



Dear Church Family:

We are often told that patience is a virtue. Yet, no one ever tells you what to do while you're waiting. There is a popular internet challenge called the patience challenge. In this challenge parents place a snack before their child telling them to wait for their return before they can eat the snack. The parent walks away for 30 seconds to see if the child has the patience to wait to eat it. As you can imagine not many toddlers are going to wait before having the chance to eat a snack. However, in one adorable video a little girl simply sits patiently waiting for her mother to return reciting to herself, patience, patience, patience.

Jesus has appeared to the disciples for a period of 40 days. He has cemented into their hearts and minds that indeed he has risen from the dead. Jesus promises them that the Holy Spirit will come upon them and that through the Holy Spirit they will be empowered to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

This motley crew of the most unlikely folks the sisters, the disciples, Jesus' siblings and his Mama a total of 120 people are all waiting for the coming of the spirit. What are these disciples of Jesus to do in the meantime while they wait for the coming of the spirit? What are we to do in life between the promises of God we have received and the fulfillment of them.

We are to wait! Waiting requires a great deal of patience. However, patience does not mean passivity. We do not simply twiddle our fingers while we wait for God. The disciples engaged in active waiting through prayer. Waiting is incredibly difficult when we want everything here and now. We want justice, we want peace, we want the world to be changed. We want our lives and situations we find ourselves in to change. We live in an age where we are quick to speak and slow to listen. Waiting is holy work. The work of prayer is not passive; it is a humble acknowledgment of our dependence upon God's spirit in our lives. Waiting requires us to recognize that the work of the Spirit is not done out of our own strength but God's. Bishop William H. Willimon in his commentary on Acts writes, "Our waiting implies that the things which need doing in the world are beyond our ability to accomplish solely by our own effort, our own programs, and crusades. Some other empowerment is needed, therefore the church waits and prays."

Patience, patience, patience... the world around us needs a response from the Church to the moments and movements of our time. Our marriages, our finances, our family relationships, our ordinary lives need a move of the Spirit. We must be equipped, prepared, and prayed up in order to act. Before we can act, before we can protest, before we can write a budget, before we start an initiative, before we make that plan we must pray and we must wait.

UCC minister Anthony B. Robinson and Free Methodist Minister Robert Wall write in the book “Called to be Church: The Book of Acts For A New Day: “This active, expectant waiting is a time of calling on the Lord, anticipating the fulfillment of promises, being confident of God’s faithfulness, and resolving to restore and create God’s people anew.”

We wait! We wait knowing that God will keep his promises to us! We wait through prayer, through worship, and through calling on God’s name! Until such time that the spirit falls upon us and we are sent out to do the task that God has called us to!

With Love & Prayer,

Rev. Harris