



Unity Church of Christianity
Be Patient with Me
November 13, 2011

Howard Caesar

Some of you may have heard of a Roman poet named Ovid who was around before the birth of Christ. He said something very interesting in relation to what I want to talk about today. What he said was that everything comes gradually and at its appointed hour. He was basically saying that in all of life you have to learn a certain degree of patience. You can't push the river. You can't force things. You have to more or less move into a state of letting go and letting God.

There was a little boy standing at the bottom of a department store escalator. He was intently staring at the handrail. He wouldn't take his eyes away from the handrail of the escalator. He was standing there, still focused on the handrail, and a sales clerk came over to ask the little boy, "Are you lost?" The boy kept his focus on the handrail and said, "Nope, I'm waiting for my chewing gum to come back."

Everything comes gradually and at its appointed hour. He would've made Ovid proud. He was demonstrating the kind of patient faith that knows if you are persistent and focused good is coming. It will come in its due time.

There's an Italian proverb that states, "Patience is a flower that does not grow in everyone's garden." The question before us today is, "Do I have the flower of patience in my garden?" Is it wilted? Is it healthy? Is it blooming? Is it bright? Is it radiant? What is the flower of patience like in the garden of my soul?

We live in a fast-paced world. There are many demands put on us by the world, and we put many demands on the world. We are conditioned to be impatient. We expect everything to happen quickly. Everything is moving fast. We want fast answers so we turn to the internet. We want fast food, and over the last several decades, we've seen an increase in fast-food chains. We don't even like to stop for red lights. We've been taking pictures of folks in that regard or trying to. Everybody wants prompt service. We have certain demands and expectations like no delays.

This flowering patience blooming within us relates to how we react or respond to conditions and circumstances in our lives. Often times we are impatient with things we don't like hanging around too long. We want them out of here, but then our goals, desires, and dreams, things we are moving toward, we're impatient and rather demanding on realizing them swiftly.

It can be like that because we live in this fast-paced world filled with high expectations. There's an importance to learning patience, and trying to establish a sense of calm and poise, rather than trying to push the river.

There was a husband and wife vacationing in the State of Maine. They had been staying in a little fishing village for a couple of days. They were walking along one day and came across an old fisherman sitting by the side of the way. They began talking with this old fisherman, and while they were talking to him, there was a boy that ran up to him and said, "Uncle Eb! Uncle Eb! Please help me! My boat is loose and it's going to drift away!" Uncle Eb looked at the boy and kind of rocked back in his chair, reached a hand into his pocket, pulled out his pipe, reached down in the other pocket and pulled out his pouch. He put the tobacco in and tamped it a bit. He took out a match, struck it on the sole of his shoe and lit the pipe. He took a good draw on the pipe. After this interminable length of time, he replied, "No need to hurry boy. The wind is onshore." He knew there was no need for fearful scurrying.

I think sometimes in old age we get there. I hope we do, and what the old fisherman reflected was "Let's not sweat the small stuff." The wind is blowing onshore. It'll be okay.

In one respect, we recognize that patience is a process of slowing down, establishing and maintaining a sense of calm. We should also recognize the true significance of patience is really

about spiritual growth. It really is. St. Augustine said, "Patience is the companion of wisdom." You get that sense in the old fisherman with patience comes wisdom.

Impatience is reactive. It gets angry. It says foolish things. It alienates others. You know where there is a spark, it adds fuel to a burning fire.

There's a story I love about Norman Vincent Peale. I love Norman Vincent Peale stories because I knew him. He was a friend. I met him at least five times, three times to this ministry. He has passed on since, of course, but his writings are wonderful. His stories always have such meaning to them, and he tells some good stories about himself.

He tells a true story about when he was a young minister. He had been called to New York City to Marble Collegiate Church. As a young minister, he had all these ideas, and innovations, and inspiration, and enthusiasm that he wanted to bring to pass. The problem was that he had two of the church's most influential elders who were cautious traditionalists and rigidly resisted him at every turn, and disapproved virtually everything that he wanted to do. One Sunday after he had given what he thought was a pretty good sermon, one of the elders came up to him and coldly said, "In this church, sermons are limited to 25 minutes. You were 2 minutes over."

He managed not to get angry there, but he blew up when he got home. He was shouting around the house that the congregation was going to have to choose between these two old fossils and me. It just so happened that his minister father was there to attend lunch that afternoon, and he was listening to his son go on and on. His father was a good minister, and he finally said, "Okay son, you can have your showdown, but I promise you you'll regret it. You'll probably make two bitter enemies. You'll probably divide the church and probably damage your career. I have a suggestion. You need that tough challenging ingredient called patience. It may be a cliché that patience is virtue, but it's true. It works and you need to try it, Norman."

His father suggested that he study the two men and figure out why they are being the way they are being. What is at the root of it? He suggested trying to see things from their viewpoint. He said, "Let them know that you love and care about them and that you want to see them grow through these things and be nurtured in some way." He said, "Then, when they have grown to like you and to trust you, as they will over time with your patience, then you can begin to sell them on your ideas." He finished by saying, "There is enormous power in patience." That was his lecture to his son.

Dr. Peale says that he took his father's advice and followed it all of his life. Dr. Peale's minister father, in his own way, was pointing out that at the root of patience is a very spiritual dynamic. Patience is really unconditional love. In other words, if I really have patience for you, there isn't

anything you can do that's going to make me so judgmental that I shut off and shut down my love of you. This is a form of patience that is very sacred.

Enduring faith is a form of patience. When we draw on our faith in God for healing or for realization of something we want in this world, it requires patience. It's not an immediate kind of thing. How are long are you going to hold to and have faith until it bares fruit? Many times we turn, and drop, and let go, and lose our faith. We don't see it through, but those who have patience do. The great minds and demonstrators in this world have said that patience is a big part of faith.

It is also not giving up hope. It's a part of that because you have the patience going on inside of you. It is exercising forgiveness which says we're not all perfected yet. There are things we are working through and growing through. I am able to forgive because I have the patience of knowing the truth about you which goes back to unconditional love. It is basically giving your best spiritually. It's persevering and living the truth. All of these things are a form of patience and where patience begins.

An overlooked statement that Jesus once made to His disciples, and I rarely ever hear this spoken to or addressed, is found in the *Gospel of Luke* where Jesus said, "By your patience you will gain your souls." A very powerful statement there, he wasn't joking around. Patience was incredibly significant and important in all of His teachings. You may not get these principles in a heartbeat. You need to have patience with yourself. You need to have patience with others.

Jesus also said that when we're impatient, we are trying to exercise our own will on God, or on another, or on life. Again, it is the ego taking over. We are EGO, edging God out, and the more impatient we are, the less connected we become to the Divine. That's what Jesus was trying to convey. It's very powerful to learn the spiritual virtue of patience.

God is a God of patience. Think of the patience God has for you and me. The very essence of God is patience. When you think about it, God stands at the door of our soul and knocks, and knocks, and knocks some more. Ultimately, we are the ones who decide whether we're going to open and say yes. We decide to be open or remain closed. It's ongoing in everything we encounter; every situation, every condition, and every circumstance, there's a knock. Do we let that in or do we impose our own impatience? Do we impose our own self-will?

God does not punish us for not answering the door. We punish ourselves to the degree in which we isolate ourselves from the voice at the door wanting to be heard. There is no punishment from God. The punishment is dished out by ourselves, and it comes out of our isolation from that

which is there to assist us. If we take the time to pause, and we are patient enough to remember who we are as a spiritual being, this is a great spiritual stride forward in practicing patience.

I think one of the most important things in understanding patience is to be fully conscious of the fact that we have more to learn. We're not there yet. We're not perfected, and to just accept the fact that we are in a learning mode. We're in this school called life if you will. Practicing patience means overcoming our reactionary responses to people, to life, to conditions, to circumstances, and to situations. Instead of reacting, we try to remember to put on our higher nature. That's what we're called to do.

There's a passage in the *Book of Hebrews* where Paul the Apostle is talking about the labors of love. He talks about how one is to remain diligent in the labors of love, and that's what we're really talking about. That's what patience is of course. Paul writes in the passage, "We are to be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit promises." He is referring to those who through faith and patience have inherited the promises of God. In a later verse, he goes on to say, "When God made a promise to Abraham saying surely I will bless you, and surely I will multiply you," and then Paul says, "Then Abraham, after he had patiently endured, obtained the promise."

Paul is saying that after, and only after, Abraham had endured, through his own inner patience, did he have manifestation of the promises of God. He's making that point in a beautiful way. A couple verses later, he refers to the reliability and the consistency of God's counsel or guidance. God is always knocking, and the door is always there, but it depends on us.

Patience is being actively aware of the many factors and influences that come to play in any situation. We so often just go right to, "How does this affect me?" And that's a big thing to get over in terms of learning patience. We have to factor in and pause enough to say, "Well now what are all the influences here? What are all the factors in what I'm dealing with?"

It's the activity of the soul being focused in such a way that it allows God's presence, God's love, and God's laws to come into play in the immediacy of what you are facing. We're talking about more than being tolerant. This is not about being tolerant of another person or tolerant of some aspect of life. This goes further than that to see every person as an individual, as a child of God, as someone you share a divine heritage with. We're all at different stages. We all have stuff to learn. We can't be judging and condemning another in any way if at all possible. I know it happens to all of us.

I love this statement, "Please be patient with me, God isn't finished with me yet." How many of us could say that? I believe that would be the case for all of us. We have to be kind to ourselves

while we work through these things. We're not perfected. We do make mistakes. There are things we say and do that we wish we hadn't.

Even Shakespeare said, "How poor are they that have no patience. What wound did ever heal but by degrees." He is saying, when we are wounded and in need of healing, that healing takes place by degrees over time. One has to be patient with the healing process as it unfolds.

We have wounds of the soul, things that have happened in our lives, in our childhood, that impact and imprint in terms of how we show up in any endeavor. We have to be able to pause long enough to say, "Hmm, there are other factors and influences, but I'm not going to stop being loving in this instance." We should not be too quick to judge, understanding, again, we all have work to do within ourselves. This is very important to remember.

The only person who we never change is ourselves. We need to realize that. We have to start with ourselves in our life journey to the heart of God. That's the journey we're all on, and we can assist one another by modeling patience and unconditional love. When we are patient with ourselves, we're less likely to be quickly frustrated and condemning. We are able to persevere because we have unconditional love for ourselves. We are going to make some mistakes. We are going to say some things we wish we hadn't, but we are going to clean it up too. We are all in this together. We all make mistakes.

When we've lost patience with another, we have actually lost patience with ourselves because like attracts like, and all we meet is ourselves everywhere we go. We have to develop within ourselves the very thing that we would hope to receive from another, which is a level of understanding that, "Yes, we're all still working on ourselves."

It's important not to counter bad behavior with bad behavior to justify it in some way. Jesus was saying, "It's not an eye for an eye." It's not, "Return the same energy with the same energy that came at you." It's not Norman Vincent Peale saying, "They gave you a cold insult, now insult them back."

Jesus talked about turning the other cheek, and what he meant by turning the other cheek was not a physical cheek. He was saying, "Turn from you human nature to your spiritual nature." That is what we're called to do.

There is a Chinese proverb that says, "If you are patient in one moment of anger, you will avoid 100 days of sorrow." I'll say that again because it's very powerful, "If you are patient in one moment of anger, you will avoid 100 days of sorrow." In other words, the energy that you put out into this universe is so important.

Edgar Cayce is an interesting individual. Some of you may have heard about him. There are many books out about him. He was considered by some to be a wonderful twentieth century mystic. What he would do is go into a deep state, and in that state, he would connect with a realm in which he was able to give readings on souls. Readings on what was happening in their lives, what was there for them to learn, and what their soul was to be working on. There are thousands of readings in the Edgar Cayce Library in Virginia Beach.

I bring it up simply to say that many of his readings had to do with patience and learning patience. It is said, in the writings, that many individuals who came to him for a reading were told that an essential purpose of their entire lifetime was to learn the lesson of patience.

In one of his readings, he was talking about understanding that life is about growth in spiritual awareness, and spiritual awakening, and spiritual consciousness, and that patience is a very important piece of that. While in a deep state, he said, "For the body, the life, the whole of every entity is a growth, and unless it is of such a growth that it is stable, it isn't worth very much. Be patient, be consistent, be persistent," and that was one reading.

In another of his readings, he states, "Time, and space, and patience are most often needed that few souls or individuals are willing to pay the price for until they grow to be such. One doesn't fall out of a tree into Heaven, but one grows in grace, in knowledge, in understanding, in perfecting within self those applications of tenants and truths that bring to the activities the spiritual, the mental growth."

Jesus' parable about the sower was along these same lines. He was talking about constantly having the word of God or truth planted within our minds. It's back to the door and whether we open when He knocks. We are a soil of the mind, and some seeds fall on the roadside, some fall on rock, some fall among thistles, and then some fell on good and fertile soil. He went on to explain what that all meant. The seed is the word of God, the word of truth, and where it lands has to do with what state of consciousness your mind is in, how receptive it is. It is symbolic of the various degrees of impatience that we have. For some it's like rock, for some it's like a roadside, sometimes it's like thistles. We don't hold on long enough to realize the fruits of the seed.

I'll read to you the last line in the explanation of His parable. Jesus states, "As for that which lands in good soil, they are those who hearing the word hold it fast, and in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience." It's right there. You bring forth fruit in your life with patience. We bring forth the promises of God with patience, as told by Paul the Apostle, the fruits of understanding and an open heart.

Dogs are a man's best friend. They have an understanding heart. I have a little poem called, "A Dog's Soul." They must have a soul; they must have because of their unconditional love. It's an anonymous poem, and it goes like this, "Every dog must have a soul, somewhere deep inside where all his hurts and grievances are buried with his pride, where he decides the good and bad, the wrong way from the right, and where his judgment carefully is hidden from our sight. A dog must have a secret place where every thought abides, a sort of close acquaintance that he trusts in and confides, and when accused unjustly for himself he cannot speak, rebuked he finds within his soul the comfort he must seek. He'll love though he is unloved, and he'll serve though badly used, and one kind word will wipe away the times he's been abused. Although his heart may break in two, his love will still be whole because God gave to every dog an understanding soul."

I'm here to tell you that God gave to every person here an understanding soul. You have a soul that never stops loving and doesn't want to stop loving. It doesn't feel good when it does. There is an opening that exists in you that is your true spiritual identity. It is a bridge from who we are to who we are ultimately becoming.

Edgar Cayce, in one of his last readings, said, "Be glad you have the opportunity to be alive at this time and to be a part of that preparation for the coming influences of a spiritual nature that must rule the world." You've been called to that. You see God is here within us, that nature is within us, and we must make the individual decision that says, "I will let God be God in me," and I will have the patience that is willing to meet my every weakness, becoming aware of myself, and discovering when I'm out of alignment so I can step back into alignment, not condemn myself, but simply say, "I'm going to be patient with me because I'm going to be patient with the world." Patience is a powerful thing.

As Jesus said, "By your patience you will gain your souls." That's a gain that I want to make. Won't you join me in it? God bless you.