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# learning patience from the cotton farmer

by dr. david darnell

*For some time we have wanted to provide an inspirational column on a periodic basis. We are fortunate to have Dr. David Darnell, the Senior Minister and Scholar in Residence for the Central Christian Church in Frisco, agree to contribute his thoughtful interpretation of some contemporary issues. We hope in future columns to explore all areas of faith represented in Frisco. In this article enjoy and reflect on the virtue of patience.*

The Book of James 5:7-8 “Wait patiently therefore, brother, until the presence/coming of the Lord. Look – the farmer expects the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently over it until it may receive early and later (rain). You people also, wait patiently; establish your hearts, because the presence / coming of the Lord has drawn near.”

**I HAVE GONE TO LAMESA, TEXAS**, in the spring to teach at a local church, largely made up of cotton farmers. On one of the farms, I was taken into a cotton field and taught about the cotton plant – how the land is cleared, the soil prepared, chemicals sprayed to destroy weeds and the seeds carefully planted. I saw the tiny plants breaking through the soil and was told how they have to slowly grow, producing stalks, leaves and blossoms, and then the cotton fibers that gradually grow within the blossoms. It was interesting to learn that with the coming of fall and freezing weather, the leaves wither and the full cotton bolls are exposed for picking.

We also went into town and walked through a cotton gin and cottonseed mill. There I learned some of the products that come from the cottonseed – materials for automobile upholstery, gunpowder, cattle feed and various cooking oils and spreads. I asked that farmer, “How can you endure the sand-storms, droughts, and hail that often beats your cotton plants into the ground and the constant fluctuation of prices?” His answer was, “You do your part and then you wait patiently, believing that one day God will give the harvest.” That’s the patience of a farmer. I recently learned that Frisco’s main crop

was once cotton – so what is true in West Texas was also once true here. And I ask, “If God can do all of that with the tiny cotton plant (and its seed), what do you think He can do with all of us together, here in Frisco? Building on the old Frisco a new and thriving city is very much like planting a cotton-crop– as we build businesses, churches, schools, strong families and good city government. Each of us has to find our niche and do our part with diligence and patience, trusting God for the outcome.

God has promised that He is both present and coming. He is always present and coming in judgment against evil, and always present and coming to help those who suffer and to bless His faithful people. God has always come to His needy people in the past. He comes in every present hour of need; He is coming in the future, especially in the darkest, most fearful hour. God has given us freedom and the ability to choose. This means we can choose both good and bad and we will have to live with the consequences. But God never forsakes His creatures. Even if we die in battle, or suffer an agonizing tragedy (car wreck, heart-attack, imprisonment or debilitating disease), still He comes, to take us to Himself, to enable a new future for our seemingly hopeless circumstances.

Sometimes (or, oftentimes) this is seemingly impossible to believe, just as it is for the cotton farmer in the midst of a drought or when the hail is beating his crop into the ground. But in the long run, our ever-present God will provide. That’s His promise.. So, be patient. Wait patiently for God’s presence/coming. See what wonders God will perform, right here in Frisco!

*Dr. David R. Darnell is the Senior Minister and Scholar in Residence for the Central Christian Church in Frisco.*

