

The Patience of Job – First Oct 14,2018

The scripture reading for today comes from the middle of the book of Job.

I am pretty sure that most of you know the story about Job. It was written, well told, long, long before the time of Jesus and long before many of the prophets in the old testament. So it is a **very** ancient story.

It's a fictional story about a man who had everything. Job had wealth, he had many children, he had respect and position in the community, he had good health.

Then this unknown storyteller, novelist decided to have Job lose everything. It 's a kind of Murphy's Law Story that is ---- **everything that can go wrong, does go wrong.**

If you remember, two of the main characters are God and Satan. Satan and God are at a meeting and God asks Satan where he has been? And Satan says, " Well I've been walking about on earth."

God questions,"Did you see Job, he's a perfect righteous fellow?"

"Yes"" says Satan, " I saw him. But you have built a wall around him. Would he be so righteous if he wasn't so fortunate?"

So God and Satan agree that Satan can do anything he wishes to Job - except kill him.

Consequently Job loses everything. And he is miserable and suffering and wishes that he had never been born.

3 friends come to comfort and console him. They sit silently with him for a week. But typically like most of us, as they sit, they begin to think and wonder.

Now the common belief of the time was that if bad things happened to a person it was because that person had done something to offend God and God was disciplining the person.

So after a week they began to question Job. Well what did you do Job? You must have done something, Job? You can tell us Job. **What is your sin?**

But Job insists that he is Innocent. "I am innocent!" he says. "I have done nothing?"

The 3 friends begin to lecture Job.

"How can you say that you are blameless, everyone sins? Come on get it off your chest? Repent? Ask God to forgive you? If you are innocent then blame God, curse God."

But Job is patient with his friends and maintains his innocence. He counters their arguments. "Good things happen to the wicked and the righteous alike you've seen that. I am innocent. I am willing to defend myself before God. I will not blame God."

Well as you may know, the story goes on and on for 42 chapters....That`s a lot of suffering.....but Job is patient. Job is confident that he has done nothing to offend God. In verse 10 of chapter 23 that was not read this morning, Job speaks of God and he says, `But he knows the way that I take when he has tested me I shall come out like Gold.`

Job will endure the testing. Job is patient.

But what does patient mean. The Funk and Wagnal`s dictionary defines it this way.

Possessing or demonstrating quiet, uncomplaining endurance under distress or annoyance or long suffering.

Tolerant , tender, forbearing

Capable of tranquility awaiting results or outcomes

Capable of bearing with

Persevering, diligent

I think that in the most part Job exemplified that definition and so we get the expression, The Patience of JOB. That expression actually comes from The Letter of James written to the 12 tribes which had been scattered outside of Palestine after the fall of the temple in the 1st century of the Common Era. James Chapter 5 vs 10-12 King James version reads

``Take my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering and patience. Behold we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the Patience of Job and have seen that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.``

Do you know of anyone who you might say is as Patient as Job

When I hear those words the Dali Llama immediately comes to mind.

Who do you know who`s outstanding quality is Patience.....

Is patience innate or is it something we learn

I have a feeling that some people are born with a temperament that exudes patience while others of us need to learn self-control in order to cultivate such a virtue.

I remember 2 experiences in my childhood where I learned about patience that involved waiting the hard way.

The first was when I was admitted to hospital with a very severe outbreak of eczema when I was 4 years old.. I woke one night and called out for MOM. But she wasn`t there a nurse came instead. When the lights came on, I saw that I had scratched the skin off of my left arm and it was bleeding badly. To stop me from scratching, she tied my arms to the sides of the crib. Crying was useless. I had to be patient till the morning came.

During that same hospital stay, Uncle Sid came to see me. He walked by my door twice, the third time I called out to him. In hindsight I realized that he didn`t recognize me as I was so covered with the rash of eczema.

Uncle Sid told me that mom and dad were here to see me, if I promised not to cry to go home. So they came and when visiting hours were over, I walked them to the elevator. Mom said that when that elevator door closed she was the one who cried. I knew that if I waited patiently they would come back another day.

The second time was when my Aunt Jo was in the hospital having surgery for cancer. We went up to Saskatoon to visit her. I was about 10, too young to visit her as the visiting age was 12 at that time. So I had to wait in the rotunda. It seemed like I waited for hours for mom or dad or Uncle Andy to come down and sit with me or take me to the cafeteria for a drink. I believe that I was able to wait patiently because I knew what it was like to be alone in a hospital room day after day.

Patience is a virtueI've reminded myself of this many a time over the years. And a virtue is the quality of moral righteousness, rectitude and rectitude is uprightness in principles and conduct.

Can you think of times when you were patient. Can you think of times when you were impatient?

It seems to me that everyone has the capacity for patience. But that we experience it or don't experience it in different situations.

For example some people are very patient when reading instructions on how to do or make something

Some people are very patient when learning a new skill or task.

Some people are known for their patience when dealing with children and so on
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Most of us know the situations where we have The Patience of Job. And the result is most often a feeling of inner peace and wellbeing. And most of us know the situations that push our buttons. And we know the result of those episodes, where we may feel upset and disgruntled and angry. And later regretful and disappointed with our behaviour, am I right.

The good news is that when we know what pushes our buttons, then we can begin to work on cultivating self-control and patience. We **can** master the virtue of Patience. But it isn't always easy is it.

Jobs wife and friends tried to push Jobs buttons but Job would have none of it.

I truly think that Job had learned the lesson of living in the NOW. Not in the past or in the future. But in the Now. When we live in the Now, we are accepting of what is happening in our lives, we dont blame anyone, we take responsibility for our actions . We live with awareness each and every moment. We exhibit patience. We have faith, faith in something bigger than ourselves, faith in God like Jobfaith in life..... And with faith comes hope . Hope for a new day tomorrow. As Job told his friends.....I will come out in Gold.

Virtue is available to each of us, if we practice living in the Now.

We too can have The Patience of Job.

May it be so.