

Rev. Anne J. Scalfaro  
26 April 2026

10:30 a.m. MT Worship  
Fourth Sunday of Easter

Calvary Baptist Church  
Denver, Colorado

## ***Patience: A Pep Talk***

Third Sermon in *Cultivating the Fruit of Patience*  
Part of *Abide & Grow: Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit*

### ***1 Thessalonians 5:12-22***

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

*NOTE: A sermon is a spoken word event. This manuscript served as a guide but is not exact to what was preached in the moment. My manuscripts often include more material than what I preached in the worship service.*

New Testament scholar and theologian, N.T. Wright said, “*We applaud patience, but prefer it to be a virtue that others possess.*” So true, right?

In this week’s Scripture, the Apostle Paul gives the Thessalonians a spiritual “Pep Talk” on how to live together in Christian community. They’re pretty new at this, after all. And at the heart of his message is patience. But before we get into the content of his message, let’s look at the context. Why did Paul have to give them this Pep Talk in the first place?

We learn in the book of Acts that Paul, Timothy, and Silas—as part of one of their missionary journeys—preached in the Thessalonian synagogue over three Sabbaths (so three weeks). Acts 17 recalls the results of their efforts:

*<sup>4</sup> Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women. <sup>5</sup> But others were jealous; so they rounded up some ruffians or bad characters (depending on what translation you’re reading) from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason’s house (Paul’s host) in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. <sup>6</sup> But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials, shouting: “These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, <sup>7</sup> and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar’s decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus.” <sup>8</sup> When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. <sup>9</sup> Then*

*they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.<sup>10</sup> As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea...[helping them escape]*

It's safe to say that Paul's missionary efforts in Thessalonica were cut short. As we can imagine, Paul was concerned for the new Christians who had responded positively to his message about Jesus. He was worried about how they were doing. So Paul sends Timothy back to the Thessalonians to check up on them in person. Timothy then goes back to Corinth and fills Paul in on how the Thessalonian church is doing. Timothy says, they're doing okay, but as one commentator put it: "not all things were rosy."<sup>1</sup> Timothy reports, and Paul addresses, three main concerns in the community.

The **first** was that **some key members of their community had died, and they were grieving**. These deaths were raising practical questions like "Who's going to do stuff, now that these key leaders are gone? Who is going to keep stuff

running? But it also raised existential and theological questions. They wondered what happens after you die. Much of 1 Thessalonians is Paul reassuring the community of what Pastor Ian reassured us about two weeks ago when he talked about *What Happens After We Die*. Paul tells these new believers that they are not destined for wrath after death, but for salvation (or healing, in the Greek) and that they will be with God, with the Lord, essentially proclaiming the truth of Easter Sunday to them: Death does not have the last word. But Death was still clearly on their minds. We even get the hint in 1 Thessalonians 4, that some in this community were wondering if all of these recent deaths were some kind of expression of divine disapproval. They were asking, like we all do, the 'big questions' in life—like, what is all this for anyway? What is the point? And spiritually speaking, what does this person who Paul is teaching us about, Jesus, have to do with any of it?

The **second big thing** is that this fear about death is heightened by the fact that **they still felt**

<sup>1</sup> Taken from the ESV® Study Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright ©2008 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News

Publishers. Accessed on April 26, 2026 at <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/1-thessalonians-introduction/#outline>.

**vulnerable themselves because they were being persecuted for their newfound faith.** What happened to Paul and Silas was scary, and they were still feeling the aftereffects of it. Going against Caesar and proclaiming “Jesus is Lord” is no joke. Not unlike the backlash that Pope Leo is receiving these days from the White House for preaching a message of Christ that sides with the life and dignity of immigrants, that opposes the war in Iran and the harming of civilians, and that opposes the death penalty in favor of life. The early Christians were at risk every time they said Jesus is Lord instead of Caesar is Lord.

In those days, the Empire tried to “play God” by putting Caesar’s face on coins with the words: “Caesar as Lord.” Today, the Empire tries to “play God” by depicting the President as a “Messiah figure” in a red and white robe, with a gold glow around him, holding an orb as he heals a man—surrounded by images of the United States (statue of liberty, flags, eagles, fighter jets). It’s an image that promotes Christian Nationalism.

Remember, Christian Nationalism has nothing to do with being a Christian who also

loves your country and is patriotic. There are a lot of us that love Jesus and also love this country. Christian Nationalism is a cultural and political framework that merges white American identity with Christian identity making them one and the same. It is the exact thing our Baptist ancestors fought against as they worked to instill the separation of church and state and religious freedom into the founding documents of our country.

The threat and harm of Christian Nationalism is the modern-day version of what the early church was up against as they tried to follow Jesus over and above any civic leader or national agenda that was saying “it” was God. Roman leaders and Jewish leaders working for Rome—people who held power and who were concerned about maintaining that power—worried about everyday folks following Jesus and forming communities of people that followed the ways of Jesus. Because Jesus disrupted those systems of power saying the “least are greatest” and “the last shall be first.” Jesus disrupted power by turning over for-profit market tables at the Temple and by displaying nonviolent resistance. Jesus disrupted

power by speaking to Samaritan women and forgiving sinners and eating with tax collectors and touching lepers.

All of these types of acts are scary to Empirical power because it's hard to hold onto power and lord it over others when those people realize the truth—that the Empire is not their Savior or saving grace, but that their saving power comes from their connection to God and their care of one another...not from an earthly leader. This is why the proclamation: "*Jesus is Lord*" was so powerful then and still is today. If Jesus is your Lord, no one else can be.

And on top of this big 'external' issue in their community around persecution and proclaiming Jesus as Lord, and on top of them grieving the loss of some of their significant leaders, the **Thessalonians were also fighting internally** about how some people were not participating by giving their resources on behalf of the community; they were depending on the wealthier members of the community to give all the money, AND some of the wealthier members were being critiqued for giving money but not doing their fair

share of volunteering and working in the community and supporting the poor, while others—often the poor and sick themselves—were the ones helping the other people who were poor and sick.

Essentially, the Thessalonians were working out what it means to be a part of a community together...do we have to give money AND volunteer? Yes and Yes! It takes all of us to make this work.

These three concerns could be the same concerns we voice today, couldn't they? The Bible is so relevant. Always has been, always will be. It is the story of our humanity, the story of our human journey, and it doesn't matter whether it's 2,000 years ago or today—we humans have the same big struggles and questions that we've always had. And sometimes we ourselves are the people in power and sometimes we are ourselves are the ones oppressed by power—privilege can be shifty and sneaky like that, but at all times, what Paul is telling the Thessalonians and what we are reminded of today is this: The Good News of Jesus is both for HERE and the HEREAFTER.

Yes, you have come from God's Love and you are returning to God's Love...the salvation (or healing) that Jesus promises is a full restoration that we cannot yet fully understand but that we have enough evidence, spiritual and even empirical these days, to know that when we die in this life, it's not the end of our existence. That is true AND, the way you make it through this life is by forming community together and living as Jesus taught you to live—creating the kin-dom of God on earth as it is in heaven. It's both/and. Not either/or.

So as Paul writes to encourage the Thessalonians, he gives them a very clear "Pep Talk" on the **Purpose** of their life together in community and the **Persistence** and **Perseverance** it takes to "keep on keeping on" with each other. And at the center of this "Pep Talk" about how to reach their **Potential** as Christian church is...*Patience*.

Just to circle back to one of our other Fruit of the Spirit, I hope you caught in today's text that the **Purpose** of these community practices that Paul lists off in 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22 that require patience is "*to be at peace among yourselves.*" Peace is the goal. Patience is not

an end in itself, it is the means to achieve peace.

And Paul believes they can reach this **Potential** of Being at Peace with Themselves, which, as he says a few verses later, is "*the will of God in Christ Jesus.*" They can create peaceful and peace-filled communities that love and support and encourage and care for another by doing a few practical things:

First, he says: "***Respect those who labor among you...esteem others highly in love for their contribution.***" Realize that everyone has a gift to give, each person's gifts are different, celebrate those differences and shout out each person's contribution. Don't play the comparison game; all gifts are needed. In Calvary "deacon language," we would say it this way: Connect people's gifts with the community's needs. Encourage one another, *respect* one another, see in one another what you do not have, and allow others to see in you what they do not have. Everybody matters; everybody makes a difference. We cannot be who we are and do the ministry God has called us to do without each and every one of us doing our part.

At this point Paul drills down deeper and gives some examples, or community norms, of how people might use the gifts they have, to strengthen the community. And to be clear, sometimes we are the people *offering* the gifts and skills to help those in these situations, and sometimes WE are the people who *need* the help! Amen?!

The first community norm that Paul gives them is to “*admonish the idlers.*” Looking at this phrase in the Greek, this really means, gently warn, teach and guide those who not ‘getting it.’ Those who are not already on board with the ‘rules’ of this community. Do not just kick them out or get frustrated with them. Come alongside them; help them see what you see; help them see a bigger picture. Help them see that their gifts are needed...that if they remain idle, the community cannot reach its full potential.

This is a community where everyone does their part. No exceptions. Those who are sitting back need to step forward...in whatever way that step makes sense for them...behind the scenes, out front...warn the folks who are not participating in the

community in an active way, that without them, this community will not survive. It’s vulnerable. That was true in Paul’s day and it’s true in our day too. Paul knows they have lost leaders, people have died, he knows he can’t always be there for them...so he says, you have to get everyone on board and have everyone realize their presence and their participation matters. Staying on the sidelines will not grow or save or protect this community; getting in the game will.

The second community norm is to “*encourage the fainthearted.*” In the Greek this same term of fainthearted also means feeble-minded! It shows the connection between head and heart. Essentially, the directive is to look for people who are struggling in mind or in heart...spiritually or emotionally...and encourage them. Be there for them. Listen to them. Journey with them. Surround them with comfort and care. From the beginning Christian communities have been what Irish Poet John O’Donohue defines as a blessing: “*a circle of light drawn around a person to protect, heal, and strengthen.*”

Calvary, we are known for this as well. We are a place where people come to heal from religious trauma or spiritual harm, where people who are skeptics or doubters, agnostics or spiritually curious...can come and feel surrounded by love and hope and care, even when they don't know what they believe. We are also a place where people who are struggling can feel the strength of those who have been through a similar struggle in their own journey and know they are not alone.

The third community norm is ***“help the weak.”*** In the Greek the word “help” here means more than just *“give aid to or care for,”* although it does mean that, but it also means *“to pay heed to, cleave to, hold fast to.”* Part of Christian community is caring for and aiding the sick, hurting, and weak...we saw Jesus doing this all the time. We know this is part of our calling.

But knowing the Greek here gives the phrase even more meaning. We are to *“cleave to and pay heed to”* the sick or the weak. In other words, we are to listen to them. Privilege them. Prioritize them. We are to connect our lives more to the weak than we are to the

powerful. We turn away from the Power that harms, and turn our attention to the powerless who yes, we will help, but who also help heal us and help us understand that the presence of the divine, the face of Jesus, is seen most clearly in the prisoner and the person suffering or hurting, not in the powerful or pompous. Paul says we need to cleave to those who are weak not just because they need help, but because **WE NEED HELP** remembering our true calling and purpose and where our focus should be.

And then, after giving these three examples of how to share life in Christian Community, Paul gives the fourth norm if you will, which is really the thread that holds all of them together: ***“Be Patient with all of them.”*** All of who? All of THEM. The idlers, the fainthearted, the weak, AND all those who are helping them...be patient with them, too. You will only reach your Potential as a Jesus-following community and you'll only achieve your Purpose of knowing and sharing peace, if you do all of these things with **PATIENCE**.

Perhaps it's obvious but people don't change overnight, so “admonishing the idlers” is

going to take time and a lot of patience. People do not flip from depression to elation or from questioning and doubting to claiming and believing overnight, so “encouraging the fainthearted” is going to take patience. And the weak do not become strong or the sick healed, overnight. Nor do those of us who cling to the idols of materialism, consumerism, self-sufficiency, power, success, fame, or achievement shake these addictions and illusions overnight.

Filipino author and poet, Balt Rodriguez says: *“There’s something deeply tender about someone choosing to be patient with you—when they take a breath instead of raising their voice, when they wait while you figure things out, when they stay even when you’re not easy to love. Patience isn’t loud or flashy; it doesn’t announce itself with grand gestures. It’s the quiet understanding in a long pause, the gentle nod that says “take your time,” and the unspoken promise that they’re not going anywhere, even if you’re not your best self right now.”*

Spiritual writer Henri Nouwen says in his book *Bread for the Journey: A Daybook of Wisdom*

*and Faith: “Being patient is difficult. Patience asks us to live the moment to the fullest, to be completely present to the moment, to taste the here and now, to be where we are. When we are impatient, we try to get away from where we are. We behave as if the real thing will happen tomorrow, later, and somewhere else. Be patient and trust that the treasure you are looking for is hidden in the ground on which you stand.”*

Perhaps this is a good time to say a word about what patience is not. Patience is not a synonym for waiting. Patience is our attitude toward waiting. Patience is not passive, it is active. If you are at a restaurant waiting for your meal to come out, and it’s taking forever...the 45 minutes you wait for your food does not change. Whether you are patient and make the best of the time with the people you are with, even if means notifying your next meeting you may be late or perhaps even making the choice to leave the restaurant if you need to...patience is handling that wait with agency about what you can control. Versus handling that wait with the emotions of impatience by being rude to the server and manager and checking your watch every

five minutes and leaving a bad google review and then when your food comes, you're so worked up you can't enjoy it.

The point being: to be a patient person is not to be a person that chooses to wait or not wait.

Waiting is just something that happens in life. We are going to have to wait for stuff. Patience is how we handle the emotion of waiting.

This is an especially important reminder when it comes to injustice. Patience does not mean, "*Well we just wait for people to stop abusing someone or for a system to stop inflicting suffering. We just let pain and persecution happen.*"

Whether or not we choose to do something to stop an injustice or stand up for someone or to set a boundary for ourselves, that is a whole different matter than patience. That is a choice we make that is rooted in courage, action, assertiveness. Patience is not in opposition to courage or action or assertiveness.

Sometimes people say, "*we must remain impatient with injustice.*" And while I understand the sentiment of that statement, and agree with its intent to say that injustices

deserve urgent attention and activism, Impatience or Patience is something completely different than working for change. We can be impatient for an injustice to stop, but our impatience will actually not make the injustice stop. Our actions and advocacy will. Our courage and our assertiveness and creative thinking and collaboration and community organizing will. Impatience may get us to those actions...but usually it's anger or frustration or being marginalized that gets us to those actions. Even more, Impatience is an emotion that signals we do NOT have control, not that we have control. So when we are impatient with injustice, that is kind of saying we can't do anything about it. And I get it, some things we can't do anything about. So we may feel impatient about those things. But hopefully, for many things, we still have drive and desire to work for justice, and are not impatient for change, but are working for change.

But this is where the spiritual practice of patience comes into play, because even as we are acting to change things, there will still be a wait. We still live in the "not yet" of it all. Patience is about the attitude of

our heart in the midst of the ‘wait,’ in the midst of circumstances and situations beyond our control. Patience is how we give a productive and purposeful shape to our waiting and to our ‘not knowing’ and to our ‘feelings of being out of control’ about something.

Or, as I’ve heard it said: This isn’t to say we should never act ON OUR impatience. The point is that we should never act OUT OF impatience.<sup>2</sup> That is, once we have processed our impatience, we can look at the situation practically and decide if intervention on our part is possible and/or necessary, and if so, what intervention that is.

Think about teachers, some of the most patient people we know. When a child’s behavior is frustrating them or disrupting a class, they do not exercise patience by doing nothing and just waiting for the child to stop misbehaving. Even if they ignore the behavior, that is an active choice, a strategy. Parents know this too. Patience is not doing nothing when disciplining your child. Patience is how you regulate your emotions and response as you try strategy

after strategy to teach your child something, seeing what works, and then regulating yourself again when it seems to work for a while and then they regress and it no longer works. They are humans too, just like us.

I like to think about Patience as the Fruit that helps us deal with the fact that we are mortal, humans. We are not immortal nor are we robots that just respond to commands the same way all the time. We ebb and flow, twist and turn, take one step forward, two steps back, and five steps sideways. We are imperfect. **Think of patience as the antidote to our own imperfection, and the imperfection of others.**

Finally, Paul wraps up his Patience “Pep Talk” by describing what Patience looks like when it’s played out through perseverance and persistence.

**Patience, in action, looks like: “*Not repaying evil for evil, but doing good to one another.*”**

Don’t fall prey to reacting to someone else and responding on a level of disrespect or harm...take a beat, take a

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<sup>2</sup> Daniella Levy, “Patience is a Virtue and I WANT IT NOW,” *The Rejection Survival Guide* (11 Nov. 2018), accessed on April 26, 2026 at

<https://rejectionssurvivalguide.com/2018/11/11/patience-is-a-virtue-and-i-want-it-now/>.

breath, and do good. Even when you do not want to...do good. Even when someone doesn't deserve it, do good. Be the Jesus-kind of love in a room.

**Patience, in action, looks like: "rejoicing always."** I know you are suffering and hurting. I know life is hard and you are tired. I know you wonder why this happening and how long it will last...even in the middle of this suffering...even in the suckiness of it all...where is joy? Remember the greater purpose of your life, and of our collective life together. We are held in God's love. God has us. We have each other. Find what you can rejoice in, no matter how big or small, and lift that up. In another letter to a different community, Paul writes "*Rejoice, again I say, rejoice.*" This is a man who wrote letters from prisons and was persecuted for his faith. This was not a man with an easy life, and he was encouraging others, saying, "Rejoice."

**Patience, in action, looks like: "praying without ceasing."** This does not mean walking around verbalizing prayers all the time saying "Dear God" or "Dear Lord" or "Dear Heavenly Father," mumbling prayers in the grocery store and as you

drive and as you journal and as you work. I mean, if you want to do that, go for it. But there is no need to say "Dear God" or "Dear Lord" in front of your words or thoughts when you start to realize your whole life is a prayer. That the Divine is privy to every conversation you have and every thought you think. Remember that God knows you, inside and out, and that God is within you, and when you begin to blur the lines between the sacred and the secular and realize that ALL of this and ALL of us belong to God...then yes, everything is a prayer and you are praying without ceasing. It helps me sometimes, and many of us, to have times where we stop and say "Dear God"—but that's less to do with God and more to do with me because I need to be reminded that God is in on all of this and because I need to acknowledge God's presence as something that is here, NOT because God needs to be invoked to arrive or to come into our lives. God is already here. Prayer draws our attention to God, within and without. So yes, pray without ceasing. Realize that the Divine Love and Care of God is everywhere and always accessible to you.

**Patience, in action, looks like:  
“Giving thanks in all**

**circumstances.”** This does not say give thanks FOR all circumstances. You don’t have to be thankful for all the stuff that happens to you in life. But no matter how difficult, where is thread of gratitude that you can find holding you together? What can you say “thank you” for or who can you say “thank you” to? Gratitude is one emotion that I believe truly can co-exist beside all other emotions. Even in the anger you feel at injustice, be grateful that you are able to see and point out the injustice and that you are not numb to it or apathetic to it. Even in illness, can we see that even to breathe and exist at all, is a gift? Is it fair that some get to live longer than others or that some die more difficult deaths than others or endure more tragedy? No, not at all. It’s not fair. But fairness is not a promise of God. God’s love and God’s presence and God’s peace are the gifts promised. You do not have to be grateful **for** the situation you are in, but can you find gratitude **in** that situation for something?

Patience, in practice, looks like all of these things, and if you do

them, persistently, you will fulfill your potential as a church...which spiritually speaking...is **“the will of God in Christ Jesus.”** Paul says, quite simply, whatever you do, please just **“don’t quench the Spirit.”** Let the Spirit flow within you and through your community, and you’ll get there.

I love what Father Richard Rohr says about patience: *“Humans and history both grow slowly. We expect people to show up at our church doors fully transformed and holy before they can be welcomed in. But [repentance] metanoia, or change of consciousness, can only come with time. **Patience is the very shape of love.** Without it, religion is merely about enforcing laws and requirements [while missing the very people we are called and commanded to love.”*<sup>3</sup>

“Patience is not resignation. It is an active trust that the seeds being planted will bear fruit in due time. Likewise, persistence is not about control but about faithfulness — continuing the work of love and growth even when progress feels slow or invisible.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Richard Rohr, “Patience,” *Center for Action and Contemplation* (4 Jan. 2019), accessed on April 26, 2026 at <https://cac.org/daily-meditations/patience-2019-01-04/>.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. J. Devin Rodgers, “Patience, Persistence, and the Waiting of Advent: Advent Reflections from the Gospel of John. Chapter 10” *InSeekingOut.Medium.Com* (13 Dec. 2024), accessed on April 26, 2026 at

So then if that is true, **Patience, in practice, also looks like: “Holding fast to what is Good.”**

In other words: Be discerning. Evil is prevalent. There are people out there claiming to be God who are not God. The opportunities to engage with evil are everywhere and they are persuasive. And perhaps the worst form of evil is to become apathetic in the face of evil. So whatever you do...keep holding fast to what is Good. Tell Someone Something Good, or ask Someone to tell you Something Good, Find something Good, anything, and hold on to it. If you are holding the Good, you don't have any hands open to grip on the Bad, even if it's gripping you.

**And finally, Patience, in practice, looks like** understanding that the phrase **“Be Patient with ALL of them”** includes you. You are part of the “all.” Be patient with others AND be patient with yourself.

Brené Brown defines patience not merely as waiting, but as “*a vulnerable, loving act of*

*“concentrated strength”. It is the conscious, courageous decision to remain calm, kind, and compassionate with oneself and others during difficult, uncertain, or slow-moving situations, rather than rushing or reacting with anger.”*<sup>5</sup>

Again, here is Filipino poet and author, Balt Rodriguez: *“In a world that often demands urgency and perfection, patience is a soft rebellion. It's a form of love that trusts the process, that believes in your growth even when you're unsure of it yourself. It's someone seeing your mess and choosing grace instead of judgment. And that kind of love—steady, slow, and fiercely kind—might just be the softest, most beautiful form there is.”*

May this poem by Mike Sansone can be a final blessing and charge for us today. It's called *Patience: A Choice We Make*.<sup>6</sup> It's part of a series of poems he's written called *Love Muscles*...isn't that great? (Other “Love Muscle Poems” are *The Quiet Strength of Humility, The Measure of*

<https://inseekingout.medium.com/patience-persistence-and-the-waiting-of-advent-dcadc83fbce>.

<sup>5</sup> Brené Brown, “The Courage to Be Vulnerable,” *On Being with Krista Tippett* (22 Nov. 2012, updated Jan. 29, 2015), accessed on April 26, 2026 at

<https://onbeing.org/programs/brene-brown-the-courage-to-be-vulnerable-jan2015>.

<sup>6</sup> Mike Sansone, “Patience: A Choice We Make: A love Muscles Poem,” *Medium.com* (2 May 2025), accessed on April 26, 2026 at <https://medium.com/be-reaching-hearts/patience-a-choice-we-make-468d1807e4f1>.

Respect, The Bridge called  
Trust, The Questions That Keep  
Us, When Your Joy Becomes  
Mine)...but this one is

***Patience: A Choice We Make:***

In moments tense, when  
tempers flare,  
A crossroads forms, suspended  
air.  
The heart may rush, the tongue  
may race,  
But patience waits — a gentler  
place —  
A choice we're free, each time,  
to take.

Impatience cries out, sharp and  
loud,  
It builds a storm, it draws a  
crowd.  
It slams the door, it breaks the  
thread,  
It ignores soft words unsaid —  
instead,  
It sows regret we can't unmake.

Yet patience, tender, steps  
between,  
It cools the fire, it mends  
unseen.  
It breathes and listens, it holds  
loving tight,  
It trades the urge to win the  
fight  
For love that stronger ties can  
weave.

Patience isn't something sold,  
Not running dry, nor growing

old.  
It's not a gift some merely gain  
—  
It's forged through choices,  
decisions through strain,  
Through quiet strength we daily  
claim.

So when the pressure pulls you  
thin,  
Remember — peace is born  
within.  
You choose the bridge, you  
choose the break,  
You choose the love you'll give  
— or take —  
Patience, or pride: the power's  
yours [to make.].

Amen.