

= PATIENCE =



"Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness."

(Colossians 1:11)

This is a verse I used to skip over and say "Yeah, yeah, I know that." But it arrested my attention last night and now I'm thinking through its implications.

Paul says elsewhere -

"That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man."

(Eph 3:16)

Here we see that it's not our strength, but His. We have to get rid of this idea that we are somehow empowered to chase the devil. We need to realize that we are called to weakness -

"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Paul Washer said -

"The MORE you Trust in the Arm of the FLESH, the LESS you're going to see of the POWER of GOD."

Charles Spurgeon wrote -

"The holiest of Christians, and those who understand best the gospel of Christ, find in themselves a constant inclination to look to the power of the creature, instead of looking to the power of God and the power of God alone."

To receive God's power I must go to the source, to God Himself. A light bulb in and of itself is of no use whatsoever - it contains not the merest speck of light. It must be connected to the power source. And somehow, through the miles of wires and substations, it manages to light the room.

Our power source is Christ -

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men." (John 1:4).

Christ has life within Himself, and that life is our light.

The moon has no light; it's just a hunk of rock. But the sun is a roaring nuclear blast furnace that generates its own heat and light; the moon merely reflects that. And similarly we have no light within ourselves - all our light and strength comes from Christ.

And what are we strengthened for? To rout the devil? To rule nations? No, look back up there - for patience and lloooooooonnnnggsuffering - with joyfulness.

Friends, we need all the power of God to do this, just to be patient. I get impatient very easily in line at McDonald's or Starbucks, for example (that was pre-Covid, same thing holds true lining up in cars for take-out). People in front of me chat their heads off and wait until they get up to the counter to read the menu and contemplate what they want. And I'm seething inside thinking, "It's not rocket science, they only have burgers, fries, and Cokes."

Fenelon said we should use such times (he wasn't around for Mickey D's or St. Arbucks - he was referring to people who talked too much) to pray. Make good use of the time when someone is dominating the conversation or taking too much time to order their burger.

Winnie the Pooh said -

"Rivers know this: there is no hurry.
We shall get there some day."

Bishop Sheen wrote -

"Patience is power.
Patience is not an absence of action;
rather it is "timing"
it waits on the right time to act,
for the right principles
and in the right way."

Scripture says about patience-

"In your patience possess ye your souls."
(Luke 21:19)

"And not only so, but we glory in
tribulations also: knowing that
tribulation worketh patience; And
patience, experience; and experience,
hope." (Romans 5:3,4)

"Truly the signs of an apostle were
wrought among you in all PATIENCE, in
signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."
(2 Corinthians 12:12)

(Did you know that patience is the sign of an apostle? I didn't. And note that patience comes before signs and wonders. What modern-day "apostles" do you ever hear talking about patience?)

And lastly - "with joyfulness." If I'm waiting in line tapping my fingers and feet, I'm not joyful.

Patience and joyfulness are spiritual qualities that we are to cultivate, and it takes all the power of God to do so. They rank higher than signs and wonders.

"He that can have patience can
have what he will." (Benjamin Franklin)

"Our patience will achieve more than
our force." (Edmund Burke)

"Teach us, O Lord, the disciplines of
patience, for to wait is often harder
than to work." (Peter Marshall)