



## In It For The Long Haul

Message by Pastor Andrew Kulasingham 31st May 2020

Last week we looked at Hebrews 6:12 (NKJV)

...that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

These two words, faith and patience, seem to be the important ingredients in order to inherit the promises of God. Last week we looked at the word faith. I wanted to look at faith from a different angle. I looked at two types of belief systems we seem to call faith. A “faith that” and “faith in” belief system. We saw that the mere “faith that” God can do it isn’t the faith the Bible talks about. Believing that God can do anything, and has the power to do anything, is not really faith. Admitting that God is all powerful is merely stating a fact. James says even demons believe that and tremble.

A “faith that” belief system is a dangerous kind of faith. It creates a life of faith without action. It’s prayer without expecting answers. It’s a believer living in unbelief. I said last week that this type of faith is a facade of a saviour without salvation, faith in a healer without the experience of healing, the faith of a God of the impossible without walking in the realm of Divine possibilities. I challenged us to go beyond a “faith that” God can do it, to a “faith in” God to do it. It is a kind of faith that requires us to take steps to pursue what we believe. It’s a type of faith that requires us to accompany our faith with acts of believing.

What would that look like for you? For Abraham, he obeyed and took his son up the mountain and met Jehovah Jireh. For Peter, he stepped out of the boat, at the bidding of Jesus, and walked on water. If you acted on what you believed in, what would it look like? What would it look like for you to accompany your faith with acts of believing?

Today, I want to look at the other word in that passage. Patience. Let me read the passage again to you.

Hebrews 6:12 (NKJV)

...that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

The word translated patience in our English Bibles comes from the Greek word makrothymia. It is a combination of two Greek words - makros (long) and thymos (passion). It literally means to have long passions. The Strong’s dictionary translates it as - longanimity (a disposition to bear injuries patiently) or long-suffering. The passage in Hebrews is telling us that these men and women who obtained the promises of God in their lives, received it not only because they had faith, but along

with that they had a disposition, a temperament, a nature that was willing to keep at it no matter what they went through, until they inherited the promises.

Let's look at the two Greek words makros and thymos a little closer. The Word makros is straight forward. It just means long. The word "thymos" however is a very unique word. The Strong's dictionary defines it as "passion (as if breathing hard), boiling up". We usually think of boiling up as in the context of anger. But the apostle to the Hebrews has used this word in a positive context where passion has the same feeling – boil up, not with anger but with passion. These men and women of God believed in the promises of God to the point that they kept stirring themselves up with passion, boiling up, until they inherited their promises.

Not just faith but faith and patience. They believed God can do it. They believed God will do it because He promised He would. So they waited with "long passion". No matter how long, no matter all the trials and testing that came there, They kept believing and kept their passion boiling up – until they obtained their promises.

For how long you may ask? Until they inherited their promises. How long is that? How long is "until"? Well how long is a piece of string? How long is "until"? Ask Abraham and Sarah. Their "until" was 25 years. Imagine keeping faith and long passion for 25 years. Experiencing your body growing older day by day, year after year. Sarah 90 years old, Abraham 100 when they finally obtained their promise. They didn't just need to have faith, they had to keep having faith. Keep believing and keep that passion boiling up. Faith + long passion.

How long? Ask Caleb. For him it was more than 40 years. He had to exist in the wilderness along with the unbelieving generation. Year after year – people dying because of their unbelief and their refusal to enter the promised land. He had to keep his faith – "God you promised, and so you will do it". He kept his passion boiling throughout those forty years. So much so, when they crossed the Jordan river, 45 years later – at the age of 85 - Caleb would say to Joshua – "Give me this mountain."

Joshua 14:12 (NKJV)

Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the Lord spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the lord will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said."

How long is "until"? Ask Joseph. He receives the promise of the Lord in two dreams when he was a young teenager – around 15 years old – but had to endure 15 years of long suffering before he would see the promise fulfilled. His brothers sell him as a slave. Lived as a slave at Potiphar's house – but the Bible tells us "the Lord was with Joseph". He is falsely accused by Potiphar's wife and thrown in a dungeon. Again we are told - "but the Lord was with Joseph". Finally after 15 years – his time came and he was appointed Prime Minister of Egypt. Finally the fulfilment of God's promise.

Hebrews says - "imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." These men didn't just have faith. They had faith and patience. Faith and "long passion". Faith in God to do what He promised He will do, and long passion, keeping the fire stoked, keeping the passion boiling up - until they obtained the promises.

What breakthrough are you needing? Whatever you are praying for. Whatever you are believing for. Have faith but also patience. Keep moving towards your breakthrough with acts of believing but

keep on keeping on. Stoke the fire of passion, Be in the midst of people who will encourage you, who will build you up in the most holy faith. Keep the passion boiling up – until you see your breakthrough.

Before I close, I want to talk about us as a corporate body – the church. Today is Pentecost Sunday. Today we celebrate the birth of the church. We have become so individualistic in our Christian faith, but the New Testament church was a family, a body.

I want us to look at the promise Jesus gave to us as a body of believers. Let's read Luke 24:49.

Luke 24:49 (NKJV)

Behold, I send the promise of my father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

Again we are faced with that one challenging word – until. Let's go to that day the "until" happened – 50 days after the Resurrection.

READ Acts 2:1-4

I want to focus on verse 1.

Acts 2:1 (NKJV)

When the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

The word "one accord" is the Greek word – homothymadon. A combination of 2 root words – "homos "(together) and that word "thymos" again (long passion). They waited together for 50 days, believing God for the promise of the Holy Spirit – but they waited with long passion – kept the passion boiling as they gathered together every day in prayer. All 120 of them, All together. All with long passion, keeping the passion boiling up, until they received the promise.

It didn't stop there – the experience in the upper room was only the beginning. They kept the passion boiling until we read Acts 2: 40 – 47. 3000 men were baptized in one day and the Bible says that "the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."

It didn't stop there – they kept the passion boiling until in Acts 4: 32-35 we read that "no one among them lacked anything". They were not only being blessed themselves but they were transforming the community to the point that people coming into fellowship with them were experiencing breakthroughs in their lives.

It didn't stop there – they kept the passion boiling. In spite of persecution (some say because of persecution) – they spread out of Jerusalem into Samaria. In Acts 8: 4-8 we see Phillip and the work God did through him.

Acts 8:5-8 (NKJV)

Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city.

It didn't stop there – they kept the passion boiling. We now see the church spread outside the region of Samaria. In Acts 11:19-26, the church is born in Antioch, over 7,000 miles from Jerusalem. One would be tempted to feel that we have accomplished much once a small band of believers, totalling 120 of them in an upper room, now see the church spread thousands of miles from where it began.

But they didn't stop there – they kept the passion boiling. We read in Acts 13:2-3.

Acts 13:2-3 (NKJV)

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, The Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.

The Gospel was spread to the entire then known world. The book of Acts ends with Paul.

Acts 28:30-31 (NKJV)

Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, <sup>31</sup> preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.

The book of Acts doesn't have an ending. It cannot stop there. It requires the church in every generation to keep boiling up with passion. It requires us in Welcome Bay and Carmel to keep boiling up until – Welcome Bay is saved. Until Tauranga is saved. Until New Zealand is saved. Until...

Matthew 24:14 (NKJV)

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Being a Christian is not merely believing in the doctrines of the church. Neither is it holding on to a bunch of statements of belief. Being a Christian is a life of faith and patience. Faith – believing that because God always does what He promises, we can confidently step out in acts of believing. Not just faith but also patience. Long passion – keeping the fire going – keeping the passion boiling up within us.

WE ARE IN THIS FOR THE LONG HAUL