

I Believe in God who is Patient

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: We will again refer to the Westminster Confession of Faith as we consider God's patience since our confession, the Belgic Confession of Faith, is a shorter confession and does not focus on God's patience.

We all know what impatience is! Consider an illustration: A father told a girl: "I want to teach you patience." The girl responded: "Well, get to it!" Most of us are impatient, especially with those who are not our friends. We are impatient on the road, when our spouses are late, or in the slow check-out line in the supermarket. Why are we so impatient? The root of impatience is usually selfishness. We want the world to go around us and we don't care about the needs of others. Thank God he is not that way. You will hear today about our God who is patient and how he helps us to be patient.

Our headings are:

The Doctrine of God's Patience Explained

The Doctrine of God's Patience Illustrated

The Doctrine of God's Patience Applied

Our goals are: **That seeing how patient God is with you, that you will then love him for it, worship him for it, and show his patience so the world might be drawn to him.**

WCF 2:1 There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable (不变的), immense (无量的), eternal, incomprehensible (不可测度的), almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel (旨意) of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, **long-suffering (长久忍耐的)**, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity (罪孽), transgression (过犯), and sin (罪恶); the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments; hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

The Doctrine of God's Patience Explained

1. God is the most patient person who has ever existed and who will ever exist.

There are some patient people and you can admire them, but none of them comes close to God. He epitomizes 概括 longsuffering – another word for patience.

Psalms 86:15 But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, **Longsuffering** and abundant in mercy and truth.

2. How is God longsuffering?

a. God is patient in your salvation!

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack (懈怠的) concerning **His promise**, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

God started to be patient with you when you were **his enemies**. You continually rejected him and he continually came after you. **He was patient because he desired to make you into his children**. He persevered with you while you heard the Gospel from many preachers and saw the Gospel in the lives of Christians. He sent his Holy Spirit to convict (定罪) you. God had every reason to end your and send you to hell, but he exercised patience because he chose you. (Being elect does not mean that there is immediate surrender to the Lord. Election 拣选 does mean the Lord is patient.)

b. God is patient in your sanctification (成圣). This is his promise to all his children. God is patient **with children who are in rebellion**. He is the one who digs around the roots of the tree that is in the vineyard but does not bear fruit.

Luke 13:8 "But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I **dig around it and fertilize (施肥) it**. 9 'And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.'"

c. What is even more remarkable is that God is patient even though he does not need any children and he does not need anything from you. Most people learn to be patient because they are desperate (绝望的) to get something from the person with whom they are patient. Not God!

3. God's patience does not contradict (与...矛盾) his justice (公义).

In other words, don't think that because God is patient that he wouldn't carry out his justice. This is a common error.

Numbers 14:18 **The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy**, forgiving iniquity and transgression; **but He by no means clears the guilty**, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and

fourth generation.'

In fact, God's patience is tied to his justice. **Thankfully he carried out his justice on the Lord Jesus on the cross.**

4. How does God show longsuffering or patience today?

You are one of the main ways that God shows longsuffering. You are the instruments of God's patience!

1 Timothy 1:16 However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that **in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering**, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.
People (including your children) will see your patience and learn about God's love!

The Doctrine of God's Patience Illustrated

1. God illustrated his patience for all mankind as he waited for more than 100 years for people to repent and return to his service.

Noah in particular was called to undertake this task. It was a hard task. He did it for 120 years and not one person repented. Imagine what he must have thought after preaching for 65...or 105 years!

1 Peter 3:20 who formerly were disobedient, **when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah**, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. And yet, instead of destroying the whole world, God graciously saved Noah and his family.

2. God illustrated his patience as he waited for David to repent...for a whole year.

Patience with was not merely a state of mind by which he resigned himself to wait. God wrestled with David until he repented of his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah. God never left him alone.

Psalm 32:3 When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. 4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought (干旱) of summer. 5 I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

3. God illustrated his patience when he pleaded with Judah to repent so they would not be sent into Babylonian captivity.

Among those prophets were Zephaniah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah. But there were many others, including Isaiah.

Nehemiah 9:30 Yet for many years You had patience with them, And testified against them by Your Spirit in Your prophets. Yet they would not listen; Therefore You gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands. God pleaded and pleaded.

4. Jesus illustrated his patience with the Jews when he finally cried over them.

The Jews had killed the prophets from Abel to Zechariah! For thousands of years he pleaded...till he had had enough.

Luke 13:34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her!
How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!

The Doctrine of God's Patience Applied

1. God is patient with you in your salvation and your sanctification so you must love him like no other and worship him.

Romans 2:4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance (忍耐), and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

He did more than your mother or wife does for you.

2Peter 3:14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; **15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation** — as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,

And when you think how often you commit the same sins against the Lord, and how he continues to forgive you, worship him with increasing passion.

2. Be patient with others as your heavenly Father is patient with you.

Romans 15:5 Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus,

Be patient with your children when they don't understand something you are explaining and be patient in disciplining (管教) them.

Be patient with your spouse. So he forgets something you asked him to do. Take a look in the mirror and then look heavenward.

Be patient with your elders and pastor. We struggle with our own sins and our family responsibilities, so sometimes we don't do our job as we should.

Be patient when you drive. The person in front of you might be rushing to a hospital.

1 Thessalonians 5:14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted (怯懦的人), uphold the weak, **be patient with all.**

Don't be that servant who was forgiven much by his master but refused to be patient with his own brother who owed him little.

3. Having patience is not a suggestion...or an insignificant thing...but it is a command.

So you may not say, "I just don't have patience," and use that as an excuse.

Colossians 3:12 Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, **put on** tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

1 Timothy 6:11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and **pursue** righteousness, godliness, faith, love, **patience**, gentleness.

So how do you become patient? You become patient by recognizing God's patience with you. Real patience is not natural. Real patience is supernatural. So you have to ask God for patience and then practice it.

Galatians 5:22 But the **fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering**, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Even the young must learn patience. And it starts with waiting for dessert...or to open presents! There is a dangerous situation with young people wanting everything instantly. Watch what happens when the Wi-Fi goes down...or they don't get a response for a text in 30 seconds!

4. Be patient and don't stop praying

...for those who are lost

...for those who are straying from the faith

...for those who are not growing as fast you think they should.

1Thessalonians 5:16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing...

God is patient and so should you be. And remember how patient God was with you.

5. Be patient with God and accept what comes from his hand, good things or painful things.

James 5:7 Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.

Be patient in your Christian walk.

Romans 2:7 (God will give) eternal life to those who **by patient continuance** in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality;

You will be all the better for it.

James 1:4 But let patience have its perfect work, **that you may be perfect** and complete, lacking nothing.

Conclusion:

God is patient with his children in their salvation and in their sanctification. And his children need his patience. They need it very much. **God's patience must then be reflected in the lives of believers.** Doing this will bring honor and glory to God and great rewards in heaven.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Think how you fought God, some for many years, before you surrendered to him and accepted Christ as your Savior. That was God's patience with you. Think how you fight against God now, even as a Christian, wanting to get your own way and live your own way. But think how God continues to forgive your rebellion against him. And all of God's patience comes to you because of the work of Jesus on the cross for sinners. No cross, no patience!

2. Think now how you must show God's patience with the world. Think of the lost condition and how badly the world needs the Gospel, though they often wouldn't admit it. Don't give up preaching and praying! **Think how much you need to show patience to your wife, your children, your parents, your boss, your professors, and your pastor.** Think of the straying (走偏的) ...or the struggling ones...among your family and friends!

Finally, if you are not a Christian, God will not be patient forever. The time will come when God will say, "Enough, it is time for you to go to hell!" So I urge you to get your life right with God and do it today.