

Patient Hope

Scripture Reading — James 5:7-10

Be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. — James 5:8

When a child sees gifts under the tree with his or her name on them, it is hard to be patient for Christmas morning to come. When a person is hungry, it is hard to be patient for the next meal. When you are feeling the burden of a long to-do list, it is hard to be patient with people who hold you up or take extra time.

These are just small things to be patient about. What about adoptive parents waiting for a child, or a prisoner waiting to be released, or citizens in a war zone waiting for the conflict to end? In these situations, patience might seem almost impossible.

James calls us to be patient as we wait for the Lord's coming kingdom. In the book of James, patience does not imply an absence of eager longing. Patience doesn't mean that we don't want the Lord's kingdom to come very soon. Instead, according to James, it means that we "stand firm" and that we "don't grumble against one another." He compares patience to a farmer planting a crop and waiting for the seasonal rains to come.

Patient hope means that we long and pray for God's kingdom, while at the same time we live with courage and compassion in a world that is still waiting for God's kingdom to come fully. May we live in such patient hope.

Prayer

God of compassion and mercy, may your kingdom come soon. As we wait with eager longing, give us patience to stand firm with courage and compassion. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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