

Need of patience

*Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.
Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge
standeth before the door.*

James 5:8-9

After exhorting his readers to patient endurance under trials at the beginning of this epistle, James now exhorts them to patient waiting, using two different but related words in the original Greek language. How much our Lord knows our need for both kinds of patience. In our text, the immediate application is the patient waiting for the coming of the Lord, that He might bring justice to those that have selfishly oppressed his readers. At the same time, he reminds them against exhibiting selfish attitudes toward other disciples, since the same Judge for whom they wait is also about to come to judge their own attitudes, motives, and behaviors. Be careful how soon we wish for things to come to pass!

We have been conditioned by our culture to expect to have what we need or want immediately, whether it be relief from oppression, vindication, or satisfaction of our desires. Yet the example of the Lord and His word teach us just the opposite. Often there is much time required for goodness or justice to come to fruition in the case of this fallen world. Throughout the scriptures we are reminded of the longsuffering, or patient waiting, of God for men to come to repentance. Through the book of Acts we see the apostles faithfully obeying the commission of the Lord to preach the gospel, even as they wait for oppression to cease or for people to come to faith. Yet in spite of all we learn, how often do we find ourselves impatiently responding to people and circumstances. Somehow we think that we deserve better, with no defensible basis. This is nothing more than selfish pride, left over in the old man that still clamors within. Let us instead, like the farmer, faithfully plow life's ground that God brings to us each day, and then be also patient for Him to bring the right to pass, in His will, and in His time. As the writer to the Hebrews exhorted: "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Hebrews 10:36-37).