

WISDOM'S THEMES

By John F. Hall

Wisdom is defined as the quality of having experience, knowledge, and good judgment; the quality of be wise. In a previous story about perseverance, I did not cover the topics of patience and peace. This story includes patience, peace and perseverance. I selected a song to enhance each theme for each part of this story. We live in a society that since January 2020 has been under attack from an invisible enemy. This stealth and silent enemy does not care what we possess, or what we do for a living, or what we achieve in this short life. This insidious virus is very lethal especially to people over 65 with compromised immune systems. The defenses used against this enemy are social distancing, stay at home, constant washing of hands, keeping hands away from the face in public and awareness that touching anything in public is a risk.

There is an old hymn written in 1748 by Isaac Watts. A few words in the hymn are archaic. But the song deals with patience. These are some of the lyrics in the hymn, “My soul with patience waits for Thee, the living God; my hopes are on Thy promise built, Thy never failing Word. My longing eyes look out for Thy enlivening ray, more duly than the mourning watch to spy the dawning day. Let Israel trust in God; no bounds His mercy knows; the plenteous source and spring from whence eternal succor flows. Whose friendly streams to us supplies in want convey; a healing spring, a spring to cleanse and wash our guilt away.”

Jesus gives us grace for patience. The word patience is defined as the state, quality, ability or fact of being patient. Specially, the will or ability to wait or endure without complaint. Today, that patience is being tested, almost to the breaking point. The invisible enemy has caused our churches, schools, movie theaters, restaurants and most retail stores to close. The virus is so contagious that the Governors of most states have issued strict stay at home orders. The social distances of six feet is the norm and handshakes may be a thing of the past. Prior to January 2020, our society was predominantly impatient. People were impatient waiting in lines in grocery stores and department stores and impatient when stuck in traffic.

Since March, 2020, my wife, Paula and I have secured in place. My son continues to work in Tennessee. My daughter-in-law, a respiratory therapist, had her hours reduced at the hospital where she works, from 40 to 29 hours a week. This is the first time in 30 years that she had to sign up for unemployment compensation. In Revelations, Chapter 2, Verse 3, Jesus said, “And you have patience and have endured for my name and have not grown weary.” All of us are in this together. We have endured the loss of our church family and family fellowship during this Easter season.

Christ wants us to have peace in the face of adversity. Jesus told us not to be weary and to be faithful. We give Christ honor and glory by being alive and sharing our life with Him. Jesus knows that we are sinners with the hope to be with Him one day. Life is not easy. We live, to quote a former mentor, in a world of darkness that seeks the destruction of our souls and gives us no real peace. The word, peace means an undisturbed state of

mind, an absence of mental or physical conflict. In 1955, Jill Jackson-Miller and Sy Miller wrote the hymn, "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me." These are their lyrics: "Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be. With God as our Father, brothers all are we. Let me walk with my brother in perfect harmony. Let peace begin me, let this be the moment now. With ev'ry step I take let this be my solemn vow. To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally. Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me." This Christmas hymn is a simple reminder to be the change you want the world to be.

The third element in this story is perseverance. The word, persevere means to continue in a given course in spite of the difficulties or obstacles. It means to continue with a determination not to give up. We have all been through hard times, trials and pain. In Psalm, Chapter 34, Verse 18 are these words: "The Lord is near to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." There is a song titled "Shoulders," that is written by Ben Glover, Joel Smallbone, Luke Smallbone, and Tedd Tjornhom. These are some of their lyrics: "I look up to the mountains. Does my strength come from the mountains? No, my strength comes from God who made heaven and earth and the mountains. When confusion's my companion, and despair holds me for ransom, I will feel no fear, I know that You are near. When I'm caught deep in the valley with chaos for my company, I'll find comfort here 'cause I know that You are near. My help comes from You. You're right here, pulling me through. You carry my weakness, my sickness, my brokenness, my sickness, all on Your shoulders. Your shoulders! My help comes from You. You are my rest, my rescue. I don't have to see to believe that You are lifting me up on Your shoulders. You mend what once was shattered. And You turn my tears to laughter. Your forgiveness is my fortress. Oh Your mercy is relentless."

As a witness to these emotionally hard times, for all of us, I find that trusting in Christ is our beacon of light. Easter services in front of a television rather than in church and with our church family, makes us appreciate what we have taken for granted all these years. Not being able to celebrate Easter with family and friends has been tough. But this too will pass. The next time we see each other, we will not take each other for granted. We will all gain wisdom's theme that we need each other as much as we need Christ.

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