

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

St. James writes “Be patient until the coming of the Lord.” They are Words well-heeded as we begin our Advent observance. Advent is a time of patience, a time of waiting, a time of repentance, a time of preparation. Proper Advent observance is to keep the Word of St. James, to be patient until the coming of the Lord.

But Christian patience is unlike worldly patience. The patience of the world is a tempered count-down, a measured waiting for a predetermined event. Men wait patiently for a paycheck every other Friday. They know it is coming, they know when it is coming, they know how much it will be, and they’ve probably already spent much of it. That’s not the patience to which St. James refers.

Advent patience is to wait for something for which there is no assigned date, something the exact circumstances of which no man knows, to wait for something that most men deny, to wait for something that is now unseen. The world doesn’t call that patience. The world calls it foolishness. It is foolishness to those who perish because they believe they find ultimate fulfillment in self-actualization and in temporal riches. They are disinterested in the spiritual, or are given to “spirituality” rather than saving faith.

But Advent patience is possible only by faith. And faith gives birth to hope. We believe that the Lord will come. We believe it because His Holy Word, also rejected by the world, promises it. That promise is even imbedded in the Words of St. James this day. He says “Be patient until the coming of the Lord.” There is no doubt in these Words. The Lord will come. And until that time we wait – patiently, reverently, repentantly, and yet hopefully.

The Apostle Paul speaks also of this same patience. He writes first that we are justified by faith, and that we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Christian patience is established only after conversion and justification. But more, we have access by faith into the grace in which we now stand. And by that grace, through faith, we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. And in that hope, patience is possible.

The flesh isn’t patient. A little discomfort proves it. Skipping a meal reminds us of just how frail the flesh is. A one-hour time change throws the family into chaos. A little change in temperature, the passing of a few years, even temporary affliction reminds us of just how impatient we are.

So patience and affliction are related. Without affliction patience, in the worldly sense, isn’t hard. But add affliction, add tribulation, loss or mourning, and fleshly men are finished being patient. Not so the Christian. To believe in Christ means to taste of His cross. It means that while waiting, the world will rail against us. It means that while waiting, the flesh will deteriorate and fail. It means that while waiting, tribulation will be added, as the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh try to shatter faith.

But faith is given that we might endure tribulation, that in the face of suffering we have hope, that while we wait we do not fall away. The Apostle writes that “we glory in tribulations,

knowing that tribulation produces perseverance, and perseverance, character, and character, hope.

So do not lose hope, dear Christian. The Lord comes. The Apostle confirms it. The Evangelists proclaim it. The Epistles promise it. Do not wait as the fallen world waits. Repent of your impatience. Repent of your doubt, your transgressions, your fleshly wonderings. Put away the worldly, and trust in the Promise.

For by that trust, by the faith worked by the Promise by the Spirit of God, you have hope. And that means that by the grace of God you have perseverance. And by that Divine gift, patience is possible. It is a fruit of faith. It is a patience that never loses sight of the Promise: the Lord comes. And it is a patience that strives to conform your life to the Word of God, a patience born of sanctification, patience possible by the working of the Spirit of the Living God.

True patience, the patience the Apostle describes, endures the indignities and afflictions of this fallen world, trusting in the world to come. St. James uses the example of the farmer waiting for the precious fruit from the earth. So will the coming of the Lord bring a harvest of righteousness, the angels the reapers, the Holy Church the blessed crop brought forth from the good soil of faith.

St. James bids you to consider the example of the Prophets. In tribulation, in extended times of waiting, they remained faithful. Consider St. Nicholas, who is remembered on this day. He suffered great tribulation as he was imprisoned under the Diocletian persecution, faithfully waiting. His faithful waiting bore fruit as he was released under the Emperor Constantine, and was sent to the Nicene Council, where he bore testimony, where he gave witness, where he confessed the One Holy catholic and Apostolic faith, that faith which we ourselves confess this day.

Let them be an example of suffering and patience. Let them be an example of men who clung to hope, hope born of the promise. And St. Paul reminds you of the reason for all of it: "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

How much more, then, will the same Christ keep His Promise to you, you who are baptized into Him, you who cling to His Word, you who believe the Prophetic and Apostolic Truth, you who wait patiently for His coming, you see your Lord now in water and Word, in Bread and Wine, and in the proclamation of forgiveness by the undershepherds He calls and sends. He gives you faith that works hope, and that hope brings forth patience as it is wed to trust. Believing, you wait patiently until the coming of the Lord. And in that patient waiting, you find joy, and God gives you the peace that passes all understanding.

And that patience, the patience of faith, the patience that looks through the tribulations and afflictions of this life, the patience that finds its fulfillment in the final Advent of Christ, that patience your Coming Lord feeds and strengthens as you wait expectantly, hopefully, as you daily long for His Coming.

For even this violet day the Gospel is preached to the poor, there is healing for the brokenhearted, there is liberty for the captives, there is recovery of sight for the blind, as you see

St. James 5:7-11
Wednesday of *Ad Te Levavi*, 2017 A. ✠ D.

Christ in Paten and Chalice, there is liberty for you oppressed by the devil, the flesh, and this fallen world. There is liberty for you, because the acceptable year of the Lord is proclaimed.

And in the patience of faith, the patience that trusts in the Lord's coming, you confess with the Psalmist "Unto Thee, O Lord, I lift up my soul; O my God, I trust in you, let me never be ashamed."

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