience says, increase my faith.

Give me the eyes to see. So I need patience more than anything else. And God has worked and is continually to work.

You remember what he said in James 1. Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. So you're going through a trial. Why? Because he wants to try your faith.

And then he says, and let patience have her perfect work, that you would be perfect, entire, wanting nothing. So when the lesson is over and you finally come to the point in your life that you say, I don't need to get married, what happens? You get married. When all of a sudden you say, I don't need to buy anything else, what happens? It all comes in.

Until I come to the point that I don't need anything. But you see, as long as I'm enduring, trying, things begin to fall apart. I just want to give you five things to think about very simply this morning.

Why I think patience is so important. Number one, patience in suffering. Notice in James chapter 5, verse 11.

In James 5, 11, Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and tender mercy. In other words, you suffer because God is developing things in you.

And there's no other way to grow except through some of the things. The Bible says that when I suffer, the grace of God is going to come upon me. And I'm going to see and have sympathy and now I'm going to have empathy.

In other words, God is going to give me a bigger heart. He's going to give me a greater heart. When I see people walk out with a bad back, man, I want to pray with them.

Before I pat them on the back and about knock them over. Now I just want to hold them and pray and pray. When I see people having a hard time walking, I know what that feels like.

In other words, I really thank God for what I've had to suffer. Because I find that in Peter, or what glory is it when you're buffeted and everything's going your way? It's when you're patient. And so first of all, I need to have patience in my suffering.

But the second thing is patience in my sorrow. I need to be patient when a dating relationship breaks up. I need to be patient when I want to tell my wife how I really feel.

I want to be patient when I want to tell the kids. In other words, when I am sorrowful, I want to tell the kids how I feel. You say, what are you talking about? You know how you feel when you're rejected? When no one listens to you? When you're not important? When you speak and no one listens and no one cares and no one will receive you're hurt.

That happens all the time around here. I'm hurt. Why? Well, he didn't say hi.

I'm sorry. You mean the whole world has to say hi to you? I thought you had to say hi to everybody else. Well, I don't like this church because they don't say hi.

Why don't you come and say hi? Why did you come? I came for somebody to say hi. No. You came to what? Minister.

No. We came to hear you. No, I came to minister.

What are you doing? Well, we're receiving. No, you are receiving but now you are going to minister. Are you going to be hurt? Yes.

Are you going to go through difficult times? Yes. Is someone not going to pay attention? Yes. Is your wife going to be kind of mean to you once in a while? Yes.

Are you going to say things that you wish you wouldn't to her? Yes. Are your kids going to be rebellious? Yes. You know, is the world not going to like you? Yes.

In other words, it's sorrow. And what Jesus is saying, very simply, is I wait patiently for the Lord and incline into my ears. In other words, patience and sorrow.

And Jesus was a man of sorrow but he was patient. And so, what happens when all of a sudden I have this sorrow? I need to learn to be patient. Let me give you another one.

Thirdly, patience and success. I think this is really good. All of a sudden, things begin to go my way.

Business begins to grow. Things begin to happen. Everything begins to take off.

What happens? Now I become anxious. I've got to do this. I've got to do that.

I've got more bills and more of this and light of the word and this ministry and that ministry. Time out. Be patient.

You've got to learn to be patient in your success. In Hebrews 12.1, Patience. Now, would we say that you're running with patience? No.

I'm stressed out making tamales for Christmas. You've got to run and make those puppies with patience. You see, it's like patience.

You don't understand. No, I do understand. Jesus went about doing many good things.

We're all over the place. And what's happened is that we've missed the love of God so we don't see people. Why are you making the tamales? Because you want to bless people.

Why are you stressed out? Because I don't have them. Well, don't make as many. Well, we always give 25.

Give 15. Well, we can't. Why? We're going to go to hell if we only get 15.

No, you're not. You'll be fine. Chill out.

Relax. Be patient. Things are happening.

Be patient. And then, fourthly, you've got to be patient in your setbacks. I think you've got to be patient in your setbacks.

It says in Psalm 37, verse 7, Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. You're going to have things that set you back. You're going to have bad days.

You're going to have a car breaking down. You're going to have tires that go bad. Well, I don't understand that, Steve.

I serve God with all my heart and I've got a flat tire. Hey, hello. It's rubber.

It's made by man. It's going to go bad. No, no, no, no, no.

If I serve God, it should never go bad. What are you going to do? My wife called. You know, I don't have enough gas to get to the gas station.

I said, well, give me a call when you run out of gas. Well, you don't care. Where are you heading? I'm going to the gas station.

Okay. Are you going the right way? Yep. Are you going downhill? Yep.

What do you want me to do? Come in kind of like a jet? Come beside you and fill it up as you're driving? I don't... I mean, I understand. I mean, I'm very patient, very... But in that situation, what's she thinking? I'm a woman running out of gas. And somehow it's my fault because I probably drove... I don't know, but... Honey, tell you what you can do, baby.

Get in the right lane and be prepared. Prepare for what? Running out of gas. Why? Because you called me.

You're not going to do anything. Honey, if you get to the gas station, I'm not doing anything. But if you run out of gas, I'm going to come.

Okay. So what did she need? She needed another husband. That's what she needed.

She needed patience. So she might be... She could run out of gas. At the washing machine, we came home last Sunday.

This is our time. We're going to sit down and chill out. Electrical went out.

Been out for five days. I didn't believe it. What are you going to do? Go talk to Edison.

What are you doing? We're working day in, day out. When's it going to be fixed? Two, three days. We don't know.

Okay. God, speak to Edison in Jesus' name. No, you go get lights and lamps and, you know, you just... You got to chill out.

You're going to have setbacks. Be patient. And lastly, lastly, when you're serving, you have to be patient.

Patience and service. It says in Hebrews 6.15, and so after he patiently endured, he obtained the promise. And then in Hebrews 10.36, for we have need of patience that after we have done the will of God, we might receive the promise.

And I believe that if we're going to serve our children, our spouses, our church, we've got to have patience. They're not going to do it the way you do it. Why can't they do it? How long did it take you to learn it? Eight years on staff? They've only been with you eight days.

Well, why don't they understand how to use the phone? Because they don't. Well, why don't they? Because they don't. Well, what do I do? I patiently help them.

You see, we just need patience. Paul said, I'm going to pray for patience. I'm going to pray for this, the patience of Christ.

And if Christ has been patient with you, would you please try to be a little bit patient with everybody else? Good instruction from Pastor Steve Mays today on the virtue of patience in the life of the believer. The message is called The Patience of Christ, one of Pastor Steve's most requested messages of last year. Is it okay to worry from a biblical standpoint? The answer is no.

Yet many of us are bona fide worriers. Worrying doesn't solve problems. In fact, worrying about things just causes more problems in life.

So in his new pocket publication, Steve addresses this issue of worry head on. The booklet is called Let Go and Let God. Based on 1 Peter 5.7, you'll learn how to cast your cares upon the Lord.

It's in this relinquishing that you'll begin to enjoy the sustaining and keeping power of God in your life. Let Steve share the practical steps to overcoming worry and anxiety in his new booklet called Let Go and Let God. Now, we get real excited about making these types of helpful resources available to you.

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But join us next time when we once again dive into the light of the word.

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