

Icebreaker:

As we transition to fall, is there a favorite fall food you might share or activity you might do with your home group?

Read this week's scripture and discuss:

1. In John 21, why do you think Jesus asks Peter three times "Do you truly love me?" Putting yourself in Peter's shoes, how would you feel answering Jesus?
2. According to John 21, how is Peter supposed to show his love to Jesus? What are practical ways we might also take care of and feed the sheep?
3. Do you find these eight verses of 2 Peter 3:8-15a encouraging or discouraging? Why?
4. Bible Background: With regard to 2 Peter 3:15, consider Romans 2:3-4. Compare the two passages in looking at God's patience and kindness.
5. The Greek word translated "patience" (μακροθυμία) can also be translated: "long-suffering." What does this latter meaning suggest about patience?
6. In your faith journey, do you feel that God is more patient with you than you are with yourself?
7. In what ways can you cultivate patience in your life?

Prayer:

As you pray for one another, please pray for the following needs in our church family:

prayer requests

- > Pray for peace and comfort for Becky Emery in the death of her mother and continued prayers for the Shelton, Reese, and Hunn families and friends in the deaths of Harrison, Shelby, and Michael.
- > Pray for the team and guests of the Women's Great Banquet, taking place in our building this weekend.

[The following are from ZPC's prayer calendar, which is available at the Welcome Center or at zpc.org/prayer.]

- > Pray for the ministry of the Fuller Center and the blessings of homes for families in need in Central Indiana.
- > Pray for ZPC worship musicians as they continue to bless us with music.
- > Pray for Wheeler Mission as it celebrates its 125th year and the Women Helping Women luncheon tomorrow as it raises money to help serve the needs of homeless women and children in Indianapolis.

Love is patient, love is kind. God is both loving and patient. God's patience is shown to Peter when he restores his relationship with Peter in John 21. While Peter denied Christ, Jesus restores him later when they reunite. Jesus is patient with Peter, not pushing him away. Peter reminds early Christians, and us, that God is patient with us too. We are called to be shaped like Jesus in being patient.

1. Jesus asks Peter three times as a reminder of what Peter did, that Peter denied knowing Jesus three times. He restores Peter to relationship with Him. Peter affirms his love for Jesus. Jesus says simply, "Follow Me" and calls Peter to action. We might feel both embarrassed by Jesus' questions and loved by Jesus' actions.

2. Peter is supposed to feed the sheep. This means to take care of Jesus' people now that Jesus will be ascending to heaven. Peter has a great call on his life, which gives him purpose. Jesus does not tell Peter specifically how to feed the sheep; that is for Peter to find the ways within Jesus' teaching. We too are to find ways to feed the sheep, to care for others today.

3. Encouraging: God is patient, not wanting anyone to perish but for all to come to repentance. He promises a new heaven and new earth.

Discouraging: The day of the Lord will come like a thief. Destruction will happen. What are we to do? Be spotless, blameless, live godly lives – this all happens with the help of Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

4. In both passages, God is patient and kind. God's patience exists in Romans so that we will escape or survive judgment. God is patient in 2 Peter so that we can repent, and be saved. In Romans, we are called not to be judgmental, but to be patient. In 2 Peter, we are called to live blameless lives, and be at peace with God. We are called to be patient with God's help.

5. Patience can mean long-suffering. Long means that God is with us for the long-term. God does not give up on us. We can trust God to be there. Suffering reminds us that God the Father suffered by sending His Son, and that Jesus suffered, and understands when we suffer. God is patient and suffers with us for the long haul of life.

6. God is more likely to be patient with us than we are with ourselves. We can be hard on ourselves. God was patient with Peter and Saul (who became Paul). He waited on them to turn or return to Him. Peter can write about patience and encourage having patience because he experienced it in his own life with Jesus.

7. Here are at least three ways we can cultivate patience:

- Look at things from a longer view, from a longer perspective.
- Simplify your life. De-clutter things that distract you from God.
- Focus on God's patience with you. Learn from God's patience.