

GreyStone EDU James: GS.EDU 2020
SESSION 11: SUFFERING/COMFORT
WEEK OF 08/11/2020

Welcome back! Thank you for continuing our Distance-Discipleship Summer Study: JAMES by Matt Chandler; hosted by Grey Stone EDU with Small Groups by Lifeway! We hope you are growing spiritually over these 13 weeks by studying this vital book together! *****Video reminder:** In order to view the video teachings each week, you will need to download the **Lifeway Small Groups App** for your device.

MAIN POINT

In times of suffering, believers are to endure with patience and steadfastness, keeping their eyes on the Lord. He's compassionate and merciful to His children in every circumstance.

INTRODUCTION

- **Where do you turn to for comfort in times of suffering?**
- **How does following Christ change the way a person responds in the midst of hardship?**

In this week's passage, James turned his attention from warning the oppressors to comforting the ones who were suffering. Following his intense condemnation of people who put their hope in money, James pointed to the Christian's source of true hope.

[Watch the session 11 Video featuring Matt Chandler.](#)

Video Teaching Notes:

Persevering, glad-hearted faith in God requires P_____.

1. Be patient; the Lord is coming.
2. Be patient; God is A_____ something in you.
3. Be patient with each other.
4. Be patient; God's P_____ are true.
5. Be patient with each other—seriously.

God uses both joys and sorrows to C_____ us to the image of His Son.

God's grace for us stays lavish and extravagant throughout our progressive sanctification.

*****Patience; Accomplishing; Promises; Conform**

Scriptures Used in This Session:

- **James 5:7-11**
- **2 Corinthians 4:16-17**
- **Romans 8:28**
- **Isaiah 55:8-9**
- **2 Corinthians 1:3-6**
- **James 5:7-12**

Conclusions & Remarks:

1. **God's promises are true. God has never betrayed you. He has never failed you.**
2. **As those who have experienced the sacrificial love of God in Christ, we live selfless lives, loving and encouraging and saying yes as often as we can to our brothers and sisters.**

Pastor Randall's Notes: Farmers & Prophets

1. **Be patient like a farmer, waiting for the harvest.**
 - **Trust God with what you can not control.**
 - **Honor God with what you can control.**
2. **Be patient like a prophet, speaking the truth.**
3. **Hope in God's purpose, just like Job.**

My Personal Study

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Read James 5:7-8.

- In what ways do these verses express a foundational truth for our Christian faith?
- How do they give comfort, hope, and patience in real-life hardships?

James was writing to Christians who were likely externally oppressed and internally conflicted. His words of comfort addressed both situations. In fact, the two often go hand-in-hand, although sometimes we wrestle with one without the other. Currently, we all face some degree of struggle. Whether or not it's persecution or extreme suffering, we all struggle. In the video, Matt highlighted five points in James's message of comfort and hope for believers who are suffering: 1. Be patient; the Lord is coming. 2. Be patient; God is accomplishing something in you. 3. Be patient with each other. 4. Be patient; God's promises are true. 5. Be patient with each other—seriously.

Read James 5:9.

- How can we as the church greatly help or hurt one another while enduring hardship?
- How does keeping in mind that the Judge is at the door fuel our patience toward one another?

Unlike most people in our culture today, the early Christians likely expected Jesus to return during their lifetimes. Many believed that He could return at any moment. Today, anyone predicting Jesus' return is recognized as a false teacher (see Mark 13:32); yet at the time, the disciples had seen Jesus ascend into heaven and hoped He would return soon (see Acts 1:11). In the New Testament church, waiting for the Lord's return frequently led to unhealthy inactivity (see 1 Thess. 4:13–5:11). Today, it can lead to unhelpful speculation and preoccupation. James mentioned the Lord's return as a means to encourage his audience to see their suffering in light of the bigger picture.

Read James 5:10-11.

- Many men and women in the Bible experienced suffering. Which example is most encouraging and comforting to you? Why?
- What are some of your favorite promises from God's Word? Why are they especially meaningful to you? When have you found much-needed comfort in God's Word?
- How does patience allow our faith to grow?

James's instruction to be patient was a word of comfort. It was a word of hope. It was a spiritual perspective that rightly framed the suffering and hardship of daily life on this earth. The words, "Be patient" (v. 7) were strong, yet gentle pastoral hands that lifted the weary heads of believers to fix their eyes on Jesus.

James concluded his thought on comfort and suffering by saying that we should be people of our word (see v. 12). We shouldn't try to assure people that we're trustworthy by swearing by things we can't control. Our speech should convey the integrity of the gospel. Our words can cause great harm or bring great healing—we should use them wisely.

APPLICATION

Identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to our lives.

- What impact should the certain return of the Lord have on the way you view your present suffering? When we're in the middle of suffering, why is patience so hard to come by?
- How can you encourage someone else who is facing hardship by exhibiting patience and compassion toward him or her? How does this display the character of Christ?
- How can the hope of Christ in the midst of suffering be good news to those who are not yet believers? How might Christ use you to share the good news with those close to you this week?

PRAYER

Pray for patience in the midst of suffering. Ask that the Lord would draw your mind to the certain return of Christ as an anchor of hope in times of deep hardship. Pray that you would be an encouragement to others by displaying patience with them in times of suffering.

Digging Deeper COMMENTARY James 5:7-11

5:7-8. James wrote these words to Christian readers, addressing them as brothers. His readers in these verses were the victims of mistreatment by the wealthy mentioned in 5:1-6. James presented an incentive to show stamina, a hindrance to stamina, and two positive examples of stamina.

Trials and afflictions often produce grumbling or complaints. James prohibited this response when he urged his readers to be patient. Be patient demands an attitude which shows long-suffering in the presence of affliction and injustice. Believers should show this stamina without complaining, giving up, or retaliating. They should be ready to endure affliction without complaint and to remain committed in their obedience to God.

Persecuted believers can develop stamina by looking to the coming of the Lord. At that time Jesus will bring judgment on the disobedient (see 2 Thess. 1:6-10). Instead of taking vengeance into our own hands, Christians are to trust God to perform justice and to bring punishment on those who may cause hardship for them (see Rom. 12:19). Such forward-looking waiting requires patience.

The hard-working farmer shows us an example of patience. The farmer can prepare the soil, plant the seed, and keep the field weeded. However, he must expect God to supply the conditions of rain and sunshine which encourage growth. For this he needs patience.

The autumn rains usually appeared in October and softened the ground for planting. The spring rains usually came in April or May and matured the crops for harvest. The fact that the farmer had to wait for these rains showed his stamina or patience. The farmer had learned to trust in the reliability of God to supply the needs for his crops. James called his readers to the same demonstration of trust as they faced persecution.

Verse 8 urges us to show patience and courage because of the nearness of Jesus' return. We should show a firm purpose and depend constantly on God's grace. We can find the strength to stand firm because the return of the Lord will bring salvation, eternal life, and spiritual health.

The blessed hope of the Christian is the personal, bodily return of Jesus Christ (see Titus 2:12-13). We must not allow events to dull our hope in Jesus' return. We must not reduce our hope for Jesus' return to something like the transformation of society by Christian values. Jesus will come personally!

The hope of Jesus' return gave the early Christians hope as they faced hardship (Heb. 9:28). We must look at time from the viewpoint of the God for whom a thousand years is only a day (2 Pet. 3:8; 2 Cor. 4:16-18). Though centuries have passed since Jesus promised to return, we serve a God for whom the length of time does not imply a failed promise. Our hope of Christ's return is an encouragement for us to obey him.

J. Hudson Taylor founded the China Inland Mission in the 1860s. He believed fervently in the impending return of Christ. His belief influenced him to make the evangelism of unreached areas of China his primary aim. His beliefs about Christ's return gave him direction and urgency in the establishment of the mission.

Our belief in the return of Christ can provide us courage to face difficulty. It can give us stamina to endure persecution. It can deepen our hope that God will provide us reward and recognition to vindicate our actions.

5:9. This verse points out that a complaining attitude hinders us from developing patience and long-suffering. "Grumbling" involves the development of criticism and faultfinding against one another. Hardship may have driven some believers to despondency. They may have blamed their troubles on one another. Some may have questioned the devotion of other Christians or faulted the way others had treated them. God will judge and punish "grumblers." Such a loveless attitude is a direct contradiction of the true spirit of Christianity.

Who can hold on to such attitudes when the Judge is standing at the door! How inappropriate it is for Christians to be fighting when the return of Jesus is a certain event. Jesus will bring with him a complete knowledge of our feelings, thoughts, and reactions. We should be living in readiness for his coming. Instead, too often we behave like a group of students fighting in a school classroom while the absent teacher walks rapidly toward the room. Jesus is coming! How are you living?

5:10-11. The Old Testament prophets and Job also exemplified patience in suffering. The prophets suffered because they spoke in the name of God. In suffering, they demonstrated incredible capacity for devotion without complaint.

Patience is related to the word for patient in verses 7-8 and refers to an attitude of long-suffering which does not complain or find fault under trial. In Jeremiah 38, King Zedekiah wrongly imprisoned the prophet Jeremiah in a muddy dungeon and left him to die. Jeremiah voiced no complaint toward God or his captors. When Zedekiah summoned him and asked for his advice in a matter, Jeremiah told him, "Obey the Lord by doing what I tell you. Then it will go well with you, and your life will be spared" (Jer. 38:20). Jeremiah spoke in the name of the Lord and showed obedience despite intense suffering. He showed long-suffering in that he neither complained nor found fault with God's treatment. We are to imitate behavior like that.

Job's consistent obedience under trial was legendary among the Jews. He endured abject misery and exhibited great perseverance. Christians considered those who endured like Job as happy. This viewpoint amounted to a reversal of the world's evaluation of such sufferers, for the world would pity such people.

The God who tested Job in the furnace of hardship finally brought him to an experience of compassion and mercy. Through enduring trials, Job received a more complete insight into the divine purpose, and he was able to show deeper repentance (see Job 42:5-6).