

**Revelation 14: 12 – “Here is the Patience of the Saints”, Sermon # 107 in the series - “The Faithful and True Witness”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

I like Albert Barnes comments on the text that we are considering this afternoon. He says – “The design of this portion of the chapter is to encourage Christians in their trials by the assurance, that this formidable anti-Christian power would be overthrown, and that all the enemies of God would receive their just doom in the world of despair.” “Fearful as that doctrine is, and terrible as is the idea of the everlasting suffering of any of the creatures of God, yet the final overthrow of the wicked is necessary to the triumph of truth and holiness, and there is consolation in the belief that religion (he means the true religion of Christianity) will ultimately triumph.” “The desire for its triumph necessarily supposes that the wicked will be overthrown and punished; and indeed it is the aim of all governments, and of all administrations of law, that the wicked shall be overthrown, and that truth and justice shall prevail.” I like these words because Christians today need to understand that there have been times in the history of the Church of Jesus Christ when things around them have not gone politically or spiritually well for them. At many points in the history of the Church, truth was not advancing and righteousness was not evident in societies and governments. And as a result, the Christian in such times might have thought that Christ’s cause and kingdom of true religion would not triumph on the earth. But if they were reading and taking to heart the promises which are found in this book, they would know that it will triumph because it is clearly promised to do so. In Revelation Chapter 5 and verses 9 and 10 it says, “And they sang a New song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth. It does not say that we are reigning now in heaven, although for every person who dies in the Lord this is most certainly true. Neither does it say that we are reigning now on the earth; for the context of these verses is set at the beginning of the Church age, where she is looking forward to what Christ would do for her during that time. No, she is looking forward to what the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ would do for her sometime during that church age. That time is the Millennium where Christ will reign spiritually with His Church in the triumph of the gospel going forth to conquer among the nations. The great systems of Antichrist will fall when God’s Spirit is poured from on high, and Satan is bound in this particular way; that the nations are no longer deceived by false Christianity and Islam and the religions of the East.

And we should know and understand that this is one of the main reasons why this blessed book of Revelation was written. It was written so that the Church would understand that even though there would be many trials and tribulations in regard to her fulfilling of the great commission given to her by her Lord, that she would eventually come to the place that she would reign upon the earth. I am well aware that this is not what the present condition or strength of the Church suggests to us, but as a man who I have been corresponding with in the UK recently said to me, “I am now convinced that the promises of God must outweigh

contemporary appearances.” “That is, we must read the current apostasy and unbelief in the light of the promises and not read away the promises in the light of the state of the world.” “Therefore we may and must pray for worldwide revival because God purposes it, and our importunity will give him the signal that we mean business and that we are serious about it.” “As Alan Redpath (who was once the pastor of the church where I grew up) said, “Prayer is not overcoming God’s reluctance.” “It is laying hold on God’s willingness.” This is true, my brethren, and we should pray for revival, and hope for it and expect that it will eventually come. But if revival does not come right away, what should we do? Should we abandon our Reformed faith and think that the preaching of the truth of all the Bible does not matter? No, we need to heed the words of this text. “Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. So this afternoon I would like to open up this text by stating this proposition to you. During the best of times and the worst of times, politically, the Church of Jesus Christ is called to patiently labor on, even though it appears that Antichristian spiritual forces have gained the ascendancy and appear to even to have triumphed. They will not triumph ultimately, but we need to exercise patience. There are 2 ways in which the Church of Jesus Christ is called to labor on in good political times, and in bad political times. She is called to labor on in keeping the commandments of God. And she is to labor on in the faith of Jesus. Let us pray as we proceed that we will truly understand what God has called us to.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – The Church of Jesus Christ is called to patiently labor on, in keeping the commandments of God.**

“Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God.” Our translation, the New King James, has added another “here” at the beginning of the second phrase; there is no “here” added in the NAS. There are manuscript differences which cause this. The ESV translation does indicate that the second phrase is an amplification of the first. I believe that the original Greek is indicating that we, as Christians are going to need to exercise patience in regard to continuing on in our labors, which are defined for us. “Here is the patience of the saints.” “Here are those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus. The New American Standard Version says, “Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.” The English Standard Version says, “Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.” In each of these translations good words are used in translating the Greek word ὑπομονή. Patience, perseverance, and endurance are all going to be needed when the saints are surrounded with spiritual darkness, ignorance and confusion in relation to the truth of the word of God; that we are called to keep God’s commandments. Each of us needs to grasp this truth. There will be times in the history of the Church when it will be particularly difficult to keep the commandments of God. And this most certainly will happen in times when political authorities persecute Christians for their keeping them. But it may also be hard for Christians to keep them in times when there is no political opposition or persecution taking place. In either case, there will be times when there will be few people around us keeping the commandments of God, and that is going to require that those of us who do, will persevere in keeping them. Christians may have to endure the

disapproval, or the scorn or ridicule of others around them, because they are keeping them and they intend to keep on keeping them.

Adam Clarke is very helpful here. He says in his commentary at this point, “Sometimes ἡ ὑπομονη, patience or perseverance, is taken for the reward of these virtues; the text therefore may be thus understood: Here is the reward of the perseverance of the true Christians; for although they die for the testimony of Jesus, yet they shall be unutterably blessed.” Verse 13, the next verse proves this. I would only add that there is also a blessing which comes to the living also. It is that they will have a clear conscience before God, and even peace in doing and keeping the commandments of God when no one else seems to be concerned to do so. For this is what we have been called to in our day. It is the same in all generations in this New Covenant age. 1 Corinthians 7: 19 says, “Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters. It is what is pleasing to God. It does not merit us favor with God, or justify us in the sight of God. But it is what matters to God after we are converted. We cannot keep His commandments in the way that pleases God before we are converted to Christ. But afterwards, since we have grace, it is what we will attempt to do, even though we know that we will not keep them perfectly. We keep them as much as we can, by grace, and we are motivated by the love which He has placed in our hearts to please the Father, just as the Lord Jesus pleased the Father. We can know that this what God expects of us by our remembering the words of our Savior; that He regards our keeping the commandments of God as love to Himself. John 15: 9 and 10 – “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.” “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.” Notice that the commandments which Jesus kept in order that we might keep His commandments, were the commandments given to Jesus by the Father. Jesus was under the law, and fulfilled the law (the commandments of the Father) in order that we might be justified. Therefore, we are not under the law if Jesus has fulfilled it. But this does not release us from the obligation to keep God’s commandments now that we are justified. We are not under law; we are under grace. But grace leads us back to the commandments of God out of our love for Jesus, and our desire to please the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

But it requires patient endurance and perseverance to keep on keeping the commandments of God when so many around us want to rationalize their not keeping them. Ask yourself this afternoon if you are consciously going about to keep the Ten Commandments, first of all? For they are the sum of all the commandments of God. And then ask yourself if you are consciously studying to love God with all your heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself? For that is what we are told by Jesus are the first and greatest commandments of the law, in Matthew 22: 36-40. And then ask yourself whether you are really loving your neighbor as yourself as it says in Romans Chapter 13, verse 8. “Owe no man anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.” “For the commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, You shall not covet, and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” “Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is

the fulfillment of the law.” Now notice that love is the fulfillment of the law, but nowhere does it say here that love does away with our considering or keeping the commandments. It is simply that this is how they are to be kept and fulfilled in us. None of the 10 commandments have been abrogated (that is fulfilled in such a way by Christ, that He has done away with them). Instead, by Christ’s fulfilling of them, they have all been established to us as holy, and just, and good, as it says in Romans 3: 31 and Romans 7: 12.

Therefore, beloved brethren, here is the patience of the saints; that we will keep on keeping them, even when others neglect them, forget them, and think that it is not important to God. Ask yourself if you are consciously attempting to keep all of the commandments of God? Is your worship of God alone through Jesus Christ our Lord? Is your personal worship and corporate worship something that God is pleased with? Are you studying not to swear and take God’s name in vain? Is your speech good, or is it coarse and questionable? Do you remember the Christian Sabbath day, the Lord’s Day, to keep it holy, or are you infringing upon it with all the personal things that you would like to do and accomplish, or even engaging in your 6 day work when you do not really have to? Do you love your neighbor as yourself, or are you critical of him and refuse to help him or be his friend, because you see all of his faults so clearly? You see; this kind of faith which examines your own heart in relation to the commandments of God; to see if you are keeping them out of love to God and your Savior; this is what you should be persevering in, even though other people who call themselves Christians do not. This requires patience in order to see fruit born to God, but wait for it. The Lord will reward you.

**2ndly – The Church of Jesus Christ is called to patiently labor on, in the faith of Jesus.**

“Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” I hope that you can now see from this verse that a saint is one who keeps the commandments of God. A saint is one who keeps the commandments of God because they believe in Jesus Christ. Saints are those who have faith in Jesus and they keep the faith of Jesus. I thought that it was very tragic to see on television this past Friday, that the man who used to be Pope, John Paul II was today, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011, going to be beatified by the present Pope, Benedict XVI and the church of Rome. This means that he is half way to becoming a saint because he had performed one miracle of healing. He has supposedly performed a miracle of healing on sister Marie-Simon Pierre, who had had Parkinson’s disease. If he can be found to have done 2 miracles of healing, while he lived, then he could make it to be a saint. In the Roman Catholic church becoming a saint is a stringent process. The person being considered by the Church (for it is the Roman Church which alone can canonize them to become a saint), must have lived an exemplary life, someone must nominate them to attain to sainthood, there has to be an investigation into the miracles performed, and the Congregation of Rites in Rome which handles sainthood nominations has to conduct its own investigation into the person’s background, writings, and alleged miracles, as well as the person qualifications for sainthood. Then the Pope has to sign off on their evaluations and then that person can become a saint.

Brethren, here is the patience of the saints; that those who are twisting the gospel of Jesus Christ like this would finally be brought to see their error, and that this false system of Christianity would be brought down and destroyed. People become saints when they believe

in Jesus for salvation. They ask God to forgive them of their sins, and they are seen by Him as saints immediately, for Jesus sake. It is the righteousness of Christ imputed to them and conferred upon them, and Christ's grace working in them, that makes them saints. It is nothing that they do. Listen to how Paul words this in 1 Corinthians 1, verse 2 – "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." You see, it is those who are called by God to be saints, who are saints. It is those who call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord in every place. This requires patience and perseverance and endurance on the part of the true saints; not to be known as God's saints when they have believed in Jesus. No church, Rome or otherwise, can confer sainthood on you. But if you believe in Jesus, in accordance with the truth of the Bible, you are one of His saints. Here is where you know if you are keeping the faith of Jesus Christ; if you are not willing to compromise the truth of the Bible to acknowledge the false doctrine of false churches like the church of Rome.

It is the patience of the saints to hold fast to the sound doctrine of the Bible; that which was given to Christ's Church by the Apostles, and given to the Apostles by our Lord Jesus Christ who is the true and only Head of the Church. It is the patience of the saints to hold fast the word of God against all the traditions imposed upon it by men who would add to the Bible and thus create a false authority and false teaching of what Christianity is, and thus lead many to destruction and eternal punishment as verses 9-14 of this chapter tell us. Many hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions of Protestants have died for this truth over the time period of the 1260 days prophecy. I do pray that we will be those who will hold fast to the truth of the Bible which teaches us what grace is, and what saints are, and who the true head of the church is. Let us not let our guard down. Let us not succumb to the false propaganda of the Devil who works through the false religion of Roman Catholicism, but rather, let us patiently teach and instruct all who will listen, as to what true religion is. Perhaps God will grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they will escape the snare of the Devil, having been held captive by him to do his will. True religion is not taking sacraments to be saved, and worshipping God by means of crucifixes, and listening to the Latin prayers and chants of priests, or praying to the saints and Mary. It is worshipping God through our living Risen Head, our Lord Jesus Christ. It is following Christ in accordance with the truth of the Bible, It is keeping His commandments as they are found in the Bible. It is persevering in the faith, that body of truth which is taught in the Bible; the doctrines of grace, and the commandments which lead to godliness. It is having the Holy Spirit in your heart, given to you by the Father and sent by the Son. Oh persevere in the doctrines of the Bible which are so well explained in our Confession of Faith; the 1689 Confession. Compare that document and the Council of Trent, and you will understand why we are called Reformed Baptists. Let us be those who know the difference between truth and error. Let us patiently hold to the truth, and patiently teach others the truths of the Bible, and not allow what is false to creep in to our thoughts or into our church. Let us be like the Psalmist in Psalm 119, verse 116-119. "Uphold me according to Your word, that I may live;

and do not let me be ashamed of my hope.” “Hold me up, and I shall be safe, and I shall observe Your statutes continually.”