

## Patient Presents for Advent James 57ff TLC Dec 15 2019 (Patience in Suffering)

<sup>7</sup>Be patient, therefore, brothers,<sup>[a]</sup> until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. <sup>8</sup>You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. <sup>9</sup>Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. <sup>10</sup>As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. <sup>11</sup>Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

It is one of those posts on face book that always comes to mind this time of year. It is not a drawing or sketching of the birth of Jesus. It is not a beautiful painting of shepherds in the field. It is not clip from a movie like the Christmas story.

The characters in this photograph is not a picture of Santa Claus, reindeer, or frosty the snowman.

NO this photograph and post is about Advent. And it is not someone dressed up as John the Baptist. No the Advent post involves to animals—and it is not a sheep or a donkey. One of the animals is loved by most people and one is disliked by most people.

The star of the photograph, loved by most is a middle aged dog. There is grey on his chin and his eyebrows a peppered with white. This is one of those loyal hunting dogs. He is a beagle mixed with white spots on a tan body. He is standing on the deck of His house and before him is the animal most disliked by people.

The little black and white fellow is minding his own business. He is hungry. So, his face is not looking at the dog at all. No, the skunk has his nose and mouth deep in the dog's dish and it is eating the dogs food.

The dog sees the skunk and stands there. The dog is watching and waiting instead of pouncing and barking at the criminal eating his food. The dog in his wisdom knows don't move lest you are sprayed by the skunk

The caption on this encounter for the dog and the skunk is this. **"TWO OF THE GREATEST QUALITIES TO HAVE IN LIFE ARE PATIENCE AND WISDOM."**

**And that is a clear message in our season of Advent. It is a time of patience and wisdom.**

**James in his letter, his epistle is pointing us to this idea today. He isn't using the image of a dog or skunk, but the farmers, grumblers, and prophets.**

***First the farmers. <sup>7</sup>Be patient, therefore, brothers,<sup>[a]</sup> until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains***

We have to remember a few things about James when he is inspired by the Holy Spirit to pen his letter to 12 tribes of Christians who have fled because of persecution in Jerusalem and other places. This book is the 2<sup>nd</sup> book written in the New Testament. Scholars believe only the book of Galatians written by Paul is early. Then James and one of the topics He is telling those who have fled for their lives is to be patient—patient until Jesus comes again.

That word patient in the King James Version of Scripture is also known as long suffering. Like that Dog who wants His food from the skunk—He is long suffering in His wait. This world will cause

believers trouble. There will be challenges and people will not like us because they did not like our Lord Jesus Christ.

Farmers in the new Testament knew a lot about long suffering. American farmers are great producers of food today because they have all the technology of anhydrous fertilizer, insecticides, pesticides, and fancy planters and combines. Yes, they have to be patient in waiting for the rain and sunshine, but they are not as longsuffering as the people in the New Testament. The plowing may be done between to oxen back then, or the seeds just planted in holes by hand. The weeds pulled out by hand with out hurting the plants. And then there was the waiting for rain—no irrigation system here. Waiting, waiting on the Lord above to provide water for the crops and the land.

It rains in the fall in the Holy Land. It rains in the month of October in other countries like the third world country of Laos—without the rains in Laos the people starve for the water needed for the rice patties will not form. This 3<sup>rd</sup> world country to day is similar to Israel in the New Testament, but their starvation is even greater for communism and Buddhism block the spread of Gospel of Christ just like Jesus is blocked in other Asian lands.

What does this remind us of, but to be Patient with our lives in Advent. Like people wait for rain around the world and today and in ancient times—we are to be more patient in the long lines as we pick up presents, more patient with the relatives, more patient with each other, more patient with ourselves.

Patient Presents...My how our world has changed with so many people ordering their gifts on line. Almost as fast as lighting a gift can travel on Amazon from one side of the country to the next. God are the days when you order something and it took months before it to arrive—no reason to plan for a fishing trip months ahead when you can have your new lures almost overnighted anywhere you can be—but Patience is part of the Christian life and Advent—for our we want not just for the child of Christmas we are waiting for the king at the end of the world.

And while we are waiting, James reminds us not to be an Ebenezer Scrooge. **He deals with the grumblers. Second the grumblers Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door.**

The Christians who were dispersed throughout the Roman empire did not have an easy life. James is reminding them do not be upset with one another during these times of persecution. Do be so picky about how people do things—realize your focus is not on comparing one another to see who is better or worse focus on the Judge of us all—Jesus.

Jesus the judge who unbelievers will see with fear is the judge who has decided to have mercy on you and your fellow Christians. He decided to have mercy on you when He came to this world the first time by living a life on this planet. He decided to have mercy on us by healing our sick, forgiving our sins, casting out our demons, feeding thousands of people, listening to people mock him, torture him, kill him on a cross, and then rising on the third day. Jesus judged to have mercy by not calling down his angels to destroy everyone when he was betrayed in the Garden of Eden. When He was teased on the cross, he did not call His angels in to rescue Him. And when Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea took His body, He was really dead and not an angel came to heal Him.

Be patient with fellow Christians during this holiday season. Some of them are lonely this year because of those they have said goodbye to in heaven. Be kind to unbelievers too. Pray that God would guide them in His mercy to faith.

Perhaps a new group should form for believers and non-believers alike known as GA—Grumblers Anonymous. We gather together in a group and confess I really was a lousy person this week, I was mean. I thought even thoughts. I didn't help those I could have helped. I complained about other people. I was a poor wretched miserable sinner—oh wait a minute.

We just did that—my Grumblers Anonymous group is church. I confessed my sins in church.

**And then there are the prophets not profits but prophets.**

***As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. <sup>11</sup>Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.***

A prophet was someone who did more than just foretell what would happen in the future, they preached and lived the faith. They taught the word of God. And when things were not what they wanted in life they trusted the Lord, with all their heart, soul, and mind. Like Job they did not lean on their own understanding, and God kept their paths straight so they would have heaven.

God has judged to be merciful to you. He blessed Job after the suffering by giving him back double the camels, double the sheep, double all the oxen, and double the donkeys he had lost plus and 10 more children in addition to those living in heaven.

He blessed the early Christians for their faith continued in spite of persecution and this faith is what is in you today.

There may be a skunk in your life, but be patient and wise. Instead of running into a situation like a young puppy—Pause and look to God in order to know what to do. Patience Presents.

Amen.