

# Take a Deep Breath

or The Long-Suffering of God

18 - Walking with Jesus

Church on the Park | Mother's Day, 10 May 2015

**Text:** Exodus 34:6-7

**Theme:** God doesn't pounce on you when you sin, instead he's patient. But that patience has a purpose.

**Intro:** An appraiser will take a diamond, lift it to the light and rotate it to determine its quality. In the same way, over the last few weeks we've been exploring the facets of God's glory. We've examined God's compassion and grace, and this week we will study his long-suffering/patience. God describes himself to Moses as "slow to anger" and we see that this is his character throughout history, and especially seen in Jesus Christ.

## 1) When God sees your sin he takes a long, deep breath. Rather than reacting in anger, he reaches out to rescue.

- "Slow to anger" (lit., 'long of nose') - "***The thought is that God takes a long, deep breath as he holds his anger***" (TWOT)
- Let's think about how God responded to **man's first sin**. In this we see how he handles disobedience to him (Gen. 2:7, 16-17; 3:6-9).
  - It's through God's **breath** that you really come **alive**. That's why you continually need the Spirit of God, which is God's breath.
    - When you are **saved** God's **breath** is **restored** to you.
  - Sin brings **death**. But, notice how Adam and Eve didn't **instantly** drop **dead** (He lived 930 years, Gen. 5:5).
    - **Why?** Because, God is **slow to anger** and wants to **rescue** them, giving them **time to repent**.
  - God **gently** comes to them, calling them in the cool of the day.
    - He **could have** smited them dead right there and started all over. But, he didn't!
    - Yet, there is **still judgment** and consequences for sin (Gen. 3:16-20)
  - The Lord **covers** them with his **sacrifice** (Gen. 3:21)
- Peter teaches us that the reason why **the coming of Jesus** is **delayed** is because God is **patient** (slow to anger, 2 Peter 3:3-9).
  - Instead of starting a new heavens and earth straight away, he is waiting for as many people as possible to come to **repentance**.
  - God takes **no pleasure** (no delight) in the death on anyone (Eze. 18:31-32; Eze. 33:11).
  - God's **patience** causes heaven to be **populated**.

## 2) Jesus' patience toward Peter and Paul is the same long-suffering he will have with you.

- Unlimited patience was shown to **Paul** as an example to you (1 Tim. 1:15-16).
  - Remember, Paul **imprisoned** believers and consented to their **murder**, all in the name of God.
    - It's one thing to murder somebody, it's another thing to murder someone and say God told me so.
  - And yet, **Jesus** uses **Paul** and **exalts** him as the chief **apostle** to the Gentiles. That's patience and grace. God is slow to anger.
- **Peter's life** is also an example of Jesus' unlimited patience toward you.
- Peter starts to get a revelation of **forgiveness** and says to Jesus, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" (Matt. 18:21-35).
  - Seven times seems like a lot, but Jesus says seventy times seven. In other words, an unlimited amount of times.
  - Notice this forgiveness is for his brother, the closest member of his family.

- As we read the majority of the Gospels, Peter **shows** himself to be the **most loyal** of Jesus' disciples. Jesus even lets him see his glory when most of the disciples are left out.
- But, at the end of the Gospels, we see Peter doing the exact opposite of what he confessed.
- **What did Peter see, say and do?**
  - Peter saw his **mother-in-law** healed by Jesus
  - Peter **walked** on water with Jesus
  - Peter made the **foundational confession** of a believer: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."
    - The Lord said he would entrust him with the keys of the Kingdom. Yet, we see in Matthew 16 that Peter **stumbles** over this whole concept of the **cross**. He has a clear and certain idea in his mind what the Messiah is and will do, but it's not the same as what is in Christ's mind.
  - Peter's **second confession**: Matthew 26:33 - "Even though all will fall away because of you, I will never fall away." (cf. Matt. 26:35)
    - In his **mind**, he was totally **convinced**. You may have your plans and convictions, but Jesus knows what's in your heart. You may say, "I can do it!" But you can't unless you are abiding in the vine.
      - Your **words** can be different from your **actions**. God's work in your life is to make your words and actions **balanced**. Your words may have great weight to them, but do your actions also have great weight?
  - Jesus calls Peter to **watch and pray** but instead he falls asleep.
    - It's your disobedience to watch and pray that cause you to fall asleep
  - Matthew 26:56 - When we get to Matthew 26:56, Peter is no longer Jesus' close disciple, but rather **following** him at a **distance**.
  - By Matthew 26:69 he's **denying Jesus**. And Jesus always knew this would happen - he told him.
  - And yet, Jesus does not cast him out, instead he is slow to anger.

### 3) Jesus patience has a purpose—it's to lead you to repentance and cause you to grow into his likeness.

- Jesus **knew** Peter would deny him, yet he still is slow to anger with him.
- \*Luke 22:31-34 - "**Satan** desires to **sift** you as wheat...when you have **turned** again, **strengthen** your brothers."
- In Matthew 26:75 - Peter is **awoken** by the **rooster's** crow and **repents**. Before you can truly repent, you need to be awoken.
  - Awoken to what? You can live a righteous, good life (God's way), without his power and strength. You can't do it on your own.
- Despite Peter's **failings**, Jesus still **exalts** him to being the chief apostle to the Jews when he repents.
- If God is patient toward you, you need to be patient toward one another.
- And we need to see **people's destination** rather than the **ditch** they are in. We need to see passed their corruption and to their call. Quick to listen, slow to get angry. Slow to get angry even when we see vile sins.
- **Patience** is one of the **core characteristics** you need to have if you are going to **raise** someone to be a healthy man or woman of God.
- LOTS OF PATIENCE. LOTS OF LONG-SUFFERING. Enduring pain as you see people fall and fail. Patience as they get back up again.

**Conclusion:** God is slow to anger to give you time to change and grow. Be reminded of how patient he has been toward you and show that same patience to others.

## END NOTES

**34:6** As promised in 33:21–23, which contains the prediction of how Yahweh would “pass in front of” Moses, Yahweh fulfilled his promise and in so doing began revealing himself by stating his name twice. The repeating of the name was certainly for the purpose of emphasis but also could have had some of the overtones associated with the pattern called repetition of such that Yahweh was in effect saying to Moses, “I am your dear Yahweh” or “to you I am your dearest friend, Yahweh” or something of the sort. But this cannot be proved since here Yahweh was stating his own name. In all other possible contexts of the repetition of endearment phenomenon, the repetition occurs with direct address, so someone is calling the name of another twice—and not his own name. (NAC: Exodus)

**133** אַנְּפָ (‘ānēp) **to be angry, to be displeased.** (ASV, RSV similar.)

### Derivatives

**133a** אַפּ (‘ap) I, **nostril, face, anger.** The double pe in the plural shows its derivation from ‘ānēp.

**133b** אַנְּפָא (‘ānāpā) **an unclean bird** (Lev 11:19; Deut 14:18). Its derivation is uncertain.

‘ānēp is used to express the Lord’s attitude of anger toward the covenant people when they have sinned, e.g. Moses (Deut 1:37), Aaron (Deut 9:20), the people (Deut 9:8). Men acknowledge God’s prerogative, but plead that he not continue to be angry.

אַפּ (‘ap). **Nostril, face, anger.** The term ‘ap in Hebrew refers first of all to a part of the body, specifically the nose, nostril, (snout of pigs, Prov 11:22) and also face (II Sam 25:23) or countenance (cf. UT 19: no. 264, an opening of the body, or possibly the body itself, e.g., nose, nipple). It is considered a vital part of the body. God made man a living being by breathing into his nose/nostrils (Gen 2:7). The nose, although referred to as the organ for smelling (Deut 33:10) or a place for ornaments (Isa 3:21) or for hooks by which to lead captives (II Kgs 19:28), is also spoken of as an organ necessary if a man’s or animal’s life is to continue (Isa 2:22).

By the act of breathing, emotions can be expressed. Perhaps it was observed that the nose dilates in anger. God is said to be “‘erek ‘appayim” (lit. “long of anger,” i.e. long before getting angry) in such passages as Ex 34:6; Num 14:18; Ps 86:15; Neh 9:17. **The thought is that God takes a long, deep breath as he holds his anger in abeyance.** A ruler is said to be persuaded by a display of forbearance, patience, i.e. “the long of breath” (Prov 25:15).

The main use of ‘ap is to refer to the anger of men and of God. This anger is expressed in the appearance of the nostrils. ‘ap gives specific emphasis to the emotional aspect of anger and wrath, whereas its synonyms and terms related to them give particular expression to other aspects.

The anger of God is particularly related to the sin of his people, which pains and deeply displeases him (II Kgs 13:3). Sin offends and wounds his love. The emotional response to this is divine anger. This anger, though fierce (Jer 25:37) is not sinful, evil, or the source of capricious attitudes or deeds. However, it is expressed in chastisement (Ps 6:1 [H 2]; Isa 12:1) and punishment (II Sam 6:7; Jer 44:6).

Man’s anger can be legitimate (II Sam 12:5). But the ot Scriptures warn that anger can be outrageous (Prov 27:4) and, stirs up strife (Prov 29:22). In contrast, it is said that the man slow to anger appeases strife (Prov 15:18) and a wise man turns from it (Prov 29:8).

**Bibliography:** Erlandsson, S., "The Wrath of Yhwh," *Tyndale Bulletin* 23:111–16. Hanson, R. P. C., "The Wrath of God," *Exp T* 58:216–18. McKenzie, John L., "Vengeance is Mine," *Scripture* 12:33–39. Morris, L. L., "The Wrath of God," *Exp T* 63:142–45. TDNT, V, pp. 392–418. TDOT, I, pp. 348–60. THAT, I, pp. 220–24.

G.V.G.3114. **μακροθυμέω** *makrothuméō*; contracted *makrothumṓ*, fut. *makrothumésō*, from *makróthumos* (n.f.), long–suffering, which is from *makrós* (3117), long, and *thumós* (2372), wrath, anger. To suffer long, be long–suffering, as opposed to hasty anger or punishment (1 Cor. 13:4; 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Pet. 3:9), to forbear (Matt. 18:26, 29), to endure patiently as opposed to losing faith or giving up (Heb. 6:15; James 5:7, 8), to tarry, delay (Luke 18:7). *Makrothuméō* involves exercising understanding and patience toward persons while *hupoménō* (5278) involves putting up with things or circumstances.

**Deriv.:** *makrothumía* (3115), long–suffering.

**Syn.:** *hupoménō* (5278), to endure; *anéchomai* (430), to tolerate, endure; *kartereō* (2594), to endure; *pheídomai* (5339), to spare.

**Ant.:** *adēmonéō* (85), to be in distress.

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Slow to Anger (Glen Gerhauser's Notes)

Literally in Hebrew it's like God taking a deep breath.

Your life is sacred ground; don't let the enemy encamp there. First, pride will come and set up his tent. Then if you don't kick him out, he'll invite his friends. "Hey, unforgiveness, come and join me!" Now, unforgiveness sets up his tent. Then unforgiveness invites his friend bitterness. Pride then says, "What's a party without jealousy?" And so jealousy comes along. Jealousy says, "Hey, where are my buddies, envy and greed?" Soon envy and greed are partying in your life. The crowd of sins will keep growing unless you let Jesus in to turn over the tables of sin in your life.

Have you ever pondered how big God is? The highest heavens cannot contain him. The more scientists are discovering about our universe, the more mind blowing the size of it is. Billions and billions of stars. Billions of galaxies. (Find out how big they estimate the universe is.) And that's only what we see. How much more is out there that we don't see?

God's power is far greater and bigger than the whole universe. So when you sin, God can just wipe you out with a blink of his eye.

But he doesn't. Why? Because he is slow to anger.

This is why I believe when Adam and Eve sinned they did not immediately fall to the ground in death. He said, "If you eat of it you will die." And yet, they did not die immediately. How long did they live afterwards? A thousand years? That's because God is slow to anger. He wants to give time for you to turn.

Mankind does not deserve mercy or forgiveness. If God really opened your eyes to the height and depth of your sin, you would be amazed at the immensity of it. Paul said near the end of his life that he was "the chief of sinners." Why? Because the closer he came to Jesus, the light, the more he saw his darkness. And yet, God is slow to anger.

All that immense power that is in God, is not to throw us in hell, but to save us. But we must respond to it. Every time you or someone else sins, God takes a deep breath. He hates sin with an unrelenting passion, but he loves you. His whole

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work is to separate you from your sin.

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We've been taught by school and psychology that independence is a sign of maturity. It is not! Independence is a sign of stupidity and immaturity. Healthy interdependence is the sign of maturity.

You must be totally dependant on God, and also a part of Christ's body, without which there is no growth.

We have to watch out at developing our own independent thoughts of who God is and how he will accomplish his work. Jesus must be our teacher, not our theological or traditional grids. Jesus will always stretch our thoughts about God and his will for us.

Jesus' patience is his glory. Any god can have awesome power and wipe people out. But, God's glory is seen in his patience and longsuffering. Paul says that "long-suffering" is the first attribute of love.

So, since you want God to be slow to anger toward you, he wants you to be slow to anger toward others.

Jesus restores people and makes him the chief leader of God's early church. That's God's patience and long-suffering at work.

The same goes for Paul. Paul murdered Christians through persecution. And yet, Jesus is slow to anger toward Paul. He saves Paul and makes him the chief apostle to the Gentiles and the author of two-thirds of the NT.