

## Blessed Endurance (James 5:10-11)

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church on March 14, 2010

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James 5:7–11 (NASB95) <sup>7</sup> *Therefore be patient, **brethren**, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains.* <sup>8</sup> *You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.* <sup>9</sup> *Do not complain, **brethren**, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.* <sup>10</sup> *As an example, **brethren**, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.* <sup>11</sup> *We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.*

Notice the word “brethren” is repeated 3x, a term of endearment from James, the prominent teaching Elder / Pastor in the church of Jerusalem (he earlier calls them *beloved brethren*). In his love for his brethren in various trials (1:2), James wants to help the early Jewish Christians to cultivate patience and perseverance during difficulty, to have long-suffering endurance in suffering. Our patient and compassionate and merciful God has allowed me to speak to you today on something I have not mastered, but am trying to pursue more and grow in by His grace

v. 7: *Therefore be patient, brethren ...*

v. 8: *You too be patient ...*

That's the context for our next text (v. 10-11). We went through v. 7-9 in our last study, which commands twice “*be patient.*” Verse 9 tells us what happens when we're *not* patient: we “*complain / grumble against each other.*” God judges that as sin, the verse says, and God is right there at the door. The coming Judge hears your complaining, grumbling, murmuring and even your discontent *thoughts* about how things aren't going the way you would like. And He takes it personally because He is the One whose sovereign Providence has determined what would take place in your life that day for His purpose, so complaining insults God. Then v. 10 gives further reason we should be patient and not complain: God's patience manifested to Israel through the prophets

Neh. 9:30 (NIV) “*For many years you [God] were patient with them. By your Spirit you admonished them through your prophets*”

*The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* points out how ironically:

‘God's own people are markedly impatient with the very [God] who shows such long-suffering toward them. When they travel in the wilderness after their deliverance by God's hand from Egypt, grumbling and impatience mark their character. Numbers 21:4–5 (NIV) comments that “*the people became impatient on the way ... [and] spoke against God and against Moses, and said, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!”* Here is the opposite of patience: rather than thanking God for the food they have, their freedom, and [God's] presence with them ... they grumble because they are taking a long route. Here impatience is shown for what it is: selfish, whiny demanding. The self is placed above God's purposes and demands that its desires be met immediately rather than according to God's perfect plan.’<sup>1</sup>

Thomas Watson: ‘Satan labors to take advantage of us in affliction, by making us either faint or murmur; he blows the coals of passion and discontent, and then warms himself at the fire.’<sup>2</sup>

In NT times and our times, it’s been said: ‘The trials being faced by those suffering Christians would have put their patience to the test and given plenty of opportunity for bickering and criticizing. The same happens in the church today [under less persecution in the US], even when the Christians are more affluent and the trials more contemporary: “difficult marriages, frustrated dreams, demotions at work, commotions at home, insomnia, high blood pressure, [illnesses], credit-card bills and insecurity” ... Christians lose patience with each other under these pressures, and the church becomes infected with a readiness to criticize and blame. James would correct the problem with a renewed vision of ... Christ’<sup>3</sup>

Look to Christ who is the supreme and sovereign King coming again (v. 7-9) but who also is compassionate and merciful (v. 11b). Don’t complain (v. 9) when you encounter various trials, but count it joy instead, James 1:2 commands. He doesn’t say *enjoy* trials, or *have happy feelings about* your hurts, but *consider it joy* in trials, *choose* to rejoice and praise. The joy of the Lord is your strength: *joy in the Lord* and *in what He is doing in us* in various trials.

I am very thankful that God is very patient even when I fail and I impatiently react with grumbling rather than glorifying God by receiving His will with joy. And because God loves us and wants our joy to be full, this book not only convicts us that *complaining* is sin (5:9). *Lack of joy* is also sin (1:2). It’s a sin to be joyless. We don’t rejoice because all is fun or we feel happy by nature, but it’s a God-focused outcome-oriented content peace, hope, and even joy in what God is doing now and how He is growing us for the future.

James knew that some of his readers were going to think that joy is impossible. But what James commands us to do at the beginning of the book (to persevere with *blessed endurance*, i.e., with blessed joy despite the trials), now in chapter 5, v. 10-11 he encourages us that *this is possible by God’s mercy that helped OT saints do this and is available to us as well*.

James has used many examples from nature and life in this book. Now he gives real-life examples of people with natures like ours (ex: v. 17 “*Elijah was a man with a nature like ours ...*”). Here in today’s text (v. 10-11) James begins this pattern of considering people with natures like ours, asking us 1) to consider the prophets and 2) to consider Job, and ultimately 3) consider God who is sovereign and full of compassion and mercy (KJV “tender mercy”)

### **OUTLINE:**

- 1. Consider the prophet’s patience (v. 10)**
- 2. Consider Job’s perseverance (v. 11a)**
- 3. Consider God’s providence, compassion and mercy (v. 11b)**

James doesn’t just command us “be patient” (v. 7-8), he tells *how*. Aren’t you glad God’s Word doesn’t just give us commandments and exhortations; it gives us examples for our help and hope? We have real-life stories of how real people with real weaknesses like us were able to endure real trials and suffering as God made His mercy more real to them, and the same mercy He has for us!

## 1. Consider the prophet's patience (v. 10)

<sup>10</sup> *As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.*

*The Concise Oxford English Dictionary* defines the English word patience as “the capacity to tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without becoming angry or upset.” (James 1:19: *slow to anger*)

*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (10<sup>th</sup> ed):

- 1 : bearing pains or trials calmly or without complaint
- 2 : manifesting forbearance under provocation or strain
- 3 : not hasty or impetuous
- 4 : steadfast despite opposition, difficulty, or adversity
- 5 a : able or willing to bear

Even the world recognizes patience is steadfastness while under provocation or strain, enduring opposition, difficulty and adversity, and bearing any pain or trial “calmly or without complaint.” The world can see, but it can't produce it without God's grace (patience is a fruit of the Spirit, as John Rucker will be teaching on tonight).

The biblical word in the context of James 5:10 is patience “in suffering,” and it's a word sometimes translated “long-suffering.” The Greek is *macrothumia*, and the first part *macro* = big, large, long. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Grk word = anger. A patient man can handle *a lot before becoming angry*, it has a *big threshold of frustration* before anger, *long-fused*, takes a *long time* to explode, i.e., *slow to anger*.

1 Cor 13:4 says “*love is patient*,” and the next verse says it “*is not easily provoked*” (KJV). ESV has “*is not irritable*.” One reference work defines patience as ‘a state of emotional calm in the face of provocation or misfortune and without complaint or irritation.’<sup>4</sup> Impatience and irritability often go together (Jerry Bridges treats them together in his helpful book *Respectable Sins*). Our lack of patience shows up when we quickly become angry or upset during some delay, trouble, or suffering. Bridges defines *impatience* as “a strong sense of annoyance at the (usually) unintentional faults and failures of others ... often expressed verbally ... The actual cause of impatience lies within our own hearts, in our own attitude of insisting that others around us conform to our expectations.”<sup>5</sup>

It's important we remember our sin in this area is never caused by the other person or the outward circumstance. James 1:13 reminds us that every sin, even every temptation is at its core traced back to our *own desires* – no one else and nothing else makes us sin ultimately. Impatience comes from arrogant and unbiblical desires that assume we shouldn't have to wait, or be bothered, or ever suffer inconveniences, but that things should go in the day the way we want them rather than the way God has allowed them to go. These desires we have for things to go our way, to not encounter trials, take us down the path of the sin of impatience (1:13). It's our own *sinful heart* that's our root issue, not outer *situations*. James 4 makes even more clear that when our patience fails and we have conflicts amongst ourselves, the real root cause is NOT what happened on the outside of us or what others do (or don't do).

James 4:1–2 (NIV) <sup>1</sup> *What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?* <sup>2</sup> *You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight ...*

- Verse 1 says the source is *your desires* (or *passions / pleasures*), your expectations. *What you want* is the root of your irritability, instability, and impatience (the same is true for my impatience).

- Verse 2 says the reason we sin physically, verbally, impatiently or outwardly is we're not getting what we want inwardly. God's Word says our root issue is when what we *supremely desire* for us doesn't match what God *sovereignly determined* for us on that day.

- Verse 7 says we must be submissive to God, i.e., God's will and what He has allowed in our lives for that day. Resist the devil, v. 7 says, including his insinuating to your pride that you deserve better and have a right to react impatiently and express your frustration. It's ultimately a submission issue with God's sovereignty, the God who has intentionally allowed whatever comes into our life to test or strengthen us. Verse 7 says submit to God, that's how we resist the devil. Verse 10 says "humble yourselves" – we start here.

It's one thing to recognize when our patience fails – we all have our weaknesses – but I believe James as a good pastor and counselor wants us to not just look at the *symptoms* of impatience or irritability, but to get down to the *source of the problem*, which is our heart's passionate pleasure-seeking and its prideful desires. As we've seen in past studies, recognize your inordinate improper or imbalanced desires and repent (4:8-9) humbling yourself (v. 10).

Maybe you are impatient when you drive anytime there are slow people in front of you even for a moment – if you are honest enough to really get to the heart of the matter, are you thinking *you* are so important that you deserve the right to drive down the road and never have to slow down and everyone else on the highway should be clearing the way for your majesty to come through?

- Are we too important to stand in lines for the bathroom?
- Or for people in front of you at post office or store when you just want to buy a few things and they have a lot of items and it's complicated and other lines are going faster?
- slow service in a bank or restaurant, drive thru, computer speeds, Internet speeds, traffic on freeway – if you're honest maybe some of you sitting out there were impatient with people on the road on the way here because others in front were going the speed limit but you were in a hurry

Someone has said "Better to be patient on the road than a patient in the hospital." Interestingly, the origin of the English word includes the Latin *patientia* from patient-, pati 'suffer'. So the English word came to refer both to those who suffer in health and need to be in the hospital and those who are long-suffering or patient in spirit.

The ancient Greek culture that received the New Testament was not known for its patience. Aristotle said that the greatest Greek virtue was refusal to tolerate any insult and readiness to strike back. But biblical patience suffers/tolerates much *without* retaliation. And the prime example in James 5:10: the OT prophets.

James 5:10 *As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.*

Any prophet worth his salt suffered, and was persecuted. That's why Jesus could say to His disciples who would preach in the same manner, that they would be persecuted in the same manner, and He said in Matthew 5:12 "*in the same way they persecuted **the prophets** who were before you. You are the salt of the earth ...*"

That's the close of the beatitudes, which speak of those who are "blessed" (supremely happy in the sense of favored by God), like James 5:11 says: *We count those blessed who endured*

Hebrews 11:32–40 (NASB95) <sup>32</sup> *And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and **the prophets**,* <sup>33</sup> *who **by faith** conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,* <sup>34</sup> *quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.* <sup>35</sup> *Women received back their dead by resurrection; and **others were tortured**, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection;* <sup>36</sup> *and **others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment.*** <sup>37</sup> *They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being **destitute, afflicted, ill-treated*** <sup>38</sup> *(men of whom the world was not worthy), **wandering in deserts** and mountains and caves ...*

**12** <sup>1</sup> *Therefore, since we have **so great a cloud of witnesses** surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run **with endurance** the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him **endured** the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup> For consider Him who has **endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.***

So when James says to his Hebrew readers "take the prophets as an example of *endurance* in suffering," this and more would come to mind, as well as the prophets who wrote books in the Hebrew OT:

- *Isaiah* (Jewish tradition said he was one of those Heb. 11:37 says were sawn in two. His task: preach, they won't hear, Isa. 6:9-12)
- *Jeremiah* was told by God to preach with the promise that he would be hated, maligned, persecuted, ignored (Jer. 1:5-19), and he wrote the next book Lamentations (book most full of suffering). He was known as the weeping prophet. He was thrown in a miry empty cistern, but faithfully uncomplainingly kept preaching
- *Ezekiel* suffered painful bereavement but endured faithfully
- *Daniel* was a faithful man deported into captivity not for his own sins but his people's. His faithfulness to pray landed him with lions
- *Hosea* endured faithfully with an unfaithful ungodly wife
- *Joel, Amos*, and all the minor prophets endured the faithlessness of Israel and faithfully prophesied God's judgment at personal cost

We could go through all the “minor prophets” and see many examples of major suffering. Stephen could say to apostate Israel in Acts 7:52 *which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?* It was a prophet’s badge and blessedness. Zechariah was the final example Jesus spoke of to the Pharisees whose blood had been shed, and Jesus *blessed are you when they persecute ... rejoice!*

American Christianity has it 100% backwards thinking blessedness means painless happiness and that successful ministry is marked by numeric growth or professions of faith. Consider the prophets:

- they were counted blessed not for exponential growth and large crowds, but for their endurance and the fact that they spoke “*in the name of the Lord,*” and let the chips fall
- we consider them blessed (happily favored by God) not because they had no opposition but because they kept going through opposition and they persevered in steadfast faith
- God considers them successful because of their faithfulness
- numbers of people or numbers of programs are not the key measure of blessedness in God’s sight, success=faithfulness
- modern “church-growth” experts would have counseled OT preachers to change the message and ministry to get bigger crowds and please more people...but consider the prophets, Scripture tells us

## **2. Consider Job’s perseverance (v. 11a)**

<sup>11</sup> *We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job ...*

Keep your finger here and turn back to Job (right before Psalms). If there’s any single story that single-handedly demolishes the false modern prosperity gospel (blessedness=healthy and wealthy if you have enough faith and give enough money), the book of Job is it!

In Job 1-2, Job has all his wealth and health and prosperity, all he held dearest, taken away from him *not because of his faithlessness ... but because he was the most faithful man on the earth.*

Sometimes suffering comes precisely because we are faithful and sometimes lack of suffering may indicate lack of faithfulness.

Job’s 3 friends in their bad theology told him his suffering must be because of a secret sin in Job’s life. If you look at Job 2:9, all his physical blessings are gone, and his own wife, what a blessing she was, right? 2:9 is maybe not the most blessed encouragement!

There he is in Job 2:7-8, sitting in ashes, agonizing boils covering him from head to toe, his wealth decimated in one day, his workers killed by terrorists, natural disasters, fire, his 10 beloved children all died tragically. And what does his wife say to him in Job 2:9?

*“Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!”*

But Job didn’t curse God and die. He held fast. He was steadfast, some of your translations say in James 5:11. He endured to the end even though he was not sinless along the way (which should be an encouragement to us who are not sinless either that true believers do endure to the end without renouncing faith, cursing God, dying)

Look at Job 19. He had his moments of depression and desperation and misunderstood what God was doing and misinterpreted and even misspoke of God at times when his 3 “friends” kept poking at him with words, provoking him, bringing out the worst in him. I think Job’s enduring of them was the most amazing of all!

Job 19 (NIV) <sup>1</sup> Then Job replied: <sup>2</sup> “How long will you torment me and crush me with words? <sup>3</sup> Ten times now you have reproached me; shamelessly you attack me. <sup>4</sup> If it is true that I have gone astray, my error remains my concern alone. <sup>5</sup> If indeed you would exalt yourselves above me and use my humiliation against me, <sup>6</sup> then know that God has wronged me and drawn his net around me. <sup>7</sup> “Though I cry, ‘I’ve been wronged!’ I get no response; though I call for help, there is no justice. <sup>8</sup> He has blocked my way so I cannot pass; he has shrouded my paths in darkness. <sup>9</sup> He has stripped me of my honor and removed the crown from my head. <sup>10</sup> He tears me down on every side till I am gone; he uproots my hope like a tree. <sup>11</sup> His anger burns against me; he counts me among his enemies ...  
 ... <sup>16</sup> I summon my servant, but he does not answer, though I beg him with my own mouth. <sup>17</sup> My breath is offensive to my wife; I am loathsome to my own brothers. <sup>18</sup> Even the little boys scorn me; when I appear, they ridicule me. <sup>19</sup> All my intimate friends detest me; those I love have turned against me. <sup>20</sup> I am nothing but skin and bones; I have escaped with only the skin of my teeth. <sup>21</sup> “Have pity on me, my friends, have pity [ESV “have mercy”], for the hand of God has struck me. <sup>22</sup> Why do you pursue me as God does? Will you never get enough of my flesh? <sup>23</sup> “Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll [he had no idea his words actually were written down on a scroll later in the Scripture]  
 ... <sup>25</sup> I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. <sup>26</sup> And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; <sup>27</sup> I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

That’s the central climax or high-point in the middle of Job, which has a lot of low points. Blessed endurance is not without moments of weakness, it endures through weakness, blessed be the Lord!

The word James 5:11 uses is translated “steadfastness” (ESV) or “perseverance” (NKJV), not the Greek word *patience* from v. 10, which emphasizes patience with people. The word for *endurance* in v. 11 literally means “remaining under,” emphasis on enduring difficult circumstances. In James 1:2-3, this same word is used not for a believer’s innate persevering power *before* a trial, but a God-given power to persevere granted *during and by* a trial.

James 1:2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, <sup>3</sup> knowing that **the testing of your faith produces endurance**. <sup>4</sup> And let endurance have its perfect result...

This Greek word has been defined as remaining under the trial or test ‘which calls for the submission of one’s will ... when our natural tendency would be to rebel. *Hupomone* portrays the picture of steadfastly and unflinchingly bearing up under a heavy load. It describes the quality of one’s character which does not cause them to give in to circumstances or succumb under trial. Inherent in the concept of *hupomone* is a forward look or the ability to focus on what is beyond the current pressure, trial or affliction. Clearly this is a supernatural work in the believer’s heart by the Spirit of God, as we interact with the trials God allows or sends into our life.’<sup>6</sup>

So the definition of the word “endurance” by itself includes remaining with a submissive will to God’s will, and 1:4 makes this even more explicit: “**let endurance have its perfect result.**”

The clear implication is that if we do not submit our will to what God says and patiently endure trials outside our control, if our focus is getting out at all costs and we refuse to have joy in God if we must bear under the trial, we are disobeying God’s command in James and are short-circuiting God’s work in us for our growth.

### 3. Consider God’s providence, compassion and mercy

... *You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord’s dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.*

- KJV “*have seen the end of the Lord*” (in English of that day “end”=purpose/goal, ex: “chief end of man is to glorify God...”)
- NKJV “*the end intended by the Lord*” (NIV “brought about”)
- ESV may have it clearest “*the purpose of the Lord*”

God’s providence is the truth that He is purposefully involved in all things, working them to accomplish what He intends (Eph 1:11)

I could give you a theological textbook definition of providence, but here’s an everyday example of how most everyone once spoke. In the book edition by Lucy Montgomery, when Anne Shirley is off to Avonlea, Matthew Cuthbert reminisces with these words:

“She’s been a blessing to us, and there never was a luckier mistake than what Mrs. Spencer made [a little girl from the orphanage instead of the boy asked for]--if it WAS luck. I don’t believe it was any such thing. It was Providence, because the Almighty saw we needed her, I reckon.”

In the movie version that my sisters made us watch about 100x growing up, many of you know the story of how the Cuthberts had wanted a boy for their farm, but by human mistake, a girl had shown up at the train station, that Marilla initially didn’t want, but in time brought her into the family and grew to love her. There’s a line that as a pastor I appreciate now its good theology:

Marilla: ... She’ll be gone so long. She’ll get terrible lonesome.

Matthew: You mean, we’ll get terrible lonesome.

Marilla: I can’t help wishing that she’d stayed a little girl.

Matthew: Mrs. Spencer made a lucky mistake, I guess.

**Marilla: It wasn’t luck; it was Providence. He knew we needed her.**

God never make mistakes, though we do all the time. And the mystery of providence that is hard for me to fully understand but is not hard for me to see taught in Scripture, is that God uses our mistakes, God uses our mistreatment, and even what man intends for evil against us, God doesn’t only use, He *intends it* for good (Gen 50:20)! If you look back at Job 1, what jumps off the page is that the Lord’s purpose occurs *through* suffering, sin, even Satan!

Job 1:12 *Then the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him." So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD.* <sup>13</sup> *Now on the day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house,* <sup>14</sup> *a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them,* <sup>15</sup> *and the Sabeans attacked and took them. They also slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you."* <sup>16</sup> *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."* <sup>17</sup> *While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and took them and slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you."* <sup>18</sup> *While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house,* <sup>19</sup> *and behold, 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 died, and I alone have escaped to tell you."* <sup>20</sup> *Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and **worshiped**.* <sup>21</sup> *He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and **the LORD has taken away**. Blessed be the name of the LORD."* <sup>22</sup> *Through all this Job did not sin **nor did he blame God**.*

In Job 2:10, he corrects his wife: "*You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept **good from God and not accept adversity?***" In all this **Job did not sin with his lips**.

Now go to Job 42, which James 5:11 also has in mind (the end). The Lord gave, the Lord took away ... and He gave to Job again.

Job 42 <sup>10</sup> ***The LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the LORD increased all that Job had twofold.*** <sup>11</sup> *Then all his brothers and all his sisters and all who had known him before came to him, and they ate bread with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for **all the adversities that the LORD had brought on him ...***

Satan is not sovereign; God is! God is ultimately over adversity not just "good things" as v. 12 says the LORD blessed Job again, the same LORD the end of v. 11 said brought adversities on Job. Can your theology handle a God that big? I know for some the idea that we aren't in control but God is troubles some people, but to James this is a truth meant to comfort God's people: *You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.*" (ESV)

It would much more troubling to think the Lord has no purpose in our suffering. If you just believed God loved you compassionately but if you didn't believe He was sovereign over trials (like a kind sweet old man who has a merciful heart and would love to help if only he could but he's not in control, he just tries to help after the fact), that's not the biblical faith that gives blessed endurance. The prophets / Job didn't know *why*, but they knew *who* was in charge.

Job said basically "*shall we not accept adversity from God?*" And he said explicitly "*the LORD has taken away ...*" Not fate, forces of evil outside God's providential permission and purpose. Free will isn't sovereign – God's will is sovereign. And the good news is God is also full of compassion and mercy.

Not only is God in control of all things, He causes all things to work together *for good* to those who love God and are *called according to His purpose* (Rom 8:28)

Do you love God and trust this Lord as Job did, as your Redeemer and only hope of seeing God in the next life? Have you been called according to His purpose? You know you have, if you have called upon Him as your Lord, turning from sin to Him by grace alone, trusting in Christ's death on the cross as your only way to heaven, not trusting your own works. But if you do not yet love the Lord and trust Him as your Savior, He will be your Judge (v. 9). Repent before it's too late ... He is full of compassion and full of mercy.

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<sup>1</sup>Ryken, L., Wilhoit, J., Longman, T., Duriez, C., Penney, D., & Reid, D. G. (2000, c1998). *Dictionary of biblical imagery* (electronic ed.) (632). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

<sup>2</sup>Watson, T. (2000). *The Ten Commandments* (electronic ed.) (1). Escondito, California: Ephesians Four Group.

<sup>3</sup>George M. Stulac, *James*, The IVP New Testament commentary series (Downers Grove, Ill. USA: InterVarsity Press, 1993).

<sup>4</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament : Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996), 25.176.

<sup>5</sup>Jerry Bridges, *Respectable Sins*, p. 116.

<sup>6</sup>[www.preceptaustin.org](http://www.preceptaustin.org)