

Walking at His Pace

A Word for 2020 & Beyond
Church on the Park | Sunday, 9 Feb 2020

Text: “If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25, ESV).

Theme: Walking at God’s pace is essential for making it to his destination.

Intro: Learning God’s pace is one of the foundational lessons your heavenly Father will teach you. It’s a lesson that is costly—it’s not easily learned. As young believers, we are prone to rush God’s plan. Even when we are mature disciples, we feel a push to rush things because we are nearing the end. Keeping in step with the Spirit is a spiritual skill that needs continual sharpening. When I was young, my dad taught me how to be a good runner. He himself was an excellent runner and he taught me about the importance of pace. “Son, when you see the other kids sprint ahead, keep your pace. At the end, run with all your might.” When all my fellow classmates started the race running with all their might, I’d keep my pace. Soon all the others fell behind. I kept my pace and would win almost every long-distance race.

His plan. His portion. His pace.

“My people will get to the place I’m taking them if they learn my portion and **submit to my pace.**”

PACE

1) P - Practice Patience, Preserve Peace & Pause (Gen. 16).

- **God’s way** is a way that requires **patience** and **long-suffering**.
 - These are characteristics that we don’t have at first. And even if you have them naturally, God is going to teach you about **supernatural patience**—a patience and long-suffering that comes from **his Spirit**.
 - His **goal** is that you **share** in his **nature**.
 - God’s **journey** for you is all about you **becoming like Jesus**. It’s not first and foremost about **achieving things**.
 - Be careful of everything that is **viral**. Viruses are sicknesses and **God’s way** is **slow and meticulous**.
- Watch out that the revelation of **God’s grand plan** does not cause you to **stumble** by **forcing its fulfilment**.
 - **Both** the **plan** and the **unfolding of the plan** must be of **God**.
- One of the great examples of rushing God’s plan is the story of **Abraham, Sarah and Hagar** (Gen. 16).
 - God gave **Abraham a great revelation of his plan**: his seed would be as numerous as the stars in the sky and as plentiful as the dust on the ground.
 - But after ten years, **Sarah still remained barren**.
 - So, **Sarah** came up with an **ingenious plan**: Abraham could sleep with Sarah’s mistress and through Hagar they would have their first child.
 - “And Abram **listened** to the voice of Sarai” (Gen. 16:2).
 - So they **used Hagar** to try to fulfil God’s plan.
 - The whole thing went **‘pear-shaped’**; it was not God’s will.
 - Their **lack of patience** birthed **Ishmael** as well as a whole lot of **heartache**.
 - *What do we learn from all this?*
 - God’s plan only comes to pass through **his miraculous power**—not our wisdom and lack of patience (Gen. 17:15-27).
 - When you don’t submit to **God’s timing** you start **using people** rather than **loving people**.
 - God still had **mercy** on them and gave them **another chance** through Isaac.
 - When you **feel the pressure to manufacture** God’s plan—**practice patience, preserve peace and pause to submit to God’s timing**.

- One of the great **lessons of maturity** is learning **God's timing**—how to **keep in step** with God's Spirit and **stay at his pace**.

2) A - Accept God's Timing (Gen. 37:1ff).

- God's timing is **different** than our timing.
 - God's timing is also **better than** our timing.
- The story of **Jospeh** in **Genesis** is another example.
 - **God reveals** to him **an amazing plan**: he will be a great leader, even his family will bow to him.
- Yet, **the way** it comes to pass is much different than what he would expect.
 - God **fulfills** his plan by first bringing him through the **fires of persecution, resistance and rejection**.
- At one point Joseph seems like he's going to get out of prison (Gen. 40).
 - "Yet, the chief cupbearer **did not remember Joseph, but forgot him**" (Gen. 40:23).
 - Your **destiny** is not based on **how good people treat you**. Neither is your destiny based on their **memory or acceptance** of you. Instead, your destiny is based on God's **unfaltering will**.
- Joseph came to a point of saying, "**It is not in me**" to Pharaoh (Gen. 41:16).
 - He saw that he was nothing, but **God was everything**.
- That's the lesson God is trying to teach you. It's something that Paul said, "**There is no good thing in me, that is in my flesh**" (Rom. 7:18).

3) C - Consider God's Creation (Matt. 6:25-34).

- The **birds** of the field neither toil nor reap, yet your heavenly Father feeds them.
 - Matthew 6:25-34
- Consider how long it takes an **oak tree to grow**.
- **Weeds** grow fast, viruses spread quickly, but **God's Kingdom takes time**—it grows **little by little**.
- **Slow down**.
 - Even birth has a nine month waiting time.

4) E - Exercise Faith in Light of God's Eternal Perspective (Prov. 3:5-6).

- Keeping in step with God takes **trust**. It will mean **exercising faith**.
- Always keep God's **eternal perspective in mind**.
- With God **a day is like thousand years** and **a thousand years is like a day** (Ps 90:1-4; 2 Pet. 3:8).
- **Joseph in the New Testament** had to learn God's timing as the father of Jesus.
 - "**Remain there until I tell you**" (Matt. 2:13).
 - Egypt was no place to reach the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
 - Yet, God wanted them there for a **season**.
 - It was for their protection, but also a fulfilment of prophecy, which says, "Out of Egypt I will call my son" (Hos. 11:1; Matt. 2:15).

Conclusion: God's pace is the best pace. You will get to the place he is taking you when you learn his portion and submit to his pace.

[**Note:** I shared a similar message to this in 2018, but with a different acronym and emphasis.]