

Hebrews 10: 35 – 36

Do not surrender your confidence; it will have great reward.
You need patience to do God's will and receive what he has promised.

Patience

Patience... they say patience is a virtue. But unfortunately for me, it is not a virtue that God has blessed me with, well, not yet any way. I am not a patient man. I am always task oriented. When something needs to be done, I want it done now, if I am going somewhere I want to be there. Most of the time when I am on task, and in motion, I miss part of the journey in getting there. I am quick to make a decision, quick to give an answer, not always taking the time to think it through thoroughly. A lot of the time that works for me, but sometimes it doesn't and it gets me into trouble.

Well, you know, I am a work of God. With all of my imperfections and all of my jagged edges, this is how God made me. God is my Creator, and I am His creation. But I am also a work in progress; I am constantly striving, and working everyday to become a better creation for Him. I sometimes think that I should have a T-shirt made that says: *"Pardon my Mess, God is at Work here"*. I really think that phrase suits me so well. It is my mess, a mess that I created myself. And it takes Gods help to get me out of it, because I cannot do it alone. I am so grateful that he is a generous and a patient God. And that he truly is there every time that I call upon Him.

But it wasn't that long ago when I thought I could do everything on my own, I did not need help from God or anyone else. I had often heard that *"God helps those, who help themselves"* and I took this phrase quite literally. I truly believed that God wanted me to do it on my own. And that if I came to Him with every little problem, I would be disappointing Him. Well you can imagine after all those years of not putting God first and not having a daily relationship with Him what happened to my world. It finally came to a drastic and dramatic halt. God said enough was enough, and he gave me a major wake up call. And it wasn't pretty. Well I truly believe that God does not punish us or that he wants to harm us in any way. I also know for a fact that He is a loving and forgiving God and that He loves his children. So for me it took this life changing upheaval to get me on the right track, and going in the proper direction.

One day I was reading about John the Baptist. About his life, who and what he was all about. When I read the passage in the Bible, John 3: 30, "He must increase, but I must decrease". I realized then that this is what has to happen, He must increase in my life, and I must decrease. I must get out of my own way and let God in and to seek his guidance in everything that I do. I am no longer capable of doing anything without Him.

When I sit in prayer, I envision myself standing on this gravel and rock filled path, and at the end of this path I see Jesus standing there with his arms

open, and out stretched, patiently waiting for me to come to Him. But first, in order for me to get to Him I must remove these rocks and bits of gravel. Each rock and piece of gravel represents all of the things in my life that I have done wrong. Each lie that I have told, wrongs that I have done that need to be righted. Every rock is a person whom I must forgive and every person who must forgive me for what I may have done to them. Each rock and piece of gravel I must claim and seek forgiveness for. Every day I hope to be able to pick up a rock or sometimes maybe a handful and throw them into a pile behind me. With every rock that I throw into this pile it brings me closer to Jesus. But there are some days I am not able to pick up any rocks, or maybe it is just a small little pebble to throw in to my pile. Ahead of me on my path I can also see that there are some very large rocks that I must conquer, remove, and add them to my pile. One of these very large rocks is my lack of patience. One of my daily prayers is that my pile of rocks behind me continues to grow and get larger and that the path of rocks ahead of me keeps getting shorter and bringing me that much closer to Jesus.

So if someone were to ask me what I gave up for Lent, I would have say that I am not giving up anything, but that I want to be able to add to my pile of rocks. I would like to read a prayer that was given to me by Fr. Mark Beard:

MY LORD GOD,

I have no idea where I am going.

I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end.

Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that

*I think that I am following your will does not mean
that I am actually doing so.*

***But I believe that the desire to please
you does in fact please you.***

*And I hope I have that desire in
all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do
anything apart from that desire.*

*And I know that if I do this you will lead me by
the right road though, I may know nothing about it.*

*Therefore I will trust you always
though I may seem lost and in the shadow of death.*

*I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
And you will never leave me to face my perils alone.*

Amen

By Thomas Merton

What this prayer says to me is to “NOT TO SURRENDER MY CONFIDENCE” in the struggles that I am going through. And I try to say this prayer every day. And that I should keep moving forward “AND THERE WILL BE A GREAT REWARD”. Trust in the Lord, even when I feel like I am blind and not able to see what’s ahead. Knowing that God is going to be there. And that I truly want to do God’s will, and I will not give up no matter how afraid I am, or how lost or alone I may feel.

When I am at my lowest times and feeling like the world is going to closing in on me. It is in these times when I am in prayer and can see Jesus standing there at the end of my gravel path with His arms outstretched and waiting for me. He will sometimes step aside, and I can see that behind him there is a pile of my rocks. He is also picking up my rocks from His end of my path, and His pile is mostly made up of some of my largest rocks, and His pile is also larger than mine. And with every rock of mine that He adds to his pile He is coming closer to me as well. I know there will always be rocks on my path to Jesus, because I am not perfect. I just hope and pray that I can keep getting closer, and that one day be able to get close enough for Him to reach out for me.