

Semon for Sunday 19th August 2018 - Mattins

Preacher: The Revd Ish Smale, Cathedral Deacon

Bible readings:

- **Jonah 1**
- **2 Peter 3 v 14-end**

When reading 2 Peter 3... five words jumped out at me from verse 15 *'the patience of our Lord.'*

The word '**patience**' reminds me of 2 old testament characters both with names beginning with J.

Obviously Job.

Job showed us just how patient a **man** can be.

Job's patience stands out more than any other as he endured the most extreme amount of suffering.

When we say that *'someone has the patience of Job'*...it's very unlikely that anyone has.

You see... Job lost all of his children and wealth in a single day.

He was covered in painful sores.

His wife didn't support him, in fact she encouraged him to give up, curse God and die.

His three friends came to to comfort him and falsely accused him of wrongdoing and blamed his troubles on his unrepentant heart.

Yet through it all... Job patiently endured.

Back in the 1970's I wore a teeshirt saying *'Have patience..God is not through with me yet!'*

I think I should still be wearing it as I still get **impatient over trivial things**... like sitting in my car waiting for that 3rd train to pass by the level crossing at Chichester station.

I rarely visit Wetherspoons nowadays because it's always packed and there always only seems to be two people serving behind the bar.

And if somebody butts in when I'm in the middle of a story I'm often tempted to say... *'Oh, I'm sorry..... Did the middle of my sentence interrupt the beginning of yours?'*

Regarding patience I'm afraid I have more in common with my second Bible Character beginning with J... Jonah.

Whilst Job shows us how patient a **MAN** can be, Jonah shows us how patient **GOD** can be.

In Jonah 1 we can see how much Jonah must have tested God's patience.

God instructed him to city of Ninevah and prophesy against it. he immediately went in the opposite direction to the port of Joppa.

At Joppa Jonah had time to rethink, repent and return back to Ninevah. But no... Instead he bought a one way boat ticket heading for Tarshish, which is thought to have been in Spain.

Just because Spain was at the utmost bounds of the then known world did he really think that the creator of the universe had never heard of it and would never find him there?

As God watched Jonah board the ship He stayed patient.

To retrieve his prophet God was going to have to change the weather conditions and cause a great wind and violent storm to stop the ship.

As the storm raged, scaring the life out of the sailors, Jonah slept and when woken never confessed that he was to blame.

When lots were cast to find the culprit, God had to fix it to make sure that the lot fell on Jonah.

It was then Jonah realised that 'being on the run from God' was over... it was time to die.

He confessed to the crew and told them the storm would only stop if they threw him overboard.

Reluctantly they did so and yes, God immediately stopped the storm.

But still God did not lose patience with Jonah and leave him to drown... literally in his own sorrows.

God commanded one of his great fish not only to find Jonah, but to swallow him whole..without chewing him.

Then God steered Jonah's personal marine transport through the sea for 3 days and nights until it reached the coast and then told the fish to vomit out his prophet.

Although I'm sure the fish was literally sick of Jonah, **God still remained patient with him.**

Then... at last Jonah obeyed God and headed off towards Ninevah!

Jonah's story should be an encouragement to all of us.

We regularly pray

Almighty God our Heavenly Father, we have sinned against you and against our neighbour in thought and word and deed, through negligence, through weakness and through our own deliberate fault.

We confess to God that we are sinners, and there have been times when weve chosen to go our own way and not His.

And thankfully, just as God was patient with Jonah..so God is just as patient with us.

But God also wants us to to be more like him, and that means **learning to be more patient with those around us.**

Back in the 16th century Saint Philip Neri was a loved and popular priest who ministered in a local hospital in Rome.

But three other Church officers who worked alongside him were very envious of him and made his life almost unbearable.

They'd hide his chalice and missal, give him dingy vestments to wear and would always arrive late...making sure that he had to wait. They tried to wind him up at every opportunity.

But he refused to move to another parish and without allowing any resentment, was resolved to suffer patiently for the love of God.

One day it all got a bit too much. He earnestly prayed, *'Lord Jesus why don't hear me when I keep asking you to give me patience. Why is my soul disquieted with thoughts of anger and impatience?'*

Jesus replied. *'I will give you patience on one condition. You must first make every effort to try and be even more patient yourself. I'll do it with you...but not for you.'*

St Philip did and soon afterwards one of his tormentors humbly asked his forgiveness and became a lifelong friend.

I believe that God also wants us to make every effort to try and learn to be patient.

It's when we do, that He will step in and grant us even more patience.

So **God** remains patient with us... and **God** wants **us** to make every effort to be more patient with those around us.

According to Galatians... Patience is one of the signs that proves that we have the Holy Spirit living within us.

So I will keep trying my hardest to be patient... and also keep praying that the Lord will help me to be **even more patient**.

But honestly????

I'm afraid that my prayer is still likely to be...

Lord give me patience... but please hurry!