

February: The Way of Patience

By Rev. Keith Boyette

In “*The Patient Ferment of the Early Church*,” Alan Kreider says Christians “believed that God is patient and that Jesus visibly embodies patience. And they concluded that they, trusting in God, should be patient – not controlling events, nor anxious or in a hurry, and never using force to achieve their ends.” We must confess that we live in a world of frenetic anxiety. Many of us are impulsive. We desire instantaneous resolution to any challenge or adversity. We detest waiting. Isn’t that the human condition?

But God calls those who walk with Him to a different rhythm. We are to move in alignment with the unforced rhythms of His grace (Matthew 11:29 The Message). The witness of Scripture is that the purposes of God cannot be defeated. God, the Alpha and Omega, sees the beginning and the end and all that is to occur in between. He takes the long view. His way is established. He is inexorably persistent.

Being time bound, we feel the urgency of our condition and we forget how the great movements of God were accomplished over decades, even centuries, in human history. Although we are tempted to run ahead of God, even take things into our own hands, a survey of Scripture and human history reveals the folly of doing so.

When things do not occur on our timetable, we become frustrated, anxious, and distraught. We want to be in control. But we are not. We are tempted to manipulate, to look for shortcuts, to trust in ourselves, others, even in things, rather than to trust in God.

The witness of God’s people is that God does not waste even what seems to us to be delays and detours. He “causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them” (Romans 8:28 NLT). We are called to depend not on our own understanding, but to trust in the Lord with all our heart. (Proverbs 3:5).

Daily Prayer Points and Scripture for Reflection

Sunday: Give thanks for the purposes of God. Pray for revelation of how those purposes are being realized in our present circumstances. (Romans 8:28)

Monday: Confess your impatience and all that is in you that would run ahead of God. Pray for faith to trust the timing of God. (2 Peter 3:9)

Tuesday: Pray that we might abide in Christ so that our hearts might be perfectly aligned with His heart, and so that we might bear fruit pleasing to him in this season. (John 15:5)

Wednesday: Confess the limitations of your own understanding and wisdom. Cry out for the wisdom of God to be poured out upon you and our movement. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Thursday: Ask God to guide us into the unforced rhythm of his grace and show each of us the next faithful step we are to take with him for his glory. (Matthew 11:28-30)

Friday: Pray that God might bring forth the fruit of the Holy Spirit – especially patience – in your life and in our movement. (Galatians 5:22-23)

Saturday: Pray for God to reign in our hearts, minds, and actions so that we would live in complete harmony with one another giving praise and glory to God. (Romans 15:5-6)

They who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint (Isaiah 40:31 ESV).