

## Longsuffering

How much longsuffering do you have? I often wonder about the longsuffering of the Lord. Peter said, “But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:8-9). Peter did not say that the Lord is “longsuffering to mockers,” but “to you-ward:” to the “beloved.” The Lord’s longsuffering delays the time of his coming for the benefit of the beloved: not wishing that any of them perish, but that all should come to repentance.

The compassion of the Lord for humanity is without contradiction: “But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest” (Matthew 9:36-38). Jesus had compassion, not only for their spiritual ill health, but also for their physical ill health, saying, “he came forth, and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick” (Matthew 14:14). When Jesus healed the two blind men, they said, “Lord, have mercy on us, thou son of David...And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I should do unto you? They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. And Jesus, being moved with compassion, touched their eyes; and straightway they received their sight, and followed him” (Matthew 20:30-34).

Even though the Lord was full of compassion for the ills of man, physically and spiritually “it came to pass, when the days were well-nigh come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he were going to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven, and consume them? But he turned, and rebuked them” (Luke 9:51-55).

Jesus came to seek and to save that which is lost, (Luke 19:10). Albeit, there was opposition on every hand, and even as the Lord was bearing his cross, and the “multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented him,” followed, he said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for youR children. For behold, the days are coming, in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare,

and the breasts that never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in the green tree, what shall they do in the dry?" (Luke 23:27-31): if they will kill the righteous, what shall become of an unrighteous Jerusalem?

When the Apostle Paul defined what love is, by what love does. He said, "Love suffereth long." (1 Corinthians 13:4) Jesus is our example of longsuffering.

Remember the words of the Apostle Peter, saying, "For it is better, if the will of God should so will, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing. Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, that aforetime were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water: which also after a true likeness doth now save you, [even] baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ; who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (1 Peter 3:17-22). ret