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Psalms of the Summer / Psalm 106

How are you at waiting? Waiting in line? In traffic? At the dr's office? At the airport? At the emergency room? As a society in general we don't like to wait.

There is growing evidence from psychology, neuroscience, sociology, and economics to support the claim that people are becoming more impatient over time. Studies in the *Journal of Consumer Research* show people are increasingly making decisions based on short-term rewards rather than long-term outcomes. Smartphones, high-speed internet, and same-day delivery services have conditioned people to expect immediacy, reducing the need to wait. A 2015 Microsoft study suggested the average human attention span had dropped from 12 seconds in 2000 to 8 seconds in 2013. This reduced attention span is associated with difficulty tolerating delays and a decline in deep focus, both of which are linked to patience. A faster-paced economy contributes to a "time is money" mentality. Patience is often seen as a luxury or weakness in such a system.

Yet, patience is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, as it says in Galatians 5:22–23 “By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.” But patience is more than just waiting; it's a character trait that reflects trust in God's timing and a commitment to enduring hardship with love, joy, and peace.

I try to run a pretty tight schedule so that we are on time if not early for things. that way if supprises happen, I can usually manage because there's extra time built into things....until this week. There's been a lot of surprises in this last month in particular that wasn't “part of the summer plan” sort to speak. This week was the first time I have seen my brother in quite awhile, and he asked me, outside of Sunday, what does my week look like? And I said, it changes all the time, but often follows a somewhat consistent flow each week, though each day is usually very different, which is one thing I love about what I do. But consistently Monday is my sermon reading and writing start day....until this past week. I didn't forsee this past week being in Newfoundland. So, as I sat down to write this message, I felt out of sorts. It wasn't a Monday, I wasn't at home, and by Thursday I felt like I needed to have something but I had no idea what God wanted me to write. For days, or even weeks leading up to this Sunday, I had

either read it, read papers other people wrote on this psalm, sat in silence, but I didn't know what God wanted me. It was nearing the end of the week and my type A personality was struggling with the fact that I didn't know where God wanted me to go with this psalm. Verse 13 was brought to my attention: Psalm 106:13 "But they soon forgot his works; they did not wait for his counsel." I went for a walk in the great outdoors of Newfoundland and waited for God.

Two weeks ago we looked at Psalm 105 and the history of Billtown United Baptist Church in a message called Faithful Through the Years. Today, Psalm 106 forms what's called a diptych, with Psalm 105. A diptych is a two-paneled work of art that is meant to hang together. These two psalms are dedicated to the great faithfulness of the Lord and his covenant love. While both Psalms look at the history of the Israelites, Psalm 105 from a couple of weeks ago omits the human rebellion and ingratitude, today's Psalm does not. A focus of this Psalm is on the many ways the people of God resisted the will of the Lord and rejected his love and mercy.

The time we live in currently is such a different time from the Israelities yet we can still relate what this Psalm says about us, "we forgot his works, we did not wait for his counsel."

In Psalm 106, the psalmist confesses their sins, as we are to

do to God. Verses 6 to 12 express a heartfelt confession of spiritual indifference. As this section begins in verse 6, “we have sinned, even as our ancestors did; we have done wrong and acted wickedly.” The psalmist is acknowledging that they are no different from other generations, and if we look at our own lives now, we need to acknowledge the same thing. We may think our problems are fear, insecurity, loneliness, frustration, or anxiety, when it all stems to sin and how we drift away from God. As it says in Hebrews 2:1–3 “Therefore we must pay greater attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. For if the message declared through angels was valid, and every transgression or disobedience received a just penalty, how can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? It was declared at first through the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him.” These verses remind us that confession of our sins is not just about admitting failure—it’s about reorienting our hearts back to God’s mercy and salvation.

We reach verses 13 to 15 and at confessions of craving. As this sections begins, “in the desert they gave in to their craving; in the wilderness they put God to the test.” It is a focus on one episode in the wilderness where the Israelites’ cravings overtook their trust and the Lord’s reaction to their discontent was to give them what they asked for. Their craving wasn’t just for food—it was a

rejection of God's provision. They preferred their own appetites over God's plan. They demonstrate that they wanted what they wanted, not what God wanted, they were impatient for God's timing, they forgot His goodness and provision, and they let appetite replace trust. These verses remind us to examine our own cravings - what are we currently demanding from God? We are to repent when our desires lead us to forget His past faithfulness. We need to trust in his timing and provision even when we feel the wilderness.

Verses 16 to 18 look at envy. As it says, "In the camp they grew envious of Moses and of Aaron, who was consecrated to the Lord." They were envious of Moses and Aaron's roles, resenting God's chosen roles. The Israelites resented others' gifts or roles, questioning God's decisions. They tried to elevate themselves by tearing others down letting jealousy poison trust and unity. These verses remind us to examine our own envy. Do we envy others in our family, friends, at work, or in relationships? Are we content with the place God has assigned us? Do we lift others up—or secretly hope to outshine them?

Verses 19 to 23 brings us to idolatry. As it begins, "they made a calf and worshiped an idol cast from metal." Things aren't getting better. They have abandoned Yahweh for another deity, a moment symbolizing a total rejection of God's presence, glory, and memory. They valued

something created more than the Creator and they bowed to what they could control, instead of trusting the invisible God. As it continues in this section, “They forgot the God who saved them.” How often do we forget? These verses remind us to ask ourselves, what are we tempted to worship instead of God? Are we clinging to something made with human hands, or trusting in the One who made us? Are we remembering our salvation story—or rewriting it?

Verses 24-27 are confessions of disobedience. As it says, “Then they despised the pleasant land; they did not believe his promise.” This section refers to the Israelites' refusal to enter the Promised Land after the spies returned with their report. Despite God's promises, power, and presence, the people rebelled out of fear, doubt, and grumbling. Their lack of faith became disobedience. They didn't trust what God said. They feared the future more than they trusted His promises and they treated His good gift with contempt. As Webster writes, “We are more like the Israelites in the wilderness than we may care to admit. We are guilty of turning away from the living God. Like the majority report of the twelve spies, we are ready to capitulate to the perceived strength of the prevailing culture.” Disobedience doesn't always start loudly. It can begin quietly, in tents—in private conversations, complaints, doubts, and grumbling. These verses remind

us to ask ourselves, do we ever “despise” the good things God is trying to lead us into because they seem hard or risky? Are we murmuring in our tents instead of stepping forward in trust? Are we resisting obedience because of fear, pride, or comfort?

Verses 28-31 are confessions of apostasy. As it says, “They yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor.” Instead of drawing closer to God they sought out Baal of Peor, participating in sacrificial meals to Baal, sexual immorality with Moabite women, bowing before their inept, dead gods. They united themselves to evil and entered into false worship and spiritual corruption. These verses remind us to ask ourselves have we yoked ourselves to idols—power, pleasure, popularity, or comfort, as examples? Are there ways we’ve compromised our loyalty to Christ?

Verses 32 and 33 look at their rebellion, as it says, “they rebelled against the Spirit of God.” This is the last illustration about the Israelites in the wilderness, and Moses took the rebellion of the Israelites to heart as not only against Yahweh but against himself, putting himself on the same level as the Lord. And such Moses could no longer enter the Promised Land. Do we listen to God's commands with trust, or do we quarrel and resist? Are we humble enough to admit our rebellious patterns, even when they feel justified?

The last confessions come in verses 34-39, now that they

have entered the Promised Land; confessions of pagan assimilation. It says, “They did not destroy the peoples as the Lord commanded them, but they mingled with the nations and adopted their customs.” The Israelites were meant to be a light to the nation, to be God’s treasured possession, a holy nation. But they did not live as their identity as the people of God, instead living like those around them. We can ask ourselves, Have we "mixed" with the world in ways that blur our witness? Are we tolerating or embracing values that contradict God's Word? Are we sacrificing what’s most precious (truth and integrity) for idols like success, approval, or power? Have we slowly accepted things that go against God’s ways—not necessarily because we intentionally chose rebellion, but because we’ve become desensitized?

Why so much sin? Remember verse 13, “But they soon forgot his works,” they forgot, we tend to forget. But why do we tend to forget so easily or so quickly all that God has seen us through? I think this can often come from the second part of this verse, Psalm 106:13 “they did not wait for his counsel.” They did not wait... we do not wait. We want to feel like we’re in control and we don’t when we’re waiting. We live in an instant gratification society. We are worse with waiting or patience now than we have ever been. Yet we are missing out on what is God revealing in the wait?

In a culture where faster often equals better, being patient is now a countercultural virtue requiring intentional cultivation. It's asking yourself, are you spending time on your relationship with God? Are you more shaped by the Word than the world? Are you confessing your sins to God and seeking his will for your life?

It's not easy to wait. When I sat in the ICU family waiting room with my best friend it wasn't easy to wait. When I got a call from that same ICU room sitting with my best friend that my sister had a cardiac arrest, it wasn't easy to wait. Yet, I knew in both situations that things were going to be okay. I didn't know what okay would look like but I knew God had it under his control. There was still tears and fear but also a peace. It didn't mean it wasn't going to be difficult, but I had a peace throughout the whole ordeal. In those moments I remembered God has things in his hands. I have forgotten this in the past, and I'm sure I will forget this in the future as we all sin and fall short of the glory of God. But God's grace is sufficient. We don't want to sugar coat how our own actions have played a role in our relationship, yet as we confess our sins God always has His arms open wide welcoming us into his embrace. His mercy and love overshadow anything we've ever done.

As we looked at the history of the church the other week we don't want to forget God works, and we need to wait for his counsel. We also need to remember and confess our

own sins along the way while praising God for his mercy throughout it all.

As it was written in the church's history book, "there have been moments of concern over the years with the problem of declining church attendance, offerings greatly decreasing as a result. In 1958 it was reported that for the first time that expenditures had exceeded revenues by \$240 and only eleven members showed up for the annual meeting in 1959." Harry Bill writes, "It is good to know that all was not perfect in the church in the past. Some people discourage those of the present by glorifying the past, but it is better to see that former generations had their difficulties and found grace to overcome. So we are to learn that God's Grace is also sufficient for us."

The psalmist ends this psalm with the Lord's judgment and mercy, asking the Lord to save them, while praising the Lord. In spite of chronic rebellion and sin, the good news is that God's great love prevails. The Lord remembers his covenant and acts to save his people. Verse 47 says "Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise," This prayer for the Lord to gather his people from the nations suggests that this psalm may have been sung by exiles longing for a return to Israel. Limburg maintains, "The clue to understanding the purpose of these stories is found in verse 47. The people are in trouble,

scattered among the nations. The psalmist is telling these old stories, readdressing them to a new situation, to help these exiled and discouraged people to ask God to save them.”

This psalm reminds us that when we forget God, we fall, but when we remember, repent, and return, we find mercy. Repentance leads to redemption and restoration. God’s steadfast love is greater than our failure, and His faithfulness endures through every generation.

As Webster writes, “Faithful believers do not stand over ancient Israel in judgment; we stand with them in solidarity. At every turn the Lord’s grace prevails and persists in spite of great sin, both their sin and ours. The extension of God’s grace to the Israelites made God’s grace in Christ possible.” As Augustine wrote when he finished reading this psalm, “Come then, whoever reads this, and recognize the grace of God, by which we are redeemed unto eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This psalm is not just a recounting of the past—it is a call to the present. So, what is God revealing in the wait?

