

patience

It was a remarkable period of time that was the, I presume it was 1948, let's say. I don't remember exactly which year, but I think it was.

I was just reflecting in part on some of the things that were read there in addition to what Mr. Richard Burkey mentioned and what I should like to address. Talk to a number of people in and out of the region of Southern California. On the importance of a topic that probably many of us are sure we understood until we came to an event that tested whether we did. It's called patience. But before I do I want to tell you how the world has changed since 1948 which in a sense is one of the reasons why we do need to think about patience and how we conduct ourselves. I was in a suit that afternoon, it was a Sunday afternoon, when I went to the Civic Auditorium in Pasadena as a student at Ambassador College, and I looked around and saw that no man wore a business suit as I am wearing today. They all wore tuxedos, for no responsible man went to a public affair in Pasadena without a tuxedo. Today I see men and they not only don't wear a business suit, they certainly aren't in tuxedos and they go to the Civic Auditorium today. This is a change world and I think it is important that we recognize how we need to conduct ourselves as individuals in a world that does change. However slowly, some decades much more rapidly than others, in particular the decade of the 1960s. But I am saying this by way of introduction because there wasn't that much difference in the spirit and attitude generated in that marvelous group. So many years ago the same attitude can be generated in us by listening to a reading of the book of Isaiah in particular. I should like to draw attention to the fact that Isaiah answered the question, here am I Lord, send me. He failed to ask however another question, what would happen if I did go? And you did send me. That isn't what God heard from him, nor was it revealed. But Isaiah died, they sawed him in two in the Jewish tradition after the death of Hezekiah in the days of his son, King Manasseh. So sometimes we have to ask some serious questions before we hastily make a decision.

I came to Ambassador in 1947 in the autumn of October. It was a period of time in which a number of people whose names I need not mention, I'll just mention one because his name had been written up as a contributor to the book that Mr. Armstrong wrote on the new morality, Dr. Merrill. He was baptized, a gentleman from Sweden who lived here, worked with Chrysler Motors was baptized. Yes, he was baptized. Other men and women were, and I was not.

See, there was a question I had. I just didn't ask, send me Lord. I was concerned for what would happen if he did. Because we had lived through World War II. We had lived through the knowledge that if one had another religion, you could be put to death by the millions. If you had another political affiliation, you could be put to death by the millions. A few millions, but a few millions when you're not that many millions yourself. You could be put to death if you were of another people. You could be put to death if you were of another sexual orientation.

You could be put to death if you were a religious leader.

For you see, it was a world in which to be Jewish, merited death, to be a Marxist, merited death, to be a homosexual, merited death, to be a Catholic priest, merited death, if you took a view contrary to the party doctrines.

If you were a Gypsy, it's merited death. If you were a Lutheran who waited until others came first, not that all did. And you took a stand finally against the Nazi party, it's merited death.

So we've grown to be quite different today in 1995.

In 1947, 1948, our morals, the standards were different.

The challenges were remarkable if you lived in Europe at that day or parts of Asia.

How to cope with the changes of life, where today we tolerate what was not publicly permitted in some countries and was privately extirpated in others, and now we live in a world so far removed in codes and standards.

I can think of occasions of young people who came from poor homes in the 1930s in school, even into the 1940s in World War II, whose haircuts, boys, were not up to standards in the public, not private schools. And the principal was willing to give his money to the child but told the child, you get the haircut and don't come back until you are neatly groomed for this school.

And today, I needn't even describe what it's like to be where we are.

It is astonishing. I think it's important to recognize that we live for decades, hopefully.

Some of you are relatively new in the church but may or may not have decades behind you in maturity. And in these changes that take place around us and are bound to take place again, it is important to know how to conduct ourselves, how to be patient.

It's one thing to be tolerant, to be forgiving. It's another thing to be permissive.

It's another thing to be gracious and, in contrast, hostile when you see things that are not part of your experience. So we need to look at life as a whole. We need to look at ourselves as individuals, at our families, in terms of our employment, the people whom we meet socially and the people whom we meet spiritually. There are a number of important words we can use.

The topic today is not the topic of love that I wish to address.

The patience is an aspect both of faith and love and hope. Paul lists certain fundamental areas Jesus focused on the word patience more often than we might realize. And in the Bible, whether in the Hebrew scriptures or in the Greek, we have some very important places that we ought to read. How we handle ourselves, how we are willing to, let's say, move and not seem peculiar because if I were to go to a public event and dress as we did to standard 40 to 50 years ago, then I would seem to be the peculiar one for whom others must be patient.

Ecclesiastes 7-8 speaks of the importance. Some of these you don't have to turn to, you may only want to mark. In some cases, I think that you should turn to it while I read it.

Patience in spirit is a very important attitude and it's contrasted there to the sense of pride because many who are proud are impatient people. Patience in spirit is an attitude.

The word in spirit of course is in reference to the mind, to the inner invisible person.

It's interesting that you will meet in life people who can be proud and hasty and you will meet other people who are patient and concerned.

1 Thessalonians 5-14 in a letter of Paul to a church congregation asks the brethren to be patient toward all, and the word men is used, which is a term now that is treated as sexist, so we would have to substitute something else today.

Patience toward all people that we meet. It's important to learn how to be patient because we each have differences. Habits that are good, habits that are bad, and habits in between that don't make that much difference but may be different from your habits.

James 5-7 tells us how long we have to be patient. Interestingly however James may have perceived it we have to be patient till death. He says be patient to the coming of the Lord. James in writing may have perceived his generation as hardly possible to get beyond that in which they were publicly butchering people in the arena for entertainment because so many people for example in Italy and the cities had no jobs and had to be fed and they had to be entertained or who knows what crimes they would have been into and what kind of a world to ever get beyond that.

Well the world's changed many ways since then but to be patient to the coming of the Lord is in a sense to learn to be patient to the time of death for it is appointed unto men once to die, pointed unto humans to die once and then the judgment.

Patience is consequently lifelong.

It is not something that you decide to have just so many years and after that you don't need to be patient any longer. So patience is an inward attitude that expresses of course itself outwardly toward everyone and whose duration must last through life. Ministers are asked to be patient all who have some responsibility.

For example in 2 Timothy 2 34 someone ordained in the church should be apt to teach should be a servant of the Lord and patient. Now here we are dealing with a number of responsibilities but we discover the importance of patience in the area of communicating to other people. I can't tell you when or where I learned patience because it's a lifelong experience but the first time I specifically remembered patience had to do my wife has heard the story with little Alvin who couldn't subtract and I was the next to the last person in class to learn to subtract. Now there were others who learned immediately how to subtract I don't know if Mr. Berkey was now asking what was his problem meaning me that I learned next to the last but I was the kind of person who wanted to understand what subtraction meant before I could do it and all the others who understood the teacher never asked them the teacher asked me because she thought I must have learned something and I was told to go to the cloakroom which had a little table and a couple of chairs in a window and to teach Alvin to subtract while the class went on and I dutifully did that like Isaiah didn't ask the final question well what happens if I can't and I couldn't and I walked out to the teacher and said Alvin doesn't understand and she says go back and do not come out until he does. If I had the wisdom I have today I would have suggested that she try it but I didn't know that because you could talk to a teacher and perhaps encourage her to use the same method. Poor Alvin just didn't get it and I had many things going through my mind what will my father say in the evening I don't show up you know all those things and finally a very important question not related to this topic that may be more so than you realize it's a question that really underlies why it's difficult sometimes to work with others or to understand others and to be patient with others.

I said Alvin what is it that you don't understand and I gave a few examples here and he began to explain to me what he didn't understand and when I knew what his problem was I explained it to him and Alvin understood what was the Jew's problem what was the Marxist problem in the period of world war two what was the homosexual problem what was the problem of being born a gypsy being a Catholic priest Deluther and pastor you know people find it difficult to understand why other people are either what they are in their thinking or their action and their being we have stereotypes racial stereotypes sexual stereotypes and you notice I'm not trying to define only the group that's

right and not the group that's wrong I'm giving you a whole perspective I had to understand what Alvin's problem was if I'm going to be patient with people who do not understand Christ who have some other sexual orientation who have been ordained into a religion that I would find sufficiently different that I could not be a member of it is important to understand those individuals what is it like to be a gypsy what is it like to have been a jew who when he arrives at a new place his first plan is where to go next as a jew told me when we were seated side by side I know a jew in southern california who is interested in buddhism found us somewhat interesting we were together in the philosophical library looking up some things and he said that's one of the things being a jew one never forgets how and where to go next because the people among whom we are are never patient permanently we can go through hebrew 612 a verse you should be familiar with through faith and patience we inherit the promises belief is important but belief leads to the recognition that you don't stop believing the first day or the second or the third or the first year the first decade belief should extend a lifetime and in a lifetime we learn that it is important to have faith and confidence hebrews 11 is a chapter devoted to faith and there are scattered examples in the bible devoted to patience sometimes particular individuals sarah and abraham isaac job are all individuals designated as having great need of patience while their belief and faith may have been tested it's significant therefore that we take a look internally and externally at ourselves we as children when we grow a little older and discover siblings brother or sister or brothers or sisters coming along if we're the oldest and when we're young we grow up to realize little by little that we have older more powerful brothers and sisters our oldest daughter was never shy she was quite capable of leading which made it a little difficult for number three who was a boy the youngest child we had was short she's mature now at 30 31 as it turns yes 31 this year time goes by some people learn to work with others they are by nature more patient than others and part of this is inherited we have people who are inherently impatient and other people and sometimes even races who are inherently more patient and within the groups there are some who are more patient than others americans have never been known worldwide for their patience we want to get a job done joe and lie the communist leader of china since it was based on a revolution said in response to the question what do you think the outcome of the french revolution for france and he said in good chinese wisdom with patience it is too early to tell americans would have predicted the outcome before it happened so whether we are mature individuals or little children we first have to learn patience by dealing with our younger siblings or our older ones and then there's the problem of dealing with your father and mother and then father and mother has the problem of dealing with the children that come along there are some parents who find it much more difficult to be patient with their children than others some have a knack of creating the solution so the patience is easy a mother who is able by nature without having to read a work by dr spock or someone else to know how to make decisions instantly for the children as distinct from the mother who worries and then gets frustrated it is interesting to see that in our own makeup we all differ in terms of our ability to be patient it isn't that everybody is born equal before god and the bar of justice is one thing but some of us are born physically unequal handicapped people and some of us by nature and emotion are born with greater problems to wrestle with than others do i do not have to explain that all you have to do is look at other people whom you know and you say well that that person just seems so naturally patient it may be true and some people seem impatient so we have different degrees with which we must wrestle with this particular problem so sometimes and when i reflect on our children i find that there are some children that predictably can handle patiently more children in the next generation than another might we see this and it's important that we profit by our own experiences it's important we profit as parents or grandparents as we help others and wrestle with ourselves and it is important as children that we also be patient not everything comes to the first born as soon as it might come to the next one and sometimes the third or fourth think it's owed to them at three which the oldest child at nine may have never had

before and now we have the question of the importance of patience within the church as an institution not merely the family or the workplace we have to learn how to be helpful how to be firm how to explain to others and when not to explain to others how to listen and when to speak now some people emphasize more one of these areas than others other areas but if we're going to be patient and the kind of examples that we are we ought to think of some of the thoughts that were expressed by Mr Burkey his experience is rather different in mine in terms of the friendships that he has now i can say that not because i know all of his friends because i know that he doesn't know some of ours Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Jews and sometimes Christians, Catholics, Protestants, sects there are people for whom the curtain will never go up in this life to see what we may see but if i have a Jew who does not understand cannot understand the Messiah who must like Thomas wait to see what he looks like to be convinced then there are others who may know nothing of the Messiah who may be remarkably patient and thoughtful i know of Jews who are patient and those who are not are their Buddhist friend and now some years deceased could be a very patient man and not let certain things ruffle him who died in an accident in Thailand in a subat yin yu ag in some ways he was far more likely to be patient than i would i'm giving this sermon not because i'm the most patient man in the world i should listen to myself and be an example as well we had three pieces of luggage i was to get on a plane which only two were allowed no one had told me before what do you do well he was a patient man and he made the simple suggestion we tied two of them together and we have now one and two i thought that was both clever it was a nonsensical thing to have to do it because the same amount went on the plane except that you had to toss two together i think if i were loading it i would have preferred just one each but those are the rules and that's how we've made a decision my mind immediately went to the illogical of something the illogical rules and you can lecture society for making illogical rules but he was a patient man and simply worked with them but there are things he didn't understand so Mr Berkey points out today that it is possible for some people to be growing in areas as paul addressed the question who show the works through faith of the law of god in their lives for others who may know more of the law so none of that evidence even if these people had never really understood what was written in in this case a greek might not have understood what was written in the code that the jews had but nevertheless they had learned certain things from life and were instructed by those things so in closing let me suggest that you give some serious thought to looking at the daily problems that come to you in life with others with things and you look at the example and then you begin to ask yourself how you solve some of these things can we change everybody else to meet our standards the answer would be no no woman in her right mind and there are people like that not in their right mind who married men in order to change them has made a wise decision i don't know whether men seek to change their wives as much as wives seek to change their husbands but that's at least the way the story is given it is important that we learn how to coordinate our relationship with people some of whom we can be very close to and others we simply prefer to be a little further away sometimes i meet a man and the more i know of him the more i would describe what my relationship would have to be i would be willing to dig a ditch with that person eight hours a day anywhere in the world so long as he dug in one direction and i in the other i i guess some of you know people like that and then there are people in work we keep interrupting because we have something new to think about in our little excavation i don't even remember the size if i i think it's uh there were about 10 12 feet in a direction not more than that near 10 square a jewish lady and i were excavating in syria a mrs harris she had her children early and then came to be interested in other things instead of having the professional opportunities earlier and then having children my wife has met her in number of occasions she's the kind of person that makes it possible to work with without ever having your patience test she never talked too much or too little she knew what to say and i think that she at least felt it was mutual because she's always asked if i were going there again i think she'd like to go at the same time a remarkable person

so patience can be helped by knowing what others need when to say the right words when not to say anything we can examine the experience of others around us who seem to have the art of patience saying or thinking or doing but above all it's most important in calling on god for his spiritual help through the spirit of god that is to let christ who was himself patient as expressed in the final trial where he certainly had a reason to lose his temper and argument he exemplified for death patience that we can see in how others conduct themselves what we might have done paul was a little bit more temperamental and gave a lecture to the high priest and he didn't know was one when the high priest behaved inappropriately jesus said nothing both examples are there so emotionally the difference paul explained that it was an error on his part so i'd like to encourage you for the rest of this summer to work on this category and to be of help to some who are no longer with us to be of help to those who are to recognize the differences that cannot be changed and to help change the differences that can be improved upon i think it is important now we begin to look at ourselves as individuals to see that we don't trigger problems in others because none of us know human being other than jesus christ and even he offended some don't forget that there were many who were upset by him it is important to know that none of us can make somebody else so comfortable that they can be perfectly patient with you the people who have hard hearing problems or who are blind or who may otherwise have some handicaps there's some people who know how to work with them others don't as well the elderly the less skilled we need to think about what needs to be done for the other person for alvin i don't know of any of you who are alvins here you all should be people who should be able to teach such at whatever your age but as we get older we sometimes present difficulties to others we have been very able and independent and then with age we cease to be as able or independent we have to learn how to be patient with those who must be patient with us so we're dealing with problems doctrinal differences personality differences age differences simply different ways of being reared we find this of course in the marriage of our children and you will find it also that differences in culture will make a significant difference in terms of how patient we can be with someone else we have each different sets of habits some grew up as my wife and i did in the late 20s 30s and the 40s and our habits will be permanently different not all of them we modify some but we don't modify them all our children grew up in the 50s 60s and 70s and early 80s and they will have a set of habits that will demand patients from their mates and they must learn how to be patient with others by being tolerant but not permissive being gracious but not a doormat to know how to handle each situation this of course means how to become perfect the last verse of matthew chapter five which you might like to reflect on