Let us review the fruit of the Spirit as Paul lists them in Galatians 5:22-23:

“22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

These characteristics are hallmarks, evidence of the Holy Spirit at work in the life of the believer. They represent the character of Jesus being developed in us. God is these attributes. Each is inherent in our Holy God who desires to develop them in His children. So far, we have unpacked love, joy, and peace—all wonderful attributes! Today, we look at patience. Patience is something we all want but seldom pray for. It is an attribute we all need. “Lord, give me patience, and give it to me now!” Thankfully, our God is a patient God (please reference Psalm 104:8-14 under “passages that support this message” after the end of the text).

 The Bible has a lot to say about patience. This fruit of the Holy Spirit is discussed about 100 times in the King James Version, as many as 140 in other translations. Talked about are patience with others, in tribulation, in waiting for the Second Coming of Christ, in waiting on the Lord for to answer or to act in response to prayer. Church, patience is a gift from God. It doesn’t come to us naturally. No, we are naturally impatient. We are impatient because of a need to control or because of selfishness. We fail to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in our time of waiting or in dealing with others. Paul writes in Ephesians 4:1-3,

 4 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Christian, listen. Since Christ has been so patient with me, how can I refuse to be patient with my brothers and sisters or with God, in His sovereignty and perfect timing?

 Family, listen. Patience is not accomplished by our own self-effort but by relying on God. The hands that created the stars is in no danger of forgetting our situation. We need only be aware of His presence! Patience is a preventer. It has the ability to prevent frustration, anger, and gossip. Patience is a quality that can save of from regret, causing us to make Holy Spirit-guided decisions instead of selfish ones. Patience, remember, is a fruit of the Spirit, not a fruit of “try harder” or of “just figure it out.”

 Moreover, Impatience doesn’t really speed up anything. Our problem is that we are in a hurry, and God is not. I’ve heard people say, “We shouldn’t pray for patience.” Oh, my! Listen, Christian! That is shallow, me-centered theology. Patience is the mark of wisdom and of spiritual maturity. And it is an essential element of love. Paul writes:

 4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

 8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

This passage gives the Christians at Corinth and us a healthily developed fruit of the Spirit in the life of a person cooperating with the Holy Spirit. Adrian Rogers has said, “If you don’t learn patience, you probably will learn very little of anything else.” Think, for example, of learning an instrument or a foreign language. To succeed, the learner must have patience, and patience involves endurance. It means, also, that the learner doesn’t demand his own way. He must be patient with others and with himself.

 Family, God has done some might work in what appears to be down time. Think about Jonah in the belly of the whale. Think of Job enduring the countless plagues and personal assaults. Think of the Israelites in the desert between Egypt and the Holy Land. Think of Jesus’ patience with Peter in his denials. Think of Jesus and his patience with Thomas, who Jesus could have chastised but who He welcomed and to whom He gave

evidence and assurance (\*John 20:25-28)—no scolding, no abandonment, just loving and teaching. Think, of course, of Jesus in the tomb, three days of waiting--defeating death--for the signature event of His life and ours, the Resurrection and its saving grace!

 Family, patience helps us to live peacefully even when we have to wait. What am I learning? How is God growing me? Waiting is not just a season to go through. It is a season to grow through. Waiting is NOT wasting. Maintaining perspective of His sovereignty helps us to view situations and people through a Heavenly lens. God uses waiting to form us, drawing us to Himself, developing patience as the Holy Spirit renews our mind (\*\*Romans 12:1-2). Waiting well is a worshipful witness. Waiting is the perfect opportunity to worship. And lastly, patience is a reflection of love. Love is patient. You cannot see your reflection in boiling water. Similarly, we cannot reflect the love of Christ when our impatience prevents peace. Think about how patient God has been with each of us, with me and with you. Shouldn’t we use our time awaiting God to worship Him? Shouldn’t we be patient with each other and in our prayers?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\*John 20:25-28

25 So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” 27 Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

28 Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

\*\*Romans 12:1-2

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

PASSAGES IN SUPPORT OF THIS SERMON:

Psalm 103:8-14

The Lord is compassionate and gracious,

 slow to anger, abounding in love.

9 He will not always accuse,

 nor will he harbor his anger forever;

10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve

 or repay us according to our iniquities.

11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth,

 so great is his love for those who fear him;

12 as far as the east is from the west,

 so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

13 As a father has compassion on his children,

 so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;

14 for he knows how we are formed,

 he remembers that we are dust.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.