

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 4-19-15 AM NOTES
"PATIENT ENDURANCE"
JAMES 5:7-12
#15 in Series, "James: Practical Wisdom"

James 1:2-4 (NKJV) ² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴ But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."

1 Peter 2:23 (ESV) "When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly."

Luke 9:51b (NKJV) "...He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem."

I. Patient Endurance in Difficulty (vv. 7-8)

Galatians 6:9 (NKJV) "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words."

"Any view of eschatology which eliminates imminency (believers in every age living with the hope that Christ could come at any moment) is in conflict with all those passages which provide hope for suffering believers by anticipating the Lord's coming."
—John MacArthur

II. Patient Endurance in Disappointment (v. 9)

2 Corinthians 5:10 (NKJV) "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."

Romans 14:10 (NKJV) "But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

1 Corinthians 3:13-15 (NKJV) ¹³ each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴ If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."

1 John 2:28 (NKJV) "And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."

Revelation 22:12 (NKJV) "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to give to every one according to his work."

III. Patient Endurance in Disapproval (v. 10)

2 Timothy 3:12 (NKJV) “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”

Acts 7:52 (NKJV) “Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers.”

IV. Patient Endurance in Disaster (v. 11)

Job 1:14-19 (NKJV) “¹⁴and a messenger came to Job and said, ‘The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, ¹⁵ when the Sabeans raided *them* and took them away--indeed they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!’ ¹⁶While he *was* still speaking, another also came and said, ‘The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; and I alone have escaped to tell you!’ ¹⁷While he *was* still speaking, another also came and said, ‘The Chaldeans formed three bands, raided the camels and took them away, yes, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!’ ¹⁸While he *was* still speaking, another also came and said, ‘Your sons and daughters *were* eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house, ¹⁹ and suddenly a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead; and I alone have escaped to tell you!’”

Job 13:15a (NKJV) “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.”

Job 23:10 (NKJV) “But He knows the way that I take; *when* He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.”

V. Patient Endurance in Dishonesty (v. 12)

“...what does ‘speaking oaths’ have to do with the problem of suffering? If you have ever suffered, you know the answer: it is easy to say things you do not mean, and even make bargains with God, when you are going through difficulties. Go back to Job for an example. The patriarch said, ‘Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this, Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly’ (Job 1:21-22). Job...never cursed God or spoke a foolish oath. Neither did he try to bargain with God.”

—Warren Wiersbe

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JAMES 5:7-12
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In this passage, James returns to the truths we studied in chapter one concerning the trials and tribulations that all Christians experience. Let’s re-visit a question we have looked at too many times to

count. Why do God's children have to go through painful, difficult times? If God is all powerful (and He is), then why do Christians go through times of physical illness, have prodigal children, lose their jobs, get cheated on by their spouse, have car wrecks, suffer rejection by people they thought were friends, get falsely accused, and are passed over for promotions? Of course, we bring some suffering on ourselves. Sometimes we abuse our bodies and they break down; we lose our job because we were not doing a good job; we have a car wreck because we were texting and not paying attention; we get passed over for a promotion because we were lazy. I am referring to suffering that was allowed in our lives through no wrong attitude or actions on our part. Why do Christians suffer? Here is the short answer: God's goal is to conform us to the likeness of Christ – to mature us. His purpose is not to make us comfortable. We really like being comfortable! We make an appointment with a Psychiatrist for those who enjoy being uncomfortable, in pain, or suffering. But God in His infinite wisdom has ordained that we mature in the faith and are conformed to the likeness of Christ by going through trials that are uncomfortable, painful and oftentimes seem to make no sense.

In James 1:1-5, James started his letter to “the twelve tribes that are scattered abroad” by talking about uncomfortable trials that we go through. He said in **James 1:2-4 (NKJV)** “² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴ But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” The phrase “perfect and complete” is another way of saying mature or conformed to Christ. There are some things relating to our spiritual growth that we are never going to experience apart from trials. Because God has a plan with different details for each of His children, some need to experience more and different kinds of trials than others in order to be equipped to carry out God's plan. But be certain that His preparation for us will involve going through some uncomfortable or downright painful circumstances.

In James 5:7-12 the emphasis is on how we respond to the inevitable trials or uncomfortable circumstances that we will go through. I cannot over emphasize how important this is. I don't want to waste my trials. We waste our trials when we become angry or bitter with God, our circumstances, and / or others. That anger and bitterness hardens us instead of softening us to the perfect plan that God has to mature us and to conform us to the likeness His Son. I don't want to go through uncomfortable and painful trials and end up bitter and very unlike Christ. When Jesus went through the ultimate trial of the cross, look at His response in **1 Peter 2:23 (ESV)** “When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.” In my trials, I desire to continue entrusting myself to the Father and allowing Him to do the work in me that He desires. How are you responding to the painful circumstances that you are going through right now? Are you “entrusting” yourself to our Lord who is sovereign? If the answer is “no”, then you are wasting your trials.

Before we get into the text, I need to define some key words. The first word is translated “be patient”. We see this word in verse 7, 8, and a word from the same root in verse 10. The Greek word means to suffer long as opposed to being angry and retaliating. This is one of the attributes of God and one of the characteristics of the Fruit of the Spirit. It can be translated “longsuffering”, “long tempered” or “forbearance”. The word translated “patient” most always refers to being patient with persons we have been hurt by or are disappointed with who are making our lives uncomfortable at best and miserable at worst.

The second word I want us to understand before we get into the text is translated by the English phrase, “establish your hearts” in verse 8. Some translations say “strengthen your hearts”. This Greek word is more active than the word translated “be patient”. It means to turn resolutely in a certain direction. This word is used to describe Jesus in **Luke 9:51b (NKJV)** that “He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem”. In this word there is a sense of determination that refuses to turn back or succumb to the circumstances that make doing what we have determined seem impossible.

The third word we need to understand is translated in verse 11 “endure”. This Greek word means to remain under a heavy load and keep on going. Whereas the word translated “be patient” has the idea of continuing on when people are weighing us down, this word is usually used of circumstances that are weighing us down.

From these 3 words, you get an idea of the truth that James is seeking to pound into us – the truth that the Holy Spirit will drive home to us if we will but listen and submit. When we go through trials involving persons or circumstances, we are to be patient, to suffer long, to refuse to run from trials, to resolutely set our hearts on obeying God through the trial and not miss anything He desires to teach us through it. When our desire is to run away, patience, an established heart, and endurance resolutely says, “I will not run away from the trial that God has sovereignly chosen for me”.

What is it in your life that is weighing you down and though you know that the Lord has allowed it, you are so uncomfortable and even miserable that you just want to get out from under the situation? Is it a bad marriage, a physical problem, a relationship with a prodigal child, an antagonist at work, or a neighbor or relative that’s driving you crazy? Here is God’s word to you: Be patient, establish your hearts, and persevere. Let’s examine the text.

I. Patient Endurance in Difficulty (V7-8)

James uses the example of a farmer to illustrate this patient endurance we are to possess when we go through trials. Vocationally, farmers are among the most patient people in the world. They must wait months to see the fruit of their labors. In the first century, the Jewish farmers would sow in what we would call the autumn months. The “early rains” would soften the soil and the “latter rains” would come in the early spring and mature the harvest. Why did the patient farmer wait patiently? It was because of the preciousness of the fruit that came at harvest. The harvest was worth waiting for. **Galatians 6:9 (NKJV)** “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.” The harvest of patiently enduring uncomfortable circumstances is precious; it is spiritual maturity and a deeper relationship with the God who created us for fellowship with Himself.

God’s maturing work in us seldom if ever occurs quickly. That is why we are exhorted to “be patient”. Look at the farmer for an illustration of that. You don’t plant tomato seed in the morning and that evening pull off a ripe tomato to put on your salad. Whereas the farmer waits on the crop to come in, we are waiting for the coming of the Lord. Waiting on the Lord doesn’t mean doing nothing. While the farmer is waiting on the rain, he is tilling the ground and doing other work. The coming of the Lord refers to the second coming of Jesus Christ. The early church believed in the immanence of Christ’s return. We have almost completely lost the sense of the immanence of His return. When the Lord Jesus comes for His church there is a catching up to be with Him in the air. It is described in **1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 (NKJV)** “¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore comfort one another with these words.” In what way is this coming of the Lord a comfort? We are in an instant taken away from the trials that are weighing us down. The circumstances and the people that press in on us that require patient endurance are taken away in an instant. This is one reason that the return of Christ is called “The Blessed Hope” in Titus 2:13.

In verse 8 James says that the coming of the Lord is at hand. That doesn’t mean that it was about to happen and now over 1900 years later, we realize that James just missed it. The word translated “at hand” means “to approach”. The coming of the Lord for His church is the next event on God’s prophetic calendar and could happen at any time. For every generation the coming of the Lord has been near in that from their viewpoint it could be at any time. That immanence of His return gives Christians blessed hope while in the midst of trials. John MacArthur has a good word about the immanence of Christ’s return. “Any view of eschatology which eliminates imminency (believers in every age living with the hope that Christ could come at any moment) is in conflict with all those passages which provide hope for suffering believers by anticipating the Lord’s coming.” [John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, James*, page 256].

Because the coming of the Lord is at hand, we must establish our hearts. As we saw earlier that means that we must steadfastly strengthen our hearts by looking to the Lord for enabling grace, and by setting our face (using the language of Luke 9:51) to persevere in the trials and not miss what the Lord is doing to

us and in us to mature us and equip us for all that He has for us. In times of trial, there must be a sense of determination that refuses to turn back or succumb to the temptation to run away, stop trusting Him and turn back from where He has told us to go.

II. Patient Endurance in Disappointment (V9)

Verse 9 is still dealing with the motivation and comfort in trials that we receive from the imminent return of Christ. When the Lord returns, there will be a judgment of our works. It is not a judgment relating to salvation, but to reward or loss of reward. This judgment is called in several places, “The Judgment Seat of Christ”. **2 Corinthians 5:10 (NKJV)** “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good [valuable] or bad [worthless].” **Romans 14:10 (NKJV)** “But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.” This judgment related to rewards is described in **1 Corinthians 3:13-15 (NKJV)** “¹³ each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴ If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” When the Lord returns, our works will be tested and evaluated for reward or loss.

John teaches us this same truth in **1 John 2:28 (NKJV)** “And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.” Who are those that will be ashamed before Him at His coming? It will include those who have grumbled about their trials and angrily compared their trials with the lesser seeming trials of others. The word “grumble” in verse 9 is translated “complain” in some translations. It speaks of an internal attitude that is bitter and resentful. It describes those who know Christ, but they grumbled and gave up and ran away from an unhappy marriage. It would include those who became bitter over their physical trials especially when compared to the good health of others. It refers to those who chaffed at and rebelled against the burdens that God allowed in their lives to mature them and mold them into Christ-likenesses and became bitter toward those who hurt them instead of forgiving them. These will be ashamed at the coming of the Lord. James is exhorting us to patiently endure the painful and disappointing trials that a sovereign God allows in us because we don't want to be ashamed in His presence if He returns today. The one who is the judge is standing at the door. That is language that pictures the imminence of His return. The point is that at any moment He could open the door and enter. John quotes Jesus in **Revelation 22:12 (NKJV)** “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to give to every one according to his work.”

III. Patient Endurance in Disapproval (V10)

The “disapproval” I am speaking of is the disapproval of others who reject and even persecute us. **2 Timothy 3:12 (NKJV)** says, “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” This persecution is often the form in which our trials come. The example James gives of the trials that come through the disapproval and resulting persecution of others is the Old Testament prophets. Stephen summarized the trials of the prophets at the hands of others in **Acts 7:52 (NKJV)** “Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers”. Since we don't have time to look at all of the prophets and their trials, let's just look at Jeremiah as a representative. The religious leaders wanted to kill him; he was put in stocks; he was thrown down into an abandoned cistern and left to die until he was secretly pulled out; his written out message to the nation was taken to the king and it was cut up and burned. James is saying, “Why would you expect treatment different from the prophets?” Satan tells us that our trials and painful circumstances are because of our sin or God being unfair. The lives of the prophets tell us that many times our trials are because of our faithfulness.

IV. Patient Endurance in Disaster (V11)

Remember from the introduction of the message that this word “endure” means to bear up under a load. It usually speaks of the load as being circumstances. No one serves as a better example of endurance in very difficult circumstances than does Job. We will not go over all the disasters Job experienced, but let’s look at just a few. **Job 1:14-19 (NKJV)** “¹⁴ and a messenger came to Job and said, ‘The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, ¹⁵ when the Sabeans raided *them* and took them away-- indeed they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!’ ¹⁶ While he *was* still speaking, another also came and said, ‘The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; and I alone have escaped to tell you!’ ¹⁷ While he *was* still speaking, another also came and said, ‘The Chaldeans formed three bands, raided the camels and took them away, yes, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!’ ¹⁸ While he *was* still speaking, another also came and said, ‘Your sons and daughters *were* eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, ¹⁹ and suddenly a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead; and I alone have escaped to tell you!’” Wow! That takes our breath away. In addition to losing his children and his possessions, he gets a disease that disfigures him and causes extreme pain. To top it all off, he has some friends who come to comfort him and basically tell him it’s all his fault. If that is not bad enough, his wife gives him advice to just curse God and let God kill him. Our purpose here is not to conduct a study of Job. I simply want you to see Job as an example of one who went through way more trials than any of us will ever go through. Though Job had some weak moments, in the end he gave testimony in **Job 13:15a (NKJV)** “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.” He saw his trials and pain from God’s perspective when he said in **Job 23:10 (NKJV)** “But He knows the way that I take; *when* He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.”

In the last part of verse 11, we see the conclusion that we would easily come to if we could see all that God sees. If we could see how every trial is designed for exactly what we need, we would realize that even in the pain and disappointment the Lord is very compassionate and merciful. We cannot see that with physical eyes, but with the eyes of faith we can respond to trials with praise and thanksgiving that, like Job, he is refining us so that we come out like pure gold with all of the impurities removed.

V. Patient Endurance in Dishonesty (V12)

At first this verse doesn’t seem connected to verses 7-11. However, the first words of verse 12 are connective words. How does this instruction concerning swearing and oaths fit here? In James’ day, oath taking was really abused. It had degenerated into a form profanity and deceitfulness. James seems to be talking about indiscriminate oath taking related to going through trials and troubles. It may include rash oaths concerning what we will do if God will just get us out of our trial; it may be oaths as to our innocence in doing anything that brought the trial upon ourselves. James says, “Don’t do that! Let your “yes be yes” and your “no be no”. Warren Weirsbe has a great clarifying word here. “... what does ‘speaking oaths’ have to do with the problem of suffering? If you have ever suffered, you know the answer: it is easy to say things you do not mean, and even make bargains with God, when you are going through difficulties. Go back to Job for an example. The patriarch said, ‘Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly’ (Job 1:21-22). Job ... never cursed God or spoke a foolish oath. Neither did he try to bargain with God.” [Warren Weirsbe, *Be Mature*. Page 162].

CONCLUSION

When you are going through trials, be patient, establish your heart, and persevere. God’s enabling grace is sufficient to enable you to do so.