

## Patience versus Sloth

2 Samuel 5:1-5

The Lord calls you into his presence today.

Are you standing strong this summer?

You are with David in his triumph. Despite the sins of his followers, David remains righteous toward his enemies. He becomes King over all of Israel and takes Jerusalem as his new capital.

Pray that the Lord draws you out of sloth to embrace the kingly mission he has given you. Pray for the grace of freedom and humility for all Exodus Men, just as they are praying for you.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lord and Master of my life, spare me from the spirit of indifference, despair, lust for power, and idle chatter. Instead, bestow on me, your servant, the spirit of integrity, humility, patience, and love. Yes, O Lord and King, let me see my own sins and not judge my brothers and sisters; for you are blessed forever and ever. Amen.

## A Reading from the Second Book of Samuel

Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron, and said, "Behold, we are your bone and flesh. In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you that led out and brought in Israel; and the Lord said to you, 'You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel.'" So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

## Reflection

So far, we have seen a pattern of David being very deliberate and patient. Although God told him he would be king, he did not brashly run out and conquer his enemies, forcing the hand of God. He at every point showed honor and deference to Saul out of reverence for God. Likewise, after Saul's death, he did not presume it was his time but first sought the Lord in prayer. And then he was patient and peaceful with his rivals, Abner and Ish-bosheth.

We should not underestimate how difficult this time of waiting must have been for him. Indeed, if you have read the Psalms, you know just how much internal, as well as physical, anguish David suffered and how often he had to remind himself to trust in the Lord. David is a model of patience, of waiting upon and trusting in the Lord.

David's patience and peacefulness paid off. He did not have to go out and conquer his enemies or convince the tribes. Rather, they came to him and

acknowledged him, not just as their leader, but as their “bone and flesh.” In other words, they saw him as a father—the true father of the people of Israel. He had led the people of Israel, not by brute force but by wisdom and parental gentleness.

But here we face a question: What is the difference between patience and sloth? At first glance, both patience and sloth seem to be manifest by inactivity. While patience may mean waiting and therefore not moving forward in what you perceive to be your calling from God, it is not lazy inaction. As we can see from our readings in 2 Samuel, as well as from the Psalms, David’s waiting was very active. He was constantly seeking the Lord in prayer, crying out to God and considering his every move in prayer. This is the key difference between sloth and patience. Sloth is a turning away from God, an indifference to prayer and spiritual discipline. Patience, however, is active dependence upon God, leading to an intensification of prayer and discipline. While patience often means waiting to act or move forward, it is spiritually engaged and fruitful. It attends to, rather than forsakes, the tasks of the present situation, even if the situation is not ideal or in line with our goals.

We struggle to see how patience results in a refinement of our soul, but we must rest assured that it is the way God prepares us for that to which He has called us. While on the surface it seems that nothing is happening (or that we are just biding time until we get to the place we are really supposed to be), in actuality, God is renewing our spirit, sending us graces, and cultivating in us the wisdom and diligence necessary for the tasks ahead. We preempt this process at our own peril.

Where is God calling you to be patient? How is God refining your soul and preparing you for new things or new responsibilities?

Now place yourself before God, and converse with him.

Week 3 Action Items

Plan a summer BBQ.

Evaluate your Plan of Life.

Commit to intentional prayer time with others.