

James

Lesson 7

James 5:7 – 5:20

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Lesson 7
James 5:7 – 5:20
Patience in Suffering and Prayer

My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins. *James 5:19-20*

Prayers

Introduction

The early church described in Acts 4:32-35 is the ideal of Christian love and charity. We read:

Ac 4:32 All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.

Ac 4:33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.

Ac 4:34 There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales

Ac 4:35 and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

But, within twenty years of Christ's death, the church in Jerusalem had monumental problems: favoritism, discrimination, exploitation of the poor, pride, judging, quarrels, disputes, lawsuits, moral filth, and neglecting the needs of the poor. The stress of famine and persecution brought out the worst in the people. James, Jesus' brother, addressed these problems with wisdom and directness.

James encouraged the poor and rebuked the rich. He called the rich an adulterous people who loved the world more than God. He warned them their misery was coming, and they had fattened themselves for the day of slaughter. The problem with the rich was their behavior, not their wealth. They exploited the poor and withheld wages from their workers and harvesters. They failed to provide for the poor, orphans, and widows. They showed favoritism to each other but also quarreled, slandered, and took each other to court. Their speech polluted their mind and soul.

James' message was hope and encouragement to the poor and exploited. Pursuing peace and persevering in trials would lead to mature faith and righteousness. James reminded them to live holy lives, pray, confess their sin, seek God, and resist the devil. They would be blessed with God's promises; God would draw near them when they sought Him, He would give them wisdom when asked, and they would inherit eternal life. In his closing comments, James encouraged the church to be patient in their suffering and to pray.

Read James 5:7-12, Patience in Suffering

Jas 5:7 Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains.

Jas 5:8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.

Jas 5:9 Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

Jas 5:10 Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Jas 5:11 As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

Jas 5:12 Above all, my brothers, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," no, or you will be condemned.

1. James tells the churches to be patient in their suffering, illustrated by the farmer, the prophets, and Job. Discuss how each is an example of patience to the church, who waits on the Lord's coming.
 - a. The farmer

The farmer works hard, sowing, fertilizing, and watering his crop, waiting for the harvest. Despite his hard work, he cannot ensure a bountiful harvest. That is in God's hands. Sometimes we suffer from events beyond our control, despite our hard work and planning. Like the farmer who suffers a drought, we don't give up but work to prepare for the next season and trust in God's provision.

- b. The prophets

Prophets foretold God's will or the consequences of people's sins, making them very unpopular and persecuted! Prophets spoke God's word and waited on God, but few saw God's will done in their own lifetimes. Scriptures tell us we should count it as pure joy if we suffer for the cause of the gospel because it shows that we are united with Christ.

- c. Job

Job did nothing to warrant losing his home, possessions, and family. He unknowingly found himself as God's champion in a battle with Satan. He also endured his "comforters," who insisted he confess his sins. Job waited on God's vindication, and ultimately, God restored all that Job lost. Could there also be times when we are God's champion, suffering for our righteousness to battle Satan?

- d. The church

We are the church. We are called to wait prayerfully on the Lord's coming and cannot waiver in its mission to preach God's word and reach the world with the gospel. We are to conduct

ourselves like the day of the Lord's coming is today, even though it is doubtful we will see God's will of salvation to all nations completed while we are alive.

2. Refer to the following scriptures and discuss the benefit of patience in suffering.

Romans 5:3-5, Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

James 1:2-4, Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴ Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

2Peter 1:5-8, For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶ and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷ and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. ⁸ For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive ^r in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 10:34-36, You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. ³⁵ So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. ³⁶ You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

Patience in suffering builds our character and faith. It gives us qualities of perseverance, character, hope, and maturity. We persevere until we accomplish what he called us to do, and he rewards us union in him in eternal life.

Read James 5:13-20, The Prayer of Faith

Jas 5:13 Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise.

Jas 5:14 Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.

Jas 5:15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.

Jas 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

Jas 5:17 Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years.

Jas 5:18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

Jas 5:19 My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, Jas 5:20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

3. After addressing the division issues, James closes with the importance of prayer in all things, both in trouble and joy (verse 13). What actions mentioned in James can mend the brokenness in church?
 - a. Verses 14a **Pray for those in trouble**
 - b. Verse 14b **Praise and song**
 - c. Verse 15, **Pray for healing**
 - d. Verse 16, **Confession**
 - e. Verse 19, **Confrontation / restoration**
4. The actions James mentioned by James to bring unity to the church carry some fear and anxiety, making us reluctant to practice them. Discuss these concerns and relate any experience you have with them
 - a. Prayers for trouble
 - b. Praise and Song

I am not a singer, but I enjoy the music of others. Music inspires, comforts, and moves us to praise God. Some people have remarkable faith stories they can share that inspire and encourage the faith of others.

- c. Pray for healing

Prayers for healing are part of our worship service and normal prayer life. In my church denomination, elders regularly visit the sick but are rarely called to anoint someone with oil. Prayer for others is one of our great privileges as God's children, whether or not we are an elder. Pete Grieg describes praying for someone as bridging the gap between earth and heaven to ask God's favor and influence his kingdom. As our loving Father, God is anxious to hear all our prayers. Prayers for the chronically ill are difficult to sustain and can challenge our faith. Some of our friends are healed in life; others are healed in death. We don't know why, but we learn to trust God's grace.

- d. Confession with others

Confession can be tremendously healing. Although we might not have a confessor, like a priest, nothing can begin restoring a broken relationship like the words “I was wrong; please forgive me.” James addressed seemingly monumental issues in the early church that needed forgiveness and prayer; favoritism, discrimination, exploitation of the poor, pride, judging, quarrels, disputes, lawsuits, moral filth, and neglecting the needs of the poor. All this was within the church during persecution and famine. The issues were so severe that nothing would change until people recognized their sins, confessed their wrong attitudes to God, and confessed their sorrow to the other person.

e. **Confrontation**

We are probably least comfortable confronting a fellow Christian of their sin because we know what’s coming – anger, resentment, who are you to judge? I felt compelled to confront our pastor on what I perceived as excessive spending on outside consultants when we had numerous project managers in our congregation to address our situation. The result was positive. The pastor acknowledged my opinion and wished some of the expenditures were not made. We both appreciated each other more after the meeting, and the tension that divided our relationship was removed.

5. Think about any broken or strained relationships you have where God has been nudging you to mend. Discuss with a friend or advisor how to initiate healing in a conflict, and then take the first step.

Closing prayer and blessing (Numbers 6:24-26)

The LORD bless and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.