

5 Keys To Patience Through Hardship

James 5:7-12

1. Be Patient: Manage What's In Our Control During Circumstances Beyond Our Control (7; cf. Dt 11:13-15)

⁷Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains.

2. Stand Firm: God Brings Justice When He Comes (8)

⁸You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

3. Don't Complain: The Judge Evaluates Everyone (9; Cf. Mt 7:2)

⁹Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door.

4. Endure Persistently: God's Purposes Are Loving And Merciful (10-11)

¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

5. Be Sincere: Integrity Is Essential Even When Attacked (12; cf. Mt 5:34)

¹²But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.

Conclusion:

- **Faith:** Our salvation frees us from this world's sin and knows our eternity will be better than this.
- **Hope:** Christ is coming to fix this!
- **Integrity:** Our testimony during hardship points others to Christ. (1 Pet 3:15)

Discussion:

- What hardships are frustrating you? How is your frustration expressed?
- How does the hope of Christ coming give you patience?
- What do we complain about the most? How does this passage help us adjust our attitude?
- How can we improve upon the integrity of our words during hardship?

5 Keys To Patience Through Hardship

James 5:7-12

Introduction:

- During a time the nation is suffering with a rampant pandemic and civil unrest, how should believers respond?
- During the time of the early church, there were 2 slaves to every free person in the Roman Empire.
- James just gave a warning to the wicked rich who oppressed, exploited and demeaned the poor. James addressed specific sins of those who abuse power and cheat the system in v. 1-6.
- Now in verses 7-12, James addresses the people struggling and suffering from persecution, exploitation, and unemployment because of their faith.
- James gives them **5 Keys To Patience Through Hardship:**

James 5:7-12 ⁷Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. ⁹Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful. ¹²But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.

1. **Be Patient: Manage What's In Our Control During Circumstances Beyond Our Control (7)**

⁷Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains.

- "Be Patient"
 - Kent: "non-retaliation ... hold one's spirit in check ... restrain your temper" (*Faith That Works*, p. 176)
 - No one can make us angry – we allow ourselves to get angry
 - No one can make us sin – we choose to sin
 - In the issue of Black Lives Matter, conversations
- Until the coming of the Lord
 - Jesus is coming, but His timing is beyond our control
- "Farmer"
 - Farmers in Palestine had to endure searing summers that left the soil hard and dry

- Like a farmer enduring harsh weather, hard soil and dependent on seasonal rain – be patient
- The weather is out of the farmer’s control
- Meanwhile, what do farmers do?
 - Ready the seed to plant
 - Sharpen the tools for harvest
 - Get in quality time with the family before the long days in short seasons
- We have circumstances out of our control
 - We’re all waiting for the Covid cure but is out of most of our control (unless you’re in biotech)
 - As we can’t make the rain come at our command, we can’t make the Lord come when we want Him to (for me, that would be now)
 - So we must be patient
- “early and the late rains”
 - They didn’t have modern irrigation so they were fully dependent on rain
 - They had to wait for the “early rains” in October and November to soften the soil to plant seeds
 - The “late rains” came in the Spring (April and May) which nourished the grain to ripeness
 - James uses rain because the farmers understand it’s beyond our control
 - The rain is under God’s control
- “precious fruit”
 - The precious fruit is coming – it takes time to grow a watermelon and a strawberry
 - But it is dependent on God’s provision of rain
 - God’s provision of rain was also dependent on Israel’s obedience
 - He did use drought as a punishment for disobedience

Deuteronomy 11:13-15 ¹³“And if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹⁴he³ will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil. ¹⁵And he will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you shall eat and be full.

- Our nation is in a struggle over authority and race
 - The turmoil is rooted in individual sin
 - The previous 6 verses (5:1-6) talked about the sins of people who abuse power and get rich through exploitation by identifying their sins of: Exploitation, hoarding, fraud, self-indulgence and demeaning others
 - Cultivating the soil for good conversations, police reform and achieving “justice for all” takes time among sinful men.
 - But until we take God’s law as the basis for justice – there will be struggle
 - Until everyone sees each person created in the image of God and as a person for whom Christ died – there will be struggle
 - When it becomes about individual rights instead of seeking God’s will – there will be struggle

- Church
 - Covid is beyond our control – we can only manage the best we can – facemasks, social distancing and sanitization
 - We'd love to reopen church today – but we are learning to be patient with circumstances out of our control
 - Most of my pastor friends are back up to limited capacity services, but most of the local churches in our area have not opened yet – I empathize with the cautious approach
 - Plus, our building is about to be demolished and the school we hoped to rent is out because all of the local school districts are not renting their out their schools – for understandable reasons
 - We're looking for alternative sites to meet when we feel ready to reopen
 - But we're trying to be patient – see a cure approved, see the cases go down, see economy recover
 - Ministry has become harder – but we're to be patient
 - Meanwhile: we use this time to strengthen and prepare us to reopen
 - FBC will reopen to a new building – the timing is beyond our control
 - Let's get ready to be a church that will minister to new people who will come
 - We need to prepare ministries for newcomers who will want to connect with our church when we do reopen
 - We need to improve our virtual service abilities because this is a new reality in 21st century ministry
- During our droughts, pandemics and persecutions, we must be patient managing our circumstances with obedience. We can't control congress, the President or our local politicians (though we vote). But we can control our response during hardship.

2. **Stand Firm: God Brings Justice When He Comes (8)**

*You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

- We retaliate evil for evil because we negate or neglect the Christ is coming to clean all this up
- We retaliate because our heart is unfixed
- Instead of striking out in revenge, we're to stand firm – hold our ground
- Good police have mostly had to stand their ground defensively without using unwise offensive force that is not warranted
- Patience is founded on an **established heart**
- **Establish = *sterizo* = stand firm**
 - Hiebert: "to strengthen and make firm their inner life as a decisive act ... strengthening ... so that it will stand firm and immovable" (p. 299)
 - Offensive **lineman** – firm stance that no linebacker will get passed him

- Watching my nephew **wrestle** – standing firm was being balanced and not allowing yourself to be vulnerable to your opponent
 - A careless offensive attack can leave us vulnerable if we don't protect ourselves
- Ie/ In **Chess**, we can make an offensive move with our knight leaving our queen unprotected – that's not a firm stand
- As **Christians**, we stand firm in our hope that Christ's coming is at hand
- The impulse of an impatient heart gets us in trouble
 - Rioting and looting is an impulse born in frustration
 - Ie/ A. Burr realized too late after shooting A. Ham that the world was wide enough for both them – but their anger and impatience with each brought a regrettable end to their feud
 - Is defunding police, tearing down statues and making general prejudicial accusations bringing solution or is it a knee-jerk reaction?
- These poor victims of the exploitive rich may not have the money or clout to win in these courts bought by the rich, but don't fret – Jesus is coming.

3. **Don't Complain: The Judge Evaluates Everyone (9)**

°Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door.

- **"grumble"** = *me stenazete* = to sigh or groan
 - A "sigh" is an attitude of self-pity and martyrdom
 - "Sigh" – look what I have to put up with with you!!
 - The martyr sighs with a wordless complaint
 - The nagger annoys with persistent comments
 - The passive aggressive complains one a subtle comment
 - The quick tempered person throws everything out the window at once
- **Our complaining spirit actually is related to a spirit of judgmentalism**
- **Jesus said: Matthew 7:2** For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.
- **James said:** don't grumble because in doing so, you become judgmental and you will be judged for being judgmental – the Judge is right here!! He's watching!
- What underlies our complaining spirit is **bitterness** and **discontent**
- Don't complain – find solutions
- Ie/ A black receiver in the NFL made a statement about Hitler that was derogatory to Jews. A Jewish receiver responded to this receiver saying we need to take the time to learn about each other's history. He proposed meeting in Washington DC, visit the Holocaust Museum

and an African American Museum then grab a hamburger to discuss what they've learned about each other's culture.

- We could just complain or we could use our energy to work a solution
- Ie/ Daniel, being a godly Jew, didn't like the pagan diet of Nebuchadnezzar, so he made a respectful appeal for change with a deadline to change things back if it didn't please the king
- **Teens** are frustrated at their parents – how could we make an appeal to help parents see your point of view
- **Employees** are frustrated about their boss or working conditions – instead of complaining, how could we find a solution, how could we initiate understanding what our boss is going through so we can open the door to our boss understanding what we're going through. Complaints (with a grumbling attitude and not a constructive attitude) closes doors.
- I read an article telling **pastors** to stop complaining during Covid: frustrated preaching to empty pews, miss seeing flock, Zoom meetings are so draining, introverts love to stay hidden while extroverts miss engagement. Just do the work of the ministry. Circumstances have changed, but ministry has not. **Adapt!!**
- Police Reform is needful. But making blanket statements to call all police pigs or illegitimate children or just taking money away or dismantling systems of authority – is it just complaining or is it working a reasonable solution. **We need to listen to each other, not speak louder than each other.**
- **James isn't saying to fix wrongs or right injustices.**
 - But don't just sit around grumbling about **church** and not being a part of the solution.
 - Don't complain about **groups** of people without understanding their side
- When we air our complaints, we must be willing to hear complaints from the other side. But we live in a world where we don't want to hear opposing views. The most oppressed has the moral authority to be unchallenged in a world controlled by class warfare.

4. **Endure Persistently: God's Purposes Are Loving And Merciful (10-11)**

¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

- "patience" = *macrothumia* = to suffer long
- "steadfastness" = *hupomune* = to endure under
 - We will go through long periods of suffering
- **The Prophets remained steadfast through persecution**
 - Jezebel tried to kill **Elijah** (1 Kings 18-19)
 - **Daniel** was held in captivity along with his people – he was thrown in a den of lions (Daniel 6) and his friends were thrown in a flaming furnace

- Ahab threw **Micaiah** in prison because he thought his prophecies were troublesome (2 Chron 18:12-27)
- **Zechariah** confronted Judah for ignoring the Word of God so King Joash martyred him (2 Chron 24:20-22)
- **Jeremiah** was accused of being a traitor by King Zedekiah for giving a prophecy about Jerusalem's collapse (Jer 37-38)
- They remained steadfast in their faith

- Facing persecution not too long ago taught me a lot about patience and steadfastness. There was a lot of temptation to lose my temper, to complain about false statements and to angrily protect my team.
- But we had to work through a year long process. Be steadfast.

- **Job remained steadfast**
 - "steadfast"
 - Job did complain in frustration – 3:3 let the day of his birth perish; 3:11 wish he died at birth
 - But he never abandoned his faith in God
 - His 3 acquaintances gave him 3 rounds of bad counsel falsely assuming God was judging him for some unconfessed sin
 - Even Job's wife told him to "Curse God and die"
 - God was allowing His suffering to strengthen Job's faith
 - Yet Job remained steadfast in His faith
 - Job got a glimpse of the sovereignty and power of God, His Creator
 - God was in control even when it seemed like life was out of control

5. **Be Sincere: Integrity Is Essential Even When Attacked (12)**

¹²But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.

- **"swear"** – not using curse words or making promises, but in this context, calling down a curse on your enemies – imprecations that ask God to judge your enemies or condemning them with a curse (anathema)
 - This condemning speech can reveal the evil and impatience in our heart
 - This does not apply to legal oaths we take in the court of law, but oaths we make casually in conversation or in the heat of the moment
 - Ie/ In court, people are asked to swear an oath to be truthful with their hand on a Bible or by raising their right hand
 - Don't swear revenge on the basis of heaven, earth, the Bible or the reputation of your mama

- **"oath"**
 - Kent: "In times of oppression or persecution, one may be tempted to deny his guilt by reinforcing his statement with an oath." (p. 181)
 - Peter swore an oath that he wasn't a follower of Jesus (Mt 26:72)
 - **Jesus said to not make any oath (Mt 5:34)**

- **Be Truthful** – Let your: yes be yes; no be no

- It's so convenient to throw accusations or complaints that are embellished or bend the truth
 - We risk our integrity when we do so
- Don't make an oath out of emotion that you can't fulfill
 - Don't make promises you can't keep
 - Don't say things out of anger that you know aren't true
 - Our integrity is the most important thing ("above all") to preserve at a time we are most vulnerable to sacrifice it

Conclusion:

1. **Faith:** Our salvation frees us from this world's sin and knows our eternity will be better than this.

- Our dear sister, Betty, endured the pain of cancer but looked forward to heaven. In fact, she made it her ministry in the last days to encourage others to prepare for death by looking forward to being with Christ. She looked forward to better days now realized.
- Covid and Cancer stink!
- Racial injustices are fowl!
- International and national politics are frustrating!
- It will get better!
- A world torn apart by sin can find salvation in Christ! (died, rose again)

2. **Hope:** Christ is coming to fix this!

- Like waiting for the plumber to fix our sewage leak or for PG&E to restart our furnace on a cold day – it will get better when they come.
- It will get better when Jesus comes!
- Make the most of what you can control and leave the rest to God
- We can't fix everything in this world but we can use this time to point others to Christ who will come.

3. **Integrity:** Our testimony during hardship points others to Christ.

- Let our speech reflect this patience and hope.
- Don't let frustration make you swear something you shouldn't or make uncertain what you stand for or not.

1 Peter 3:15 but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

Discussion:

- What hardships are frustrating you? How is your frustration expressed?
- How does the hope of Christ coming give you patience?
- What do we complain about the most? How does this passage help us adjust our attitude?
- How can we improve upon the integrity of our words during hardship?