

(1 Corinthians 13:1-7, NIV84)

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

For the past few months we have been patiently waiting for our churches to reopen... or have we? Perhaps we've been "chomping at the bit," like race horses waiting in the gate just busting to be set free, and the longer the wait the more restless we become. Would that characterization more accurately describe your wait to get back to church? If so, I feel you.

Saint Augustine once wrote: "O Lord... Thou hast awaken us to delight in Thy praise; for Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it finds rest in Thee." Just as our hearts have found rest in the Lord through faith, let us also find daily rest in the confidence that He will bring this crisis and the current shutdown to an end. Our church doors will reopen, our congregations will once again gather for public worship, and things will return to normal. Until then, wait patiently and at peace, knowing that Jesus is with us, forgiving our sins, guiding us by His all-powerful word and serving as our advocate before His Father's throne.

Waiting with you in Christ,  
Pastor Golm

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May 27

Long-suffering

The fruit of the Spirit is . . . long-suffering. Galatians 5:22

We have been meditating on a few gifts of the Spirit which Paul mentions in his letter to the Galatians. Today we examine the gift which he calls long-suffering. Perhaps we can start by showing what long-suffering is not.

Are things getting on our nerves? Do the countless little irritations of the day find us flying off the handle? Are we touchy, grouchy, impatient, pouty? Then remember: irritableness, impatience, and bitterness are not "the fruit

of the Spirit". They are rather "the works of the flesh". They are the very opposite of long-suffering!

In another place, Paul reminds us that "Charity suffereth long and is kind" (1 Corinthians 13:4). Love can absorb the shock of abuse, the impact of mistreatment, the stings of slander, the disappointments of false friendships-and can still maintain its peace and composure.

Love is always gracious and full of good will. In the midst of irritations, in the midst of trying circumstances, love is not only self-composed, but it is friendly, compassionate, and tender. In spite of trials, and vexations, love just goes on loving.

The source of such loving patience, of course, lies beyond the walls of the human heart. It springs forever at the foot of Calvary's cross. There, in an infinitely larger measure, love suffered long and was kind. That love, the love which drove the Son of God himself to die for sinful men, must enkindle in our hearts a similar affection, a similar patience, a similar kindness.

Godly patience is a "fruit of the Spirit". Let us pray daily for a greater measure of this priceless virtue.

Give us faith to trust Thee boldly, Hope to stay our souls on Thee;  
But oh! BEST of all Thy graces, Give us Thine own charity!