

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Third Sunday in Advent – December 14, 2025

⁷Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand."

- James 5:7-8 -

Back in 2006 there was a survey done on more than 1,000 adults. The survey revealed that most people take an average of 17 minutes to lose their patience while waiting in line. Additionally, most people lose their patience in only 9 minutes while on hold on the phone. Impatience appears to be a common trait among us human beings. Well, it turns out that not much has changed about humans over the years.

The early church struggled with waiting. Jesus said he would come again, and so, the early church expected that to happen at any moment. But as the weeks and months and even years went by, they became frustrated and confused. This is the group of believers to whom James was writing his letter. These believers were living in distressing times. Not only did they become impatient with God, but they also became impatient with one another. And so, James does his best to encourage them.

James called them to be like a farmer. The farmer waits patiently for the rain to come. If the crop needs water, the farmer can't make it rain. He must wait patiently for God to provide the rain on crop. In the same way, the farmer can't make his crop produce good fruit for the harvest. Again, the farmer must wait patiently for God to provide the fruit for the harvest. The same is true for the life a Christian.

We strive to make disciples; we invite people to worship, Sunday School, church activities. We think we've made a connection with someone and surely, they will show up for worship on Sunday. But they don't. So we try again. And we get frustrated and impatient because all these seeds that we've so diligently tried to plant don't seem to be producing anything. But that's where we must be like the farmer, who plants the seeds, and waits. We wait for God to nourish those seeds. We wait for God to produce fruit from those seeds. It might take years, and that's hard. Why? Because waiting is hard. We are impatient, but God calls us to be patient.

Along with the early church, James urges us to not give up. The finish line is just ahead. We can trust in his compassion and mercy and continue to live by faith.