

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
 Sermon: "The Fruit of the Spirit: FORBEARANCE"
 Scripture: Psalm 100, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-24
 Rev. Steve Filyk
 October 11, 2026
 Opening Hymn: For the fruits of all creation #802
 Choruses: Holy Spirit, Give Thanks
 Hymn after sermon: O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee #642
 Closing Hymn: Now thank we all our God #457
 Thanksgiving Sunday

Johnny Carson said this about Thanksgiving:

Thanksgiving is an emotional holiday.
 People travel thousands of miles
 to be with people they only see once a year.
 And then discover once a year is way too much.

That's not true for everyone.
 But it is often in those larger gatherings of family and friends
 That we notice that being with people can be... difficult.
 Even people we love can test our patience.

Others will test OUR patience.
 But what if we are also testing others' patience?

Today we are continuing our series on the Fruit of the Spirit
 And we've come to that fruit that in Galatians is called forbearance,
 an action that in today's reading is called patience.

The word Paul uses for forbearance in Galatians
 and the related word he uses for patience in Thessalonians
 share the same basic idea: being slow to anger,
 having a long fuse,
 choosing not to retaliate when someone provokes us.

Today we will see that those who have received God's patient grace

are called to bear with one another in love.
 And this is not something we can accomplish by willpower alone
 But is a quality the Holy Spirit grows in us
 as we learn to rejoice, pray, and give thanks in every circumstance.

Today's lesson comes from the end of the Apostle Paul's letter
 To the church at Thessalonica,
 a letter that is generally regarded as
 The earliest of all New Testament writings
 And was written to that community to encourage their faith
 and strengthen their hope in view of Christ's imminent return. [CBSB 2091]

The lesson is a closing series of easy to remember [encouragements]
 that, in [practise], are hard to follow. [Works, C. (2020, November 20). Commentary on 1
 Thessalonians 5:16-24 - Working Preacher from Luther Seminary. Retrieved from Working Preacher from Luther
 Seminary website: <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revise-common-lectionary/third-sunday-of-advent-2/commentary-on-1-thessalonians-516-24-5>]

We are called to honour those who lead and care for us,
 Even when their work includes admonition, which
 (and I had to look this up)
 In its harshest sense means to
 "express warning or disapproval to (someone)
 about a fault or oversight"

[Dictionary by Merriam-Webster. (2026, September 26). Retrieved from MerriamWebster website:
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/admonish>]

Paul invites us to accept the discipline of others,
 And then we are urged to be wise and discerning
 In our own treatment of those around us
 warning the idle and disruptive,
 encouraging the disheartened,
 and helping the weak.
 [The 'weak' according to Paul doesn't necessarily
 Mean weak in body but weak in faith;
 That is those who are liable to wander
 From Jesus' narrow path.] [see Lektion Comm 418]

In the midst of all this encouraging, helping, admonishing

And being admonished, we are advised against
Escalating any conflict, told not to 'pay back
Wrong for wrong' but to always think about the other person's good.

Oh then we are told to be patient. Long-tempered.
Not just with our friends or spouses.
But with EVERYONE in the community.

This is where Paul's encouragements
Start feeling heavy, difficult.
It is easy to spot the shortcomings of others
And easy to get frustrated with people.

Just consider how often
The following phrases have run through your minds:

*It's always their way or the highway...
Can't they see all the trouble they are causing...
Don't they know that they are the problem...
It's always the same sad story... they are the victim...
How many times do I need to show them...
They never listen...*

And then consider how often
Others might have thought these things about you.

Perhaps others have been frustrated by our negativity,
our stubbornness, our unwillingness to listen,
or the same mistake we seem to keep making.

But while we can wear other people out
God has not given up on us.

Consider how many times God has patiently corrected us,
forgiven us, and given us another opportunity to grow.
Not because we have earned God's patience
Or deserved a second chance,

But because God is gracious to us.

This is why should consider being patient with others:
not because we are naturally patient,
but because we ourselves depend on God's patience every day.

Paul asks his readers in another letter
His letter to the church at Rome:
"when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them
and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment?
Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and
patience,
not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?"
[Romans 2:3-4]

God's kindness has led us to repentance
And it is for this reason that we ought to be patient with others.

But even when we know certain behaviour is good and right
That doesn't necessarily make it any easier to put into practise.
So what are we to do—just try harder?

The Good News is that patience is a fruit of the Spirit
that God intends to grow within us.
God is already at work in us,
reshaping our reactions and our character.
And Paul points us toward some of the ways
we can remain attentive and responsive to that work.

We are told to rejoice always.
Many of our frustrations are real
But we CAN choose whether they will define our lives.
Rejoicing—that is joining Sunday worship,
listening to praise music, or singing a hymn on your own,
Returns our attention to God's goodness and grace.

We are also told to pray continually.

That is we are encouraged to keep in conversation
 With God throughout the day
 Rather than seasonally at family gatherings
 Or even daily when we sit down for a meal.
 An ongoing life of prayer means
 That we bring not just our gratitude but our grief
 And frustration before God,
 allowing Him to change our hearts, give us wisdom,
 And truly seek another person's good.

We are told to rejoice always, pray continually,
 and give thanks in all circumstances.
 This doesn't mean we need to thank God for our problems.
 But as we work through these challenges
 We ARE invited to consider the different ways
 God has generously poured out his blessings into our lives.
 Giving thanks reminds us that we are recipients of God's grace,
 That we have been shown God's favour
 Not because we have earned it
 But because God is kind.

Finally, we are commended to not quench the Spirit.
 That is, we are invited to remain open to God's correction
 And to the possibility that he may need to change us
 Just as much as he needs to change that person who frustrates us.

*Sometimes I wonder if certain people are in fact placed in our lives
 To allow God to stretch us and grow us in ways
 That we might never have otherwise developed.*

This practices do not guarantee patience.
 Most of us, no matter how determined we are,
 will lose our patience with each other from time to time.
 But imagine how these practices might help.
 When you find your patience wearing thin with someone,
 perhaps this is the moment to pause and pray before responding,
 to remember something for which you can give thanks,

to consider whether the person
 needs correction, encouragement, or help.

The call to patience may seem primarily about God's work in others
 But it is ultimately about God's work in us.

When we orient our lives to God
 When we open our lives to the Holy Spirit
 There is room for that same Spirit to reform us
 Into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Paul concludes his letter not with another command,
 but with a prayer that God will sanctify his people completely .

We will not always respond to others with perfect patience.
 We will need to repent, seek forgiveness, and begin again.
 But as Paul confesses, we can remain confident
 in God's work and Gods' character:
 "The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it"

As I end, I invite you to consider two questions.

Where have you experienced God's patience through another person,
 through their correction, encouragement, or help when you needed it?

And who might God be calling you to treat
 with greater patience, wisdom, and grace today.

We are not patient with others because everyone is easy to love.
 We bear with one another
 because God has loved us patiently,
 and he is faithfully growing the character of Christ in us.

Thanks be to God. Amen.