

Be Patient for the Lord's Coming

☆ **Near and endearing (vv.7-9)**

☆ **Blessed endurance (vv.9-11)**

In the name of the Lord's own Messiah, the **Coming One**, dearly redeemed:

The computer programmers among us know all about customization. Everyone has their preferences. When you get a new phone, you expect all your contacts, calendar and even your ikons to transfer seamlessly. You're in a hurry. You have things to do. Your "reality" is anything but patient.

Then the Stock Market falters or fails. Investments tank. Relationships sour. Maybe even your health takes a dive into a deep pool of suffering and so much wasted time at the doctor's office. You feel like another number at the mercy of modern medical check boxes. What next?

Things are so different than they seem. There is true peace for deep down inside your soul. We pray with the Psalmist King David, *"My soul is in anguish. How long, O LORD, how long? 'Turn, O LORD, and deliver me; save me because of your unfailing love.' 'O my Strength, come quickly to help me.'"* (Psalm 6:3f; 22:19 NIV84) When waiting is so hard, **Be Patient for the Lord's Coming**. Jesus is...

☆ **Near and endearing (vv.7-9)**

Maybe you've had some awesome times like Job in his early life. God said Job was *"blameless and upright, a man who feared God and turned away from evil....This man was the greatest of all the men of the East."* (Job 1:1,3 EHV) Your brightest days may shine on you right now. Being "in love" can sure make you feel like you're walking on air. Why can't God just keep it going forever?

And that's the kind of made-to-order, personalized Messiah we all want, one who matches my preferences for feeling good! Hopeful messages they wanted from Jesus. The Messiah they all wanted would drive out the Roman conquerors. Jesus would keep healing their sick, feeding their stomachs and supplying the fine wine for discriminating palates. Then they'd keep Him **Near and endearing**.

Isn't our society impatient? Modern "science" hates scientists who disagree with the party line. The "cancel culture" shuts down every voice that suggests they might be morally wrong or that loving your neighbor is more important than loving yourself. The sin of impatience is worse than weather. *"You see, what they are intentionally forgetting is that the heavens came into existence long ago by the word of God and that the earth came together out of the water and between the waters....⁷ And now, by that same word, the heavens and earth have been stored up for fire, since they are being kept until the day of judgment and the destruction of the ungodly....¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. On that day the heavens will pass away with a roar, the elements will be dissolved as they burn with great heat, and the earth and what was done on it will be burned up....¹³ But according to his promise we look forward to new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells."* (2 Peter 3:5,7,10,13 EHV)

The real problem is whether you or I can stand with God on the Last Day or plunge with Satan and his evil ones into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. I wish it weren't true, but that is where I deserve to go. As James writes earlier: *"Whoever keeps the whole law but stumbles in one point has become guilty of breaking all of it."* (2:10) One verse alone could condemn me: *"Remember this, my dear brothers: Let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry. Certainly, a man's anger does not bring about what is right before God. So after getting rid of all moral filthiness and overflowing wickedness, receive with humility the word planted in you. It is able to save your souls."* (1:19-21)

For farmers back then, living from harvest to harvest, drought was devastating. With them we can take a lesson from the weather: ***“Therefore, brothers, be patient until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the valuable harvest from the ground, patiently waiting for it, until it receives the early and late rain. You be patient too. Strengthen your hearts because the coming of the Lord is near.”***

The Lord is not far off and distant. Christ’s second and final coming is nearer now than when we first believed. Suddenly the last trumpet will sound, the dead will rise, and we will be forever with the Lord – truly **Near and endearing**. ***“The name of the LORD is a strong tower. A righteous person runs inside and is protected.”*** (Proverbs 18:10) Stand firm and steady your heart in the Spirit who inspired Isaiah: ***“Strengthen the weak hands, and make the shaky knees steady. Tell those who have a fearful heart: Be strong. Do not be afraid. Look! Your God will come with vengeance. With God’s own retribution, he will come and save you.”*** (Isaiah 35:3f EHV) He saves us now with...

☆ **Blessed endurance (vv.9-11)**

The human heart likes to build tiny little boxes for everyone. We’re like blind babies bumping around in dark room where everybody’s diaper is dirty and we’re all crying. Some sit in their own little corner cooing over money, fame and power. But take away their pacifier, and no soup for you!

Just stop! Listen! There’s a voice in the wilderness crying. John the Baptist is pointing to the true Messiah, God’s very own. He came to live and die and live again as your Substitute under divine justice to bring you to God. Childlike hearts receive God’s **Blessed endurance to Be Patient for the Lord’s Coming**. Jesus is the door to God’s heart, so small and narrow you can only go through one at a time on your knees. It’s called “repentance” – confessing your sins and believing in God’s forgiving grace. Come through that door by faith in Jesus to glory beyond in the wide-open spaces of heaven.

“Do not complain about one another, brothers, so that you will not be judged. Look! The Judge is standing at the doors!” Which doors? Every door of every heart and home, office and school, church or government – all must swing open to the Lord’s Messiah, Jesus Christ. Now is the time of grace.

Brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord as an example of suffering with patient endurance. See, we consider those who endured to be blessed. You have heard of the patient endurance of Job and have seen what the Lord did in the end, because the Lord is especially compassionate and merciful. After Job repented of questioning God and prayed for his friends, God blessed him with twice as much as he had before and a long life to enjoy in **Blessed endurance**.

So, endure like the Word that endures through generations of His-story. When I sat with our sister Dorothy Lindig as she was dying, I thought of the parents and pastors and Sunday School teachers who had taught her to **Be Patient for the Lord’s Coming**. Dorothy had taught two sisters in Sunday School, Ardell and Virginia, who grew up to be Sunday School teachers of one Bill Bunde who has long taught in our New Life Sunday School. Children, learn your lessons well to teach others.

Keep inviting your friends to Sunday School and especially the true story of Christmas in Jesus’ birth for next Sunday’s Children’s Christmas service. Only God knows where your witness will lead. Our neighbors came a few times and then stopped. So little Katie, our oldest daughter, took her lesson to their tree house and played Sunday School. They heard about Jesus their Savior playing Sunday School.

A man named Jakob told how he was running away from Saddam Hussein’s army on a hillside with tanks below. Jakob remembered what the children of a missionary had told him as a child, about Jesus who died for our sins and rose from the dead on Easter. Everyone can pray to Jesus because He died for all and is the Savior of all. When Jakob prayed, a cloud came over the hillside so that the tank gunners could not see him and the other young men. They all escaped in that cloud of God’s grace.

Children young and old, your witness is powerful today and the one reason we’re still on earth. **Be Patient for the Lord’s Coming**. And meanwhile, don’t be silent. Amen.