

December 7th – Tuesday

Centering Breath Prayer: Child of joy...teach me how to wait.

Opening Prayer:

Blessed Lord, I come today full of joy for your many gifts. As we travel today, guide me along the pathways that you have selected for me, so that I may learn the things that are waiting for me, to be able to serve you better and accomplish the tasks that you have for me. Help me to know the joy of serving you patiently with the skills that you have given me during this journey of love. Holy Child, in your blessed name, I pray. Amen.

Scripture: James 5:7-10

Key Verses: James 5:7-8: (7) “Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. (8) You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near” (NIV).

A very dear friend of mine used to say to me to never pray for patience because if we ask for patience, what we will get is tribulation. She would then point out Romans 5:3-4 “*And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope*” (KJV). Newer translations do not use patience, (in fact, none of the same words except the end result of hope): “*Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope*” (NIV). But no matter what her advice would be on this subject, there is no denying that we need patience.

Patience has never been one of my strong suits, although I have done many types of handiwork, including a business for several years in which I made items of needlepoint on plastic canvas. Such sewing takes hours and hours of work, patiently doing stitch after stitch which many people tell me requires patience. But there are other types of patience, especially patience with other people, in which I do not fare so well. I have, however, made progress in that area by allowing the Holy Spirit to work within me and making an effort to try to place myself in the other’s footsteps. I find that when someone is not grasping a concept I am trying to get across seems to set me off the most, and that is a poor reason to lose my patience. I am working hard on that one. Whether I am making progress is still up in the air. Our lives are full of waiting. Hurry up and wait is often a way of life for us. And the Advent season is full of waiting, even though the season is so full of activity that we often feel like we are caught up in a whirlwind and can’t get out. Finding a balance between the activity and the waiting times is also a part of learning patience.

I am a major procrastinator and I get very frustrated with myself for not starting on projects sooner and working on them at a steady pace. But, I find that I often do some of my best work when I am under a very short deadline. It is a struggle to find the right balance between working on a project and waiting until the moment it right for it.

At the present moment I am paying the price of waiting too long to work on these devotionals and am having to do each day's devotional at the last minute. It causes me to rely very carefully on the leadership of the Holy Spirit which is a good thing, but they are not getting onto the web site when they really should be there, which is very frustrating to me, and I am sure often to you as well. Learning to control our frustrations and even anger, stemming from impatience is a part of learning patience; something we all have to do to avoid causing harm to ourselves and to others. We are no different from people in Biblical times. A lack of patience was just as much a problem to them as it is to us today. When we lose our patience we do not always control our emotions and we usually do and we often lash out at those around us: "road rage" is an extreme example of this.

Perhaps this is one of the reasons Jesus told us that we should love others as ourselves. Through love we can learn more patience both with ourselves and with others. During this Advent journey of love, we can relish the magnitude of God's love which provided a direct relationship with God through Jesus, a very precious gift indeed! The journey of love Jesus took from heaven to human for us allows us to share some of our God given love with those that we contact during our journey. Joy stems from such sharing as we continue the journey. Patience will always be something for which we will strive along the way, but the joy we have in the Christ Child can help to carry us through the struggles and can be a part of our lives, not only during this season, but all year long.

Additional Scriptures: Romans 5:1-5; Mark 12:29-31

Questions for reflection and/or journaling:

1. When was the last time I lost my patience with myself or someone else? What happened?
2. When I lose my patience, do I lash out at others or turn it inward causing damage to myself? How can I find a more constructive way to deal with it?
3. What can I do to become more patient and to avoid losing control and hurting myself or others?

Suggestions for action:

1. Word for your tree: **PATIENCE**
2. Identify the things that cause you to lose your patience. Once you have identified the causes, look for ways to avoid allowing them to serve as "triggers" in the future.
3. Look for the joys that God has given you when you were patient and waited for the fulfillment of God's blessings. Hold on to those joys when you are facing times when your patience is wearing thin.

Closing Prayer:

Loving, Creator God, thank you for the joys you have bestowed upon me. I know that you love me and care for me. When I am impatient and lose my control, help me to overcome the destructive impulses that often accompany its loss. As we continue to walk the journey of love, help me to love others as I love myself, granting them the space to be themselves. In your ever patient name, I pray. Amen.