



Berean Christian Fellowship

DEVOTIONAL 129.0

October 21
2016

Patience in the Age of Grace

“While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light.’ These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them” (John 12:36).

Today, we are living in what is called “the Church age” or “the age of Grace,” where men may make peace with God through the Son of God. This time period began when Jesus ascended into Heaven and the Holy Spirit came to all Believers on Pentecost, when the Church was revealed. While the Gospel is in the world, people need to believe it, so they might be reconciled to God, come out of darkness, and become His children of light. Mankind needs to take this seriously because, while He *“overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man [Jesus] whom He has appointed”* (Acts 17:30-31a). On that day, the open door to reconcile with God will close.

People everywhere presume that this present time of Grace means God doesn’t really care how they live, because, seemingly, *“all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation”* (2 Peter 3:4b). But they mistake God’s merciful patience as indifference about their sin, when really, God is giving all men time to make peace with Him before it is too late: *“Do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?”* (Rom. 2:4) *“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance”* (2 Peter 3:9). Love and mercy are why the days wax long without judgment.

For Believers, this time of reconciliation takes patience. We suffer in a fallen world and our temptation can be to cry out, *“Arouse Yourself, why do You sleep, O Lord?”* (Psalm 44:23). Too often, we focus on ourselves and sigh to God, *“Do not, in view of Your patience, take me away; Know that for Your sake I endure reproach”* (Jer. 15:15)! Under oppression, we rarely see anything but ourselves.

We forget that it is because of God’s patience that we were saved! What is more, He *“reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation...as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God”* (2 Cor. 5:18b, 20b)! You are to *“love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven”* (Matt. 5:44). Why? That man *“may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God”* (Acts 26:18a) before *“the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men”* (2 Peter 3:7). Children share the character of their Father.

The Believer is to *“deny himself”* (Mark 8:34), like Jesus, Who *“emptied Himself”* (Phil. 2:7) and walked in His Father’s patience for the Salvation of others. We also must imitate Him Who is patient towards sinners because *“love is patient”* (1 Cor. 13:4a). Today has dawned in love and mercy. This day is not the day of judgment because there are yet some men and women, even unborn, whom God will restore to Himself as dear children and to us as beloved Brothers and Sisters.

May we cease bemoaning God’s patience, which may cause us inconvenience or discomfort, and instead declare with Paul that because of God’s patience, *“I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life”* (1 Tim. 1:16). Even so, Amen.

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