

Fruit of the Spirit: Patience

A life that keeps remaining in Jesus will result in us bearing spiritual fruits (John 15:4-5) that pleases Him. We have been learning how we can bear the fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:22) as we remain in Jesus. This month, we are zooming into the fruit of the spirit of patience! A patient person is someone who is able to hold on to one's temper for a long time without getting angry or complaining, while trusting God's timing to provide comfort - something that we can grow in only with the Holy Spirit's help. Through this series, may we learn of God's patience and to also have the fruit of the spirit of patience in our daily lives.

Series Aim: For kids to learn how God is patient, the fruit of the spirit of patience and live out patience in their daily lives!

Series Notes (For all preachers through all weeks to read)

Please remember that the following is not for direct teaching, but for your learning, study and preparation.

Galatians 5:22 lists out for us the fruit of the spirit, and in this verse, the word for patience is sometimes written as "long-suffering". This means that a patient person is able to endure much pain and suffering for a long time without complaining. Being patient also literally means "long temper" in the sense of the ability to hold one's temper for a long time, without getting angry or annoyed. A patient person is slow to anger, and in this series, we will learn that God is indeed patient and slow to anger.

In fact, the series memory verse tells us how indeed, God is patient rather than being slow. God always wants all people to come to repentance and to know Him: "The Lord is not slow to keep his promise. He is not slow in the way some people understand it." 2 Peter 3:9a (NIRV)

As we know God more and more and learn of His patience with us, may we too, out of the patience, love and kindness given to us by God, also learn to extend patience to others. After all, God wants us to be patient as He is patient.

We will also learn that it is also important to grow in being patient with God – and it is not because He is slow to keep to His promises or His truths, but that God is patient with all people (2 Peter 3:9). Being patient is also being slow to anger as we wait for God to provide comfort or even punish the wrongdoing of others, especially those who have wronged or hurt us. Patience is a fruit of the spirit because we truly need God’s and the Holy Spirit’s help to help us grow in it. While the world tells us to take things in our own hands, the Bible teaches us to trust God and learn to be patient in His ways and His timing. As we surrender to trust in God’s ways, the Holy Spirit helps us to grow in patience. Thus all the more helping us to know that we can only grow to have more patience in our lives as we remain in Jesus. God is patient, and His Spirit produces the fruit of patience in us. When we are patient, we leave room for God to work in our hearts and in our relationships with others and even with Him. We lay down our schedule and trust in God’s timing and schedule. We thank the Lord for what and whom He’s brought into our lives and we let God be God.

For more reading:

- [A Deeper Study of the Fruit of the Spirit: Patience](#)

Pri. Outline	Note for Preachers <i>Please remember that the following is not for direct teaching, but for your learning, study and preparation.</i>
<u>Week #1 - 3rd Nov 2024</u> The Big Point: God is Patient God's Word: God is Patient with Jonah (Jonah 1-3) Memory Verse: The Lord is not slow to keep his promise. He is not slow in the way some people understand it. 2 Peter 3:9a (NIRV) Application: I can trust that God is patient with me.	In this first week we will zoom into the truth that God is patient. Through the story of Jonah, we see how God is patient even towards a sinful group of people, and was also greatly patient with Jonah, who was first unwilling to obey and do what God told Him to do. Read Jonah 1-3 <i>Please remember that the following is not for direct teaching, but for your learning, study and preparation.</i> Jonah 1:1-3 - Jonah did not obey God’s call for him Jonah was a prophet of God, thus it was his job to listen to what God has to say and proclaim it to the people God wanted him to proclaim to. The name Jonah actually means “dove” and “son of Amittai” means “son of my faithfulness”. Despite Jonah’s deeds, Jonah will remain the object of God’s faithful love,

Creative Video (Optional):

 [Jonah and the Fish](#)

showing how indeed, **God is patient**, and patient with Jonah. Jonah was called by God to go to the great city of Nineveh to share about God's judgement to them because God can no longer ignore their wickedness. Even so, the fact that God wants Jonah to "preach against them" tells us that **God is patient** and is giving them a chance to repent of their evil ways. Should they not repent, then God will send His judgement and they will be in line for disaster.

However, Jonah was unwilling and ran away from God, going on a boat to go to the city of Tarshish, in the opposite direction of Nineveh. Jonah was said to run away from the Lord or from the presence of God, to show how he is going further away from God. V3 also uses the wording of Jonah "going down" which suggests that each step away from the presence of the Lord is one step closer to "going down" to death.

Jonah 1:4-16 - God's judgement on Jonah

These verses tell us of Jonah's encounter with pagan sailors and raises the question – Who fears the Lord—Jonah or the pagans? "Fear" is mentioned a few times – at the beginning and end the sailors "fear" (v5, v16), in the middle Jonah claims to "fear" the Lord (v9) while the sailors actually properly feared God. (v10a).

Because of Jonah's disobedience, God was displeased with Jonah and God sent a great wind to cause a storm, causing the pagan sailors to be so afraid that they threw their cargo out, and prayed to their pagan gods, evidently believing that a divine being could come to their aid. In contrast to the sailors, Jonah goes down below deck, taking yet another step closer to death to sleep. Ironically, the pagan captain of the ship was the one who came to Jonah to ask for prayers so that they would not die in the thunderstorm. Eventually, it came to light by casting lots that the thunderstorm was because of Jonah, which Jonah did not deny – Jonah then claims to serve and fear the LORD, but his actions contradict his confession. Jonah proclaims that he serves the God of heaven - a term that refers to the universal and supreme God who made the sea and dry land. And yet, despite confessing to fear the God who controls the sea, Jonah was

also crossing the sea to escape from the presence of God. The sailors who were “afraid” were then now exceedingly afraid.

Jonah knew the storm was because of him, and so, told the pagan sailors to throw him overboard. It would have been natural for these pagans to hurl Jonah overboard immediately, but they did not as they were afraid that they would displease God further. The sea then grew more and more tempestuous, for God was not ready to have Jonah delivered to dry land. Even this shows that **God is patient** in disciplining Jonah to get him to repent. Eventually, when the pagan sailors knew they could no longer fight against God, they then called out to God in prayer, asking God to pardon them for throwing Jonah off the boat. They were so overwhelmed by God’s power that they stopped praying to their own pagan gods and now pray to God, believing in the absolute sovereignty of God. The pagan sailors were also the ones who were concerned that people would not perish, rather than Jonah. After the sailors threw Jonah out to the sea, the storm stopped and they came to fear the LORD exceedingly. What started as a general fear (v5) grew into an intense fear (v10) and matured into the reverent fear and worship—of the Lord, even choosing to offer a sacrifice and making vows to God (v16), the exact response of people who truly feared God.

Jonah 1:17 - Jonah 2 - God’s kindness and Jonah’s prayer of repentance

V17 - Even so, God still loved Jonah and saved him from drowning by letting him get swallowed by a big fish. This verse tells us that God sent a big fish to swallow Jonah, showing His patience of wanting Jonah to learn and repent - this tells us of God’s sovereign control over all creation. Fish here is also not limited to what is called “fish” today (cold-blooded vertebrate sea creatures with fins and gills) but is a general word for an aquatic beast, which cannot be identified further. However, a large whale such as a sperm whale could easily swallow a man whole. Jonah was also said to be in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights. We cannot be sure that it was literally three days and three nights as it may be a symbolic expression for a time of dying and rising. Even so, it has associations with return from death or

near-death—which perhaps is why Jesus likened the time between his own death and resurrection to Jonah’s time in the fish (Matthew 12:40).

V1-2 Jonah started to pray and Jonah understood that being swallowed by the fish, uncomfortable it may be, was God saving him drowning in the sea. Jonah’s prayer is not a request to be saved *from* the fish but is thanksgiving for being saved *by* the fish. V2 also tells us that Jonah called for help and God answered. While he expressed himself calling out to God “deep in the place of the dead” he was simply describing his near-death experience.

V3-6a These verses expand on Jonah’s call for help to God. Jonah also understood that though it was the sailors who had hurled Jonah into the sea (see Jonah 1:15) he knew that God was working sovereignly through them, and so he can say that God cast him into the sea for his disobedience. V4 tells us that Jonah prayed decisively how he will look again towards the Holy Temple of Jerusalem, showing his faith and belief that God hears him and will keep him alive - he will get out of the fish and see daylight and the temple again. Jonah continues his experience, knowing he had done nothing to deserve being rescued; his salvation was by God’s grace alone as seen in V6. Truly, God is patient even though God could have easily punished him for his direct disobedience and Jonah acknowledges this.

V6b-7 These verses then expand on what Jonah knows of God’s character and God’s answer. Jonah knows that his prayers rise up to God and that God hears him.

V8-9 also tells us how Jonah knows God is the only one true God who hears his prayers. Jonah was actually referring to the pagan sailors who prayed to each to his own god in Jonah 1:5 when he talks about those who pay regard to vain idols but it is also a message to Jonah’s idolatrous fellow Israelites. Jonah then states how he will continue to sacrifice to God in thanksgiving, once again, recalling the

actions of the pagan sailors who came to respect God (Jonah 1:16). “The LORD is the one who saves” is Jonah’s confession that God is the sovereign source of salvation.

Jonah 2:10 tells us how God indeed hears Jonah’s prayers and God had the fish to spit out Jonah on dry land. The fish’s action brought deliverance to Jonah, an indication of God’s favour, as well as how He has been patient to get Jonah to repent of his disobedience.

Jonah 3 - Jonah’s compliance to God’s call to go to Nineveh

V1-4 Here, we see that God’s call to Jonah to go to Nineveh is happening a second time. This tells us of God’s determination to get his message to the Ninevites and to use Jonah in the process. Also showing how God is indeed patient, where he gave Jonah a second time to obey him, and yet more time for the people of Nineveh to repent. This time, Jonah complied and obeyed God and went to the great city of Nineveh, proclaiming that God’s judgement will come to overthrow Nineveh, unless the people were to repent, showing God’s love, patience and hope for all people to come to repentance when he could have easily allowed judgement to come to the pagan and evil city of Nineveh.

V5-10 The people of Nineveh were said to believe in what Jonah proclaimed - showing the immediacy of Nineveh’s repentance. They even showed their repentance by proclaiming a fast and wearing sackcloth - the ancient demonstrations of mourning and repentance. Even the king of Nineveh followed suit and proclaimed to the rest of the city, that all were to indeed fast and put on sackcloth and turn from their evil ways. V9 shows us that the king of Nineveh expresses hope that God may turn and relent his judgement on Nineveh, once again showing a pagan that was more interested in people not perishing rather than Jonah himself. In the end, God did not carry out the threatened disaster because the Ninevites repented of their evil and wicked ways.

Link to the Big Point and Gospel

God is patient and He always longs for all to come to repentance – Jonah’s story shows us how God

	patiently orchestrates for Jonah to humble himself and repent. God did not send the big fish to punish Jonah, but to save him from drowning and so that he will repent of his direct disobedience of God's word. On top of that, God could have simply punished the pagan city of Nineveh living in their wicked ways. Instead, God chose to send a prophet to give them a chance to repent, which they did. God is patient and He is not afraid to go a roundabout way in order to let people repent and be saved. In the same way, as God's created people, we are all meant to live life in accordance with His commands and His love. Sadly, we fell into sin and strayed away from His commands, choosing to do things out of our own way. The consequence of sin is death and being forever separated from God. However, God still loves all people and in His love and patience, came up with a salvation plan to save us all - God sent Jesus to pursue after us to come back to His love. Jesus died on the cross to pay the price for our sins and saved us all – showing His power to do so when he came back to life on the third day. If we believe in what He did on the cross, we too can be forgiven of our sins and come back to God. God is Patient and He always longs for all to repent and come back to Him and His love!
<u>Week #2 - 10th Nov 2024</u> The Big Point: I Can Be Patient with God's Timing God's Word: The Story of Joseph (Genesis 37, 39-41) Memory Verse: The Lord is not slow to keep his promise. He is not slow in the way some people understand it. 2 Peter 3:9a (NIRV) Application: I can trust in God's	In this second week, we will learn that in our knowing of God, we too, need to learn to be patient with God. Being patient is also being slow to anger as we wait for God to provide comfort or even punish the wrongdoing of others, especially those who have wronged or hurt us. We can be patient with God's timing of bringing comfort, and we learn this from the story of Joseph. Read Genesis 37, 39-41 <i>Please remember that the following is not for direct teaching, but for your learning, study and preparation.</i> Genesis 37 - From this chapter, we know that Joseph was one of Jacob's many sons and being born in Jacob's old age, he also happens to be Jacob's favourite son (V3). Joseph was not Jacob's youngest son, since Benjamin is actually the last son born to Jacob. Thus, Joseph may denote someone who displays

timing.

Creative Video (Optional):

1. [YouTube Joseph and His Coat of Many Colours](#)
2. [YouTube Joseph in Egypt \(Genesis 37-50\)](#)

exceptional maturity while still young or perhaps was simply the son closest to Jacob in his old age. Jacob may have recognized Joseph's leadership potential early in life. Jacob favoured Joseph so much that he made a special, ornate colourful robe for Joseph to wear (V4). Jacob's favouritism of Joseph leads to jealousy and eventually division and deep animosity within Jacob's family where all of Joseph's brothers hated Joseph and would not speak a kind word to him.

This was made worse with Joseph's own prideful behaviour, especially after he had a dream which he told his brothers about in V7. While it is not specified here, in Genesis dreams are normally associated with divine revelations. Thus, it is likely that Joseph knew that God had great plans for his life. Even so, this does not help the relationship between Joseph and his brothers which were already strained. Joseph's brothers intuitively interpret Joseph's first dream as indicating that he will reign over them. The dream adds to the brothers' jealous hatred of Joseph, for his father has already dressed him in special attire. To add on, Joseph had a second dream (V9-11) which reinforces the expectation that Joseph will exercise authority over the rest of his family. Once again, Joseph shared his dream to his brothers and even to Jacob to which even Jacob rebuked him, thinking it unthinkable that he, as an elder, would bow down to Joseph.

Eventually, Joseph's brothers decided to do something wicked - at first they wanted to kill Joseph and throw his body down a pit as they had enough of his proud behaviour (V20). But this was prevented when the oldest brother, Reuben, suggested for Joseph simply be thrown down the pit and hoped to rescue him later on and bring him back to Jacob to earn his father's favour (V21-22). They took his colourful cloak and threw him down the pit. (V23-24) However, later on, when a group of merchants came by, another of Joseph's older brothers, Judah, suggested for Joseph to be sold off to become a slave in Egypt instead, thinking it was slightly less mean to kill him. (V26-27) In the end, Joseph was indeed sold off to the passing merchants to become a slave in Egypt. His brother's then took his robe and tore it apart, even dipping it in animal's blood in order to convince Jacob that Joseph was killed by wild

animals (V31-34). While Jacob was in mourning (V35), Joseph was brought to Egypt and eventually sold to Potiphar, an Egyptian man who works for Pharaoh as captain of the guard.

Genesis 39 - Joseph became a slave in the house of a man named Potiphar. It might be hard for Joseph who had always been the favourite, to now become a slave and worker and will not even receive any money for the work he does. Even so, Joseph remained faithful and trusted God, showing that he was able to be patient with God. This chapter also tells us how God's presence was with Joseph and Joseph did well in everything that he did (V2), reinforcing how Joseph stayed faithful and committed to God, being patient with God's timing for his life. From V3-6, we learn that In spite of having been sold into slavery, Joseph prospers, being promoted to the position of overseer of Potiphar's house. The repeated references to the LORD in these verses emphasises that Joseph's success is due to God's presence with him. Potiphar trusted Joseph so much that he left everything to be cared for by Joseph and concerned himself only with the food he ate.

(Note: Please don't see the need to tell the kids outrightly that Potiphar's wife wanted Joseph to commit adultery with her. Simply state that Potiphar's wife wanted Joseph to do wrong, which Joseph refused in order to honour God and Potiphar's trust in him. Joseph trusted God and was patient with God's plans for him. However, if during Huddle time, your kids are old enough and mature enough to discuss this, it can be a teachable moment to teach about God's intention for sex and marriage - even so, this will require lots of discernment and wisdom from God!)

But trouble again, comes for Joseph as we can see from V6b to 20. Joseph was said to be handsome in form and appearance and Potiphar's wife wanted to have an affair with him. However, Joseph refused to do so as his integrity does not permit him to betray his master by committing adultery. Joseph also understood that it would be sinning against God. Joseph rightly recognizes that to give in to Potiphar's wife not only would be an offence against his master, who has trusted him with everything he owns, but would equally be an offence "against God". We will also see through V10-12 that Joseph consistently rejects the advances of Potiphar's wife. But one day, in the course of doing his normal work, Potiphar's

wife caught Joseph by his garment and was unable to free himself. Joseph then flees, leaving his garment in her hand causing him to get in trouble as Potiphar's wife tells lies to the other people in the household as well as to Potiphar about Joseph coming on to her instead of the other way round. With Joseph's garment as evidence (v16) and how Joseph was a mere slave, he was then wrongly accused and thrown in jail a second time (v20).

Despite refusing to do what was wrong in God's eyes, Joseph was wrongly accused and thrown in jail. Here again, Joseph had to be patient with God and God's plans and timing for his life. How could Joseph amount to anything when he was now in jail? Even so, God has plans for Joseph even within jail - God's presence continued to be with Joseph and Joseph prospered in everything that he did, even within jail (V21)! Joseph was a great help to the officers in jail and in the end, even entrusted Joseph to be in charge of the things within jail (V22-23).

Genesis 40 - While there is no need to go into the details of this chapter, it tells us that when Joseph was in jail, God gave him the wisdom to understand dreams. Joseph was put in charge of two of Pharaoh's servants - a baker and a cupbearer who did wrong in Pharaoh's eyes and placed in prison. The two servants both had dreams which they did not understand and wanted interpretations of. They eventually told Joseph their dreams which Joseph was able to interpret correctly as God had given him the understanding (V8) - the cupbearer will get back his job as Pharaoh's cupbearer, but the baker will not. Joseph also requested that the cupbearer to remember him and to put in a good word for him to be out of prison since Joseph had never done anything wrong (V14-15). Eventually things did come to pass as Joseph interpreted, but sadly the cupbearer forgot about Joseph (V23), once again causing Joseph to need to be patient with God's plans and timing for him.

Genesis 41 - Two full years had passed and Joseph was still in prison. It was at this time when Pharaoh had an unsettling dream which nobody could understand (V1-8). It was at this moment that Pharaoh's

cupbearer finally remembered Joseph who had correctly interpreted his dream and brought the existence of Joseph to Pharaoh (V9-13). Joseph was quickly brought before Pharaoh to help interpret his dream (V15), to which Joseph told Pharaoh outrightly that it would be God, and not him who will give the interpretation to Pharaoh's dreams (V16, Genesis 40:8).

Because God was with Joseph, he was indeed able to understand and interpret Pharaoh's dream (V25-32), telling him that God was going to bring about 7 years of abundant harvest, and then 7 years of great famine. Through V33-36, Joseph then suggests the actions that Pharaoh ought to take in order to prepare for the seven years of famine; the plans are so sufficiently detailed that Pharaoh was deeply impressed (V37). Eventually, Pharaoh recognised that God's spirit was with Joseph (V38) and decided to let Joseph be in charge to govern all the people of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself (V39-40). God then used Joseph to help Egypt to prosper. Egypt kept many of its extra grain in the seven years of abundance (V47-49). Thus, when famine came upon the lands, Egypt was able to save many people groups from dying of hunger by selling them the grain kept from the 7 years of abundance (V55-57). Many people were saved because of what God helped Joseph to do.

Eventually, even Joseph's brothers and family came to Egypt to buy grain and met with Joseph. However, they were unable to recognise him and bowed down low to him (Genesis 42:6-7) to show their respect before requesting to buy grain, fulfilling Joseph's dreams (Genesis 37:6-9) at the start of our story.

Link to Big Point: Joseph's story was dramatic and it took a long time for his given dreams to be fulfilled. Through the years, just as things were going well for Joseph (favoured son, favoured slave in charge of the household), things happened that were of no fault of his that brought him down to the depths (slavery, in jail) and far from becoming someone respectable. However, through it all, God was with Joseph and while God was never said to be speaking directly to Joseph (as He did with Joseph's ancestors e.g. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob), Joseph's life was being governed by God's providential care, despite the many hiccups.

	What's remarkable through all the seasons and years was that Joseph remained patient with God, trusting God's plans and timing for his life and remaining faithful to God. Joseph's very words to his brothers about all that happened were recorded in Genesis 50:20a: "You planned to harm me. But God planned it for good." Joseph was able to see how God was with him and remained patient and trusting of God, knowing that God is good and has the best plan for his life. While this conclusion was made in hindsight, there were many moments when Joseph could have lost trust, faith or patience with God, but through it all, he persevered in trusting and being patient with God's plans and timing. In the same way, may we too, learn to be able to trust God through all seasons of our lives, including the bad and not-so-good seasons, trusting that God always knows the best plans and will in His timing, bring forth His blessings into our lives, be it on earth or in heaven. I Can Be Patient with God's Timing! Link to the Gospel: We can all learn to trust more in God's plans and timing as God is never slow in His timing but always wanting all to come to Him (2 Peter 3:9a). We can see this even in how God saves all people. As God's created people, we are all meant to live life in accordance with His commands and His love. Sadly, we fell into sin and strayed away from His commands, choosing to do things out of our own way. The consequence of sin is death and being forever separated from God. However, God still loves all people and in His love and patience, came up with a salvation plan to save us all - God sent Jesus to pursue after us to come back to His love. Jesus died on the cross to pay the price for our sins and saved us all – showing His power to do so when he came back to life on the third day. If we believe in what He did on the cross, we too can be forgiven of our sins and come back to God. It took a long time for God to save His people and all people from sin so that more and more people will come to recognise how God loves us and came to save us. May we too, come to know God's love for ourselves and in our knowing of Him, always trust in His plans and timing. I Can be Patient with God's Timing!
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Week #3 - 17th Nov 2024

The Big Point: I Can Be Patient to wait for God's Justice

God's Word: The Story of Habakkuk (Habakkuk 1- 3)

Memory Verse: The Lord is not slow to keep his promise. He is not slow in the way some people understand it. 2 Peter 3:9a (NIRV)

Application: I can trust that God will work for my good.

Creative Video (Optional):

 [God's' People: Habakkuk](#)

In this third week, we will look into a story that we don't usually explore - the book of Habakkuk. Through this book, we hope to teach the kids the importance of being patient to wait for God's justice, which will definitely come in His perfect time! As humans, we sometimes want things to happen in our own way and quickly in our own time, especially when we see injustice and think that punishment should come quickly on those who do wrong or are evil. However, the story of Habakkuk tells us that God always has His plans and He is more than aware of the situations that we see. And being a patient God of justice, God will definitely bring forth His judgement on those who do not repent.

Read Habakkuk 1-3 + Watch this summary on the book of [Habakkuk](#)

Please remember that the following is not for direct teaching, but for your learning, study and preparation.

Context: Habakkuk was a prophet who lived towards the end of Israel's southern kingdom - Judah. It was the time when the Assyrians were losing power and the Babylonians were becoming the next powerhouse. Prophets usually would hear from God and proclaim to God's people what God wanted to say. Habakkuk however, was quite a unique prophet as he mainly talked to God and heard from God. Habakkuk lived during a time strife with idolatry and injustice, where people were doing much evil in God's eyes.

Habakkuk 1:1-11 - Habakkuk and God's First Exchange

V2-4 tells us that Habakkuk is disappointed that God does not seem to be answering his prayers. He believes that God is letting sin go unpunished and that therefore there is no justice. He calls out to God, asking how long more he needs to look at the injustice, evil, idolatry and violence around him. Habakkuk can hardly believe that God appears to tolerate sin instead of punishing it (V3). V4 also tells us how Habakkuk laments how the law is not doing what it's supposed to do since the Mosaic law had little impact on the hearts of the people and was not accomplishing its purpose. Instead, they were living according to their own greedy, self-centred desires. Habakkuk believes that God's lack of punishment or

	lack of judgement has caused injustice to become worse. The rich were using their power and money to get what they wanted; the rights of the poor were being trampled on – while there was still a small group of people who lived in righteousness (remnant) life was hard for them because they fell prey to the wicked and would not break God’s laws to get ahead. However, God’s response in V5-11 tells us that unknown to the prophet, he has already begun answering them. God is always working, sometimes without our understanding. God told Habakkuk that he was going to do something that he would not believe – which was true because God’s plans as mentioned in V6, was to raise up the Babylonians (also known as the Chaldeans) to punish his people as a form of his judgement. From here, we can see how God is in control of all nations and people groups – God controls the political scene and uses nations for his own purposes (Isaiah 44:28, Daniel 2:21). God knows the Babylonians well and uses their character traits to punish Judah as he describes the Babylonian’s power through V7-11. Habakkuk 1:12 - Habakkuk 2:20 - Habakkuk and God’s Second Exchange Habakkuk has a good understanding and theology of God. Habakkuk grounds his confidence in God’s future for his people in the eternal nature of God and understands that God has ordained Babylon to be his agent of punishment (V12). Even so, Habakkuk indeed, was finding it hard to believe that a just God would allow the cruel Babylonians to punish his people, wondering how God can use a wicked nation to punish a less wicked one. He expresses the dilemma concerning God’s justice: “Why does evil seem to go unpunished?” and wonders how an all-powerful God can allow sin to continue unchecked. Habakkuk cannot understand the justice of allowing wicked Babylon to punish a less wicked nation such as Judah – He was able to call Judah more righteous because, even though most of its people were unfaithful to God’s covenants, some of them actually were faithful. Habakkuk thinks that God’s holiness should have prohibited him from using the corrupt Babylonians. V14-17 states the evilness of the Babylonians, who Habakkuk believes acts like lower creatures (fish and crawling things) with no rulers or judges, which was
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why their wickedness goes unchecked. V15 states how the Babylonians drag their captives with hooks in their noses—an intentionally painful and humiliating treatment. The image is that of a fish helplessly caught in a fishing net. Habakkuk then questions, if a righteous God does not step in to end the Babylonians’ wicked plan, who will? Where is God’s justice, and how can he tolerate this? Habakkuk ends his lament to God by stating in Habakkuk 2:1 that he will take a stand at a city lookout tower awaiting a coming enemy. Habakkuk waits in the city’s watchtower for God to rebuke his direct challenge.

God then replies Habakkuk patiently, also showing us how God is indeed patient as we have learnt in Week 1 - God is patient. God assures Habakkuk that he will punish all the wicked at the right time. God will see to it that all those who are wicked will be punished, but the righteous ones must live by faith and trust in Him, being able to be patient and wait for His judgement.

Habakkuk 3:1 - Habakkuk 3:19 - Habakkuk’s Prayer

Habakkuk pleads with God for Him to show up like He did in the past as he knew how God had shown up before and he knew that He can do it again (V1-2). Indeed, God appears before the people in power, showing up in majesty and in confrontation to evil (similar to what happened in Micah 1, Nahum 1, and Exodus 19-20). God’s presence is so powerful that all the people stop to pay attention to Him. (V3-7) As Habakkuk then goes on to describe the future defeat of evil as a future Exodus - when God will defeat evil, bring justice to the people and rescue the oppressed and innocent in His time, this also showing how Habakkuk is patient in God’s timing as we have learnt in Week 2 (V8-15) At the end of the chapter, Habakkuk is able to conclude the situation with hopeful praise, as he knows that he can trust and find joy in the covenant promises of God. (V16-19)

Link to Big Point and Gospel:

Initially, Habakkuk was disappointed in God as he felt that God did not answer his prayers. Habakkuk grew impatient at how the injustice was going around and the people were not being punished

	accordingly - while unbeknownst to him, God has seen all the injustice that has been going on around Babylon and He has been using His own ways to punish Judah. As Habakkuk witnesses more and more injustice, he was starting to believe that God would just watch the injustice happen without doing anything about it because he was not seeing any action taken towards the Babylonians and Judah. Despite all of Habakkuk's doubts, God shows that He works in ways that are beyond our understanding - as seen in how He answered Habakkuk's prayers to serve justice. He did not punish Judah directly as Habakkuk expected Him to, but He did not let them go unpunished as well. Eventually, Habakkuk pleaded with God to show Himself to the people and God answered his prayers patiently, showing Habakkuk that He has always been just in His ways and in His timing. In the end, Habakkuk recognised the darkness and chaos of the world and how injustice comes about, but in knowing that, he also recognised God's power and he places his faith in God - when and how He will deal with evil. Habakkuk no longer doubted God's power and righteousness, and he chose to put his faith in God even in the uncertainties of the future and when things were not happening according to what he expected. Habakkuk learnt to be patient with God's justice and he waited on God to act in His righteousness. In the same way, we may not see God serving justice in our lives sometimes because of the way God works. However, through Habakkuk, we can be reminded that we can also learn to be patient to wait for God's justice!
<u>Week #4 - 24th Nov 2024</u> The Big Point: I Can Be Patient with Others God's Word: Jesus was Patient with Peter (Matthew 26:31-35, John 18:15-27, and John	This last week, we will dive deeper into how to apply our learning of God's patience towards others - to be patient with others. Through Peter's story, we see how he has denied Jesus three times and yet he was forgiven because God was patient with him - and for us, we can do the same because we have the fruit of the Spirit in us. This week's big point and story shows us how we can have patience for others even when the situation makes it difficult for us to.

21:15-17)

Memory Verse: The Lord is not slow to keep his promise. He is not slow in the way some people understand it. 2 Peter 3:9a (NIRV)

Application: I will be patient with others.

Creative Video (Optional):

 [Jesus Forgives Peter](#)

Read Matthew 26:31-35, John 18:15-27, and John 21:15-17

Please remember that the following is not for direct teaching, but for your learning, study and preparation.

Matthew 26:31-35 - Jesus predicts the betrayal of Peter and His disciples

The verses tell us that Jesus already knew that Peter and the rest of the disciples were going to betray Him. Jesus demonstrates His knowledge and power by letting His disciples know that He will be dying on the cross and coming back to life.

However, when Jesus explained how Peter would deny Him three times, Peter was in great disbelief and he did not agree with what Jesus had said. He could not perceive and predict the future the way that Jesus could, and he could only see his faithfulness towards Jesus in the present moment. Peter was unaware of what was to come, that he would deny Jesus exactly three times before the rooster crows. Peter insisted that he would never deny Jesus, showing his complacency and ignorance to his own downfall later on. This was the case for the rest of the disciples.

John 18:15-27 - Peter denies Jesus thrice and Jesus protecting His disciples

V15-16 shows how Peter tried to demonstrate his loyalty to Jesus, by attacking one of the guards who arrested Jesus. Jesus' response was not to acknowledge the act that Peter had done, but to focus on the guard and heal him. Jesus then followed the guards to the courtyard of the high priest. Peter and another disciple then followed Jesus and the guards into the courtyard.

V17-18 shows the time Peter denied Jesus for the first time. While he found a fire near the doors of the courtyard to warm himself, there were a few people there as well. A servant girl saw Peter and questioned if he was one of Jesus' disciples, to which Peter denied immediately. Instead of staying loyal to Jesus as he had vowed to, Peter denied any association with Jesus without hesitation in response to the servant girl's question. This first denial came from a place of shame and impulse.

V19-21 shows how Jesus protected the identity of His disciples, not mentioning them even when the high priest asked Him about them. Jesus put emphasis in His response that He had nothing to hide in His teachings. He even comes in confidence, that the high priest can ask anyone who has heard Jesus preach, that He has nothing to hide at all. Jesus' confidence in his words displays his transparency and consistency in His Word.

V22-24 shows Jesus' appearance before the high priest. Jesus was struck for no legal reason, which revealed the high priest Annas' unprofessional standard of practice of justice. The conclusion to the interrogation led to the high priest sending Jesus off bound as if He was a criminal. The injustice shown to Jesus was very much highlighted in these verses.

V25-27 shows Peter's denial towards Jesus for another two times. The people questioned Peter once more, and once more Peter denied any relation towards Jesus. The third time, Peter was questioned if he was the man seen in the Garden with Jesus, the one who cut off the ear of the guard - and Peter answered no again. Right after denying Jesus for the third and last time, the rooster crowed. At this point in time, Peter could see Jesus from a distance, and he witnessed everything that happened from when Jesus was interrogated and slapped, and he knew that Jesus had heard everything that he had said about not knowing Him too. The immediate crowing of the rooster must have reminded Peter of the prediction that Jesus had revealed to him previously. Peter then left the courtyard weeping.

John 21:15-17 - The restoration of Peter

The verses show the repentance and reconciliation between Peter and Jesus. When they were eating breakfast, Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him more than the food they were eating. Jesus asked a total of three times, to which Peter replied, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." to this Jesus then told Peter to

feed His lambs, tend His sheeps and feed His sheep. The significance in this is to replicate the pattern of the three-times denial previously, where Peter had bluntly denied any association with Jesus.

Thus, Jesus had given Peter this chance to redeem his love for Him, by confessing thrice that he loves Jesus. Jesus challenged Peter to love Him wholeheartedly, redirecting His questions in such a way instead of phrasing it in the point of repentance and regret. This set Peter's eyes ahead to what Jesus called him to do, to do the work of His Kingdom.

Link to Big Point and Gospel:

Though at the start Peter was in denial of Jesus' prediction and even more so in denial of being in any sort of association with Him when he was questioned, Jesus was patient with Peter. Jesus did not condemn Peter for the sort of things he said and for betraying Jesus in the face of questions, but rather, He challenged Peter to continue loving. Jesus was patient with Peter, in building his character and in showing him what it really means to be a faithful disciple. Jesus' patience extended beyond the simple act of waiting upon Peter's realisation, to the reconciliation and Peter's decision to fully obey and love Jesus. In the way Jesus was patient with Peter, it shows us that we too, can be patient with the people around us who may not show love in the way we expect them to. Instead of coming with a condescending tone, we can learn from Jesus to come from a place of love and grace.

Through the story of Peter, we see how Peter did not understand Jesus' words of advice at first but Jesus still continued to show patience to him, before and after the betrayal happened. Jesus was patient to journey through the betrayal of His disciples and He received them with grace when he came back from the dead. Similarly, our patience may not be fully understood and acknowledged by others initially - we may even be misunderstood, betrayed, and taken for granted. Yet, in the midst of these, **we can still continue to show patience to others!**