

Patience in Suffering

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[0 : 00] Why don't we open the word of prayer this morning. Lord, we come to you this morning. We come to you this morning acknowledging our need for you.

Lord, we need you. Lord, we pray that you would speak to our hearts this morning. That you would make clear those things that even now are unclear.

Lord, we pray that the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart will be acceptable to you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

When we continue our extended series in the book of James, you know, we've been here for several months now.

And our topic this morning is patience in suffering. Patience in suffering.

[1 : 23] I don't know how many of you heard about the young man who went to church one Sunday. This is a pastor, actually.

And he said to the congregation, he said, You know, I prayed for patience, but I'm not getting it fast enough. Well, perhaps you didn't get that one.

I would try another one out here. After service one Sunday, two ladies were in the parking lot walking to their cars.

And one of the ladies remarked, she said, You know, that was an excellent message on patience. And then the second lady replied.

She said, Yeah, it was. But he ran five minutes over. Patience. Something all of us know a lot about.

[2 : 31] And I must confess to you as I stand here that I am perhaps the least qualified to speak on this topic.

Perhaps if one were to consider the span of my own life, one would come to that conclusion.

My life has been characterized by acts of impatience, one after the other. And so, it is somewhat remarkable, really, that providentially I am preaching from these verses.

The Lord knows why. I'm going to ask you to turn in your Bible to James chapter 5. James chapter 5, and we will begin reading from verse 7.

James 5. We'll read verses 7 through 11. James writes, Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord.

[3 : 54] 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.

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

Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged. Behold, the judge is standing at the door.

As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold, 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 : 04] These few short verses in James are very rich. As a matter of fact, as I was preparing this message, I thought to myself that very easily this could have been an extended series in and of itself.

Perhaps three, maybe even five sermons. And even beyond that, I thought that this would make quite a book. Quite a book. And if there is someone in here who wants to write a book, you know, I don't have that gift, but if somebody wants to write a book and you want to talk about it, I'm happy to talk to you about it.

But this is quite rich. This is about real life. This is about real life.

All of us can relate to what James is talking about. All of us can relate to patience. All of us can relate to suffering.

All of us can relate to it. From the youngest person here to the eldest person present. All of us can relate to suffering.

[6 : 21] It's real life. But what is James telling us in these few verses? What is he saying to us that is so important to our lives?

I believe James is saying to us real simply that we ought to be patient in suffering as you consider the experiences of champions of the faith and the things that the Lord has brought you through. James is saying to us be patient in suffering as you consider the experiences of champions of the faith and the things the Lord has brought you through.

Be patient in suffering. As we consider these verses we'll organize our thoughts under two broad headings.

Patience in suffering commanded and patience in suffering justified. Let's consider patience and suffering commanded.

[7 : 46] The command to be patient in suffering. Here's what James says in this regard.

Be 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 rain.

You also be patient. Establish your heart for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another brothers so that you may not be judged.

Behold the judge is standing at the door. In these initial verses James tells us what biblical patience looks like.

Commands us to be patient. And I want to make a point right now and up front. When we talk about biblical patience we're not talking about the patience that the world talks about.

[8 : 58] You know there might be some people you know who are not believers and you look at them and you say boy he exercises patience in XYZ situation.

Maybe he is tolerant appears to be tolerant. Well that's not what we're talking about here. We're talking about biblical patience and as we go through this I want you to see the difference.

But James is by no means patience. The only writer in scripture to teach about patience. Paul teaches that patience is a fruit of the spirit.

Galatians 5 22. And in Romans 12 12 Paul writes rejoice in hope be patient in tribulation be constant in prayer.

Be patient James tells us. But what does patience mean? What is James really saying to us in these verses?

[10 : 13] What does it mean to be patient? The dictionary tells us that patience is the capacity to accept or tolerate delay.

Accept or tolerate problems or suffering without becoming annoyed or anxious. So patience is being able to tolerate things that you don't like.

Delays and problems and suffering without becoming annoyed or anxious. What's suffering? We talk about patience and suffering. Suffering is experiencing something that is undesirable or unwelcome.

Implicitly one thinks of it as something that we experience over a period of time. Like sickness or loss of a loved one or loss of income or perhaps betrayal or perhaps being bullied at school.

Be patient in suffering. The first thing that we see here in these verses James says to us be patient be patient but he doesn't leave us there he says be patient therefore brothers until the coming of the Lord.

[11 : 47] So you see already the distinction between the patience that James tells us to have and the patience of the world. James says be patient until the coming of the Lord.

James tells us how long we should be patient until the coming of the Lord. That's it. He says be patient until tomorrow no be patient until the coming of the Lord.

Here James gives us both the object and the implication of our patience. He points to the object of our patience which is the coming of the Lord.

And here's what I mean. Let me clarify that a little bit for you. You see when we are patient typically we say we are patiently waiting for something. Well James says that ultimately we should be patiently waiting for the coming of the Lord.

That's the thing that we are looking for. The coming of the Lord. So James says to us be patient be patient until the coming of the Lord.

[13 : 02] James helps us with these words to see that there is something going on. When you think about it James says the thing that's most important is the coming of the Lord.

So James helps us to see that there is a certain mentality that he has about this world. There isn't anything here that is sufficient for him.

James seems to have the attitude of a traveler, of a sojourner. I'm just passing through. James' mindset is that of a known citizen.

James goes on and he writes, 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.

You also be patient. Here again, James helps us to see the distinction between biblical patients and worldly patients.

[14 : 12] What does the farmer's attitude look like in this context? James says to us that our patience should be similar to that of the farmers.

What do farmers do? The farmer prance and he waits with expectation. He waits with expectation being mindful that God alone controls the rain.

The farmer plants being mindful that God alone determines the quality of his crops.

You get a sense that the farmer knows his place. That's the point that James is making. James says the farmer knows his place. He plants and waits.

He has a posture of humility. The farmer has a posture of humility. He knows where his walk ends and where God's begins.

[15 : 21] That's the point James is making. He understands the providence of God. The farmer has faith that things will turn out okay because God is in control.

And so James is helping us to see that you and I are to anchor our patience in the providence of God. We ought to know where our walk ends and where God's began.

James tells us that we should be like farmers. Do what we can do and leave the rest to the providence of an omnipotent omniscient and all merciful God.

That's what James is telling us. He said we can relax we can be patient in the midst of difficulties in the midst of suffering.

We can be as the farmer and then James goes on to tell us he says establish your heart says establish your heart this is a big one James tells us that patience that we need the patience that we need requires an established or a heart James says to us we must cultivate that disposition before trials come we need an established heart established heart a decided heart a fixed heart a resolute heart here are a couple examples of a resolute heart in scripture

[17 : 27] Matthew 16 21 from that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised Jesus had a an established heart he knew why he came he was prepared to suffer he was prepared to be rejected he was prepared to be crucified he knew what this world had to offer and he was determined to fulfill the work of his father the second Timothy chapter 1 verse 12 Paul writes which is why I suffer as I do but I'm not ashamed for I know who

I have believed and I'm convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me Paul too had that attitude Paul says I suffer as much as I do but I'm not ashamed for I know whom I have believed and I'm convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me Paul had an established heart the point I'm making is that before trouble comes Paul was determined he was determined that he would serve the Lord before trouble comes Paul's heart was established he was determined to be patient in the midst of whatever his experiences were establish your hearts establish your hearts is what

James says to us know that this is not a mind control or gritting one's teeth situation it is really ultimately about God it's about him told you that this patience differs from the world listen to what how Peter puts it in 1st Peter chapter 4 verse 19 therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful creator while doing good say that again let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful creator while doing good the point that Peter and Jesus and Paul and James make is that the ground on which our patience is carried out or is shown is the ground on our faith we are relying on a faithful

God we entrust our souls to him ultimately that's what they're saying we can be patient we can rely on a faithful creator and then James says again in these verses he says for the coming of the Lord is at hand establish your heart for the coming of the Lord is at hand if that were true then 2000

years ago when these words were penned it's certainly true today James wants us to live with the imminency of Christ's return in view he wants us to live as if it's going to happen right away he says for the coming of the Lord is at hand the patience that you and I as believers ought to have is one in which we live our lives in view of the fact that the coming of the

Lord is at hand and as we do we can more readily echo the words of the apostle Paul in 2nd Corinthians 4 verse 17 this is what Paul writes for this light momentary affliction is preparing for an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison so Paul says yeah this might be hard today it's hard today but it does not compare to what we're going to experience when the Lord returns and his return is imminent so we have reason to be patient there's no comparison and then in verse 9 James goes on to say to us do not grumble against one another brothers so that you may not be judged behold the judge is standing at the door how many of you know that when you're going through difficult circumstances when you're suffering perhaps it could be at the hands of a loved one but whatever the circumstance!

[23 : 38] It could be an employer could be a neighbor could be a health challenge but whatever it is how many of you know that it kind of stirs in us this desire to grumble and to complain to murmur to blame someone or to blame perhaps everyone if only this had happened why is their attitude the way it is but James warns that patience in suffering is not evident when one is mourning and complaining grumbling rather it is patiently walking through one's circumstances James tells us that we ought to be careful listen to the words of James the way he frames this he says so that you may not be judged then he says behold the judge is standing at the door again speaking about the imminency of

Christ's return but what does this not mean when we talk about being patient in suffering what does it not mean here is something that Peter says to us Peter says to us in 1st Peter chapter 4 verse 50 let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or a meddler so we can start there so we're talking about something that we bring on ourselves that's not what James is talking about James suffering suffering that is caused by us committing murder stealing or committing some other evil act but the patience that

James writes about patience and suffering it's not passive patience It's not wallowing or in self-pity, woe is me.

It is not the absence of ambition. It's not fighting back. No, it's none of those things. It is an awareness that God is ultimately in control.

And he is working out all things for our good. All things for our good. It is about having the right perspective.

[26 : 40] About life. About this life. Patience in suffering. Knowing, recognizing that we live in a fallen world.

James is telling us that suffering will come. That you and I, we will suffer. As children. As adults. As older people. We will suffer. He does not pretend it does not exist. But he says that we ought to endure it.

James speaks to an important human motivation. If you know that. You will live with Jesus. Patiently endure.

That's what he is saying. James is saying. If you know that you will live with Jesus. Then patiently endure the suffering. If you know that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

[27 : 43] That's what he is saying. Light at the end of the tunnel. Patiently endure. If you know that this affliction is momentary. And cannot compare.

To an eternity with Christ. Patiently endure. James wants to give practicality to our faith.

James says you believe. You believe that God is sovereign. You believe that he is all powerful. Then show it. Be patient.

Impatience. Is evidence of a lack of faith. Evidence of an absence of humility. Evidence that we don't accept fully God's providence.

Impatience. Impatience leads to complaining. And engaging in activities that are sinful. Notice this about James.

[28 : 53] In these few verses. That we have read. James does not seek to motivate us. But live your best life now.

Or how to avoid suffering. No James seemed to be saying. To us. That suffering. Will happen. And you and I ought to endure it.

There is something. Greater. There is someone. Greater. Who is in control of everything. That you and I.

Experience. In verses 10 and 11. James. James. Helps us to see.

That the patience. In suffering. That he talks about. In the preceding verses. Is justified. Patience. In suffering.

[29 : 51] Justified. Here's what James writes. As an example of suffering. And patience. Brothers. Take the prophets. Who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Behold. We consider those. Blessed. Who remain 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. James says. Your patience. Suffering.

Is justified. You. You can. Stand on it. And. James. Tells us how. James says.

That we can. Consider. The example. Of others. He said. Look at the prophets. Who preached God's word. And as we consider.

[30 : 55] These instructions. From James. We think of Daniel. Cast in the lion's den. Because he refused. To stop praying.

He remained. Steadfast. He remained. Steadfast. We can consider.

Hosea. He suffered. The pain. And indignity. Of being married. To Gomer. An adulterous. And wicked woman. He remained. Steadfast.

We can consider. Ezekiel. Ezekiel. Ezekiel. Ezekiel. Ezekiel. Ezekiel. In the book of Ezekiel. Ezekiel writes. The word of the Lord. Came to me. Son of man.

Behold. I'm about to take. The delight. Of your eyes. Away from you. At a stroke. Yet you shall not.

[31 : 51] Moan or weep. Nor shall your tears. Run down. Shortly after that. His wife was taken. Away. From him.

He remained. Steadfast. Jeremiah. Jeremiah. Ignored. By the people. He prophesied to.

And even beaten by prophets. Jeremiah. He remained. Steadfast. Job. James tells us.

You have heard. Of the. Steadfastness. Of Job. And we all have. We know him. An upright man.

Who. In a moment. Lost. All he had. All he had. He suffered. Tremendously. Yet. He remained.

[32 : 49] Steadfast. Unwavering. Loyal. James says to us. That you and I. Can look. To these.

Men. We can draw. Inspiration. From them. We can say. That. If they did it. We can do it. Too. That's the point.

James is making. James says. We can look to them. You have. Heard of the. Steadfastness. Of Job. And then.

James tells us. And you have seen. You have seen. The purpose of the Lord. How the Lord is compassionate.

And merciful. Perhaps. James was saying. To you. And to me. To his readers.

[33 : 51] That they know. Experientially. That the Lord. Is. Merciful. Perhaps. James is saying to us. That. We've had these. Experiences.

Before. That we've had these. Struggles. Before. We've suffered. Before. It could very well be. That he was saying. To us.

As a once. Popular song. Says. As I look back. Over my life. And I. Think. Things. Over. I can truly say.

The Lord. Has been. Good. I have. A testimony. I've got a testimony. I have a testimony. James. Is saying. To us.

Consider. Not only others. But. Consider. Your own. Experiences. I've got a testimony. Of the Lord. Delivering me. From the thing. That I thought. Would.

[34 : 51] Put me under. I've got a testimony. The thing. I'm going through. Now. Might be. Different. Slightly different.

But it really is. The same thing. And truly. When I. Consider it. It pales. In comparison. To what I've been through. I've got.

A testimony. To hold on. To. James. Is saying. That. God. Is.

Merciful. Perhaps. James. Recalls. The. Words. Of the psalmist. When he said. His mercies. I knew. Every morning. James.

Reminds us. That in the midst. Of. Suffering. We. Can be patient. Because God. Is merciful.

Perhaps. James. Speaks. To the. Young child.

[35 : 46] For whom. Everything. Is. Not a bed. Of roses. Perhaps. James. Says. To him. That these. Experiences.

That you have. Will produce. Steadfastness. If you let them. Then he says. Let steadfastness. Have its.

Full effect. That you may be. Perfect. And complete. Maybe. James. Says. To. The mother. Who thinks. The Lord. Has. Abandoned. Her. Perhaps. James. Says. To her. He knows. Your. Name. He sees.

Each tear. That falls. And he hears you. When you call. James. Ends. This section.

[36 : 39] Speaking about. Mercy. And. Compassion. He knows. Because James. Knows. That no matter. How. Patient. You and I are.

No matter. How established. Our. Hearts. Are. You're going to need. Mercy. And compassion. You're going to need it.

Perhaps. You are. At this very moment. Dealing with something. That. Causes. Suffering. And. Pain. Perhaps.

It has. A lingering. It's been lingering. And maybe. Even. Intense. You might. Even. Have. Questioned. God.

And. Considered. Giving up. To you. Especially. To you. James.

[37 : 36] Says. Be patient. Says. Be patient. No matter. What it is. Ask. The Lord. To. Still. Your.

Soul. In the. Minutes. Of the situation. And. Watch him. Do it. Watch him. Still. Your soul. Why? Because he's on your side. Bible. Teaches us. If God. Is for us. Who can be successfully. Against us. Written by.

A German woman. Katarina. She Lego. In the 17th century.

The song. Be still. My soul. Is a perfect summary. Of how our hearts.

[38 : 35] Should be postured. During times. Of suffering. Listen to these words. Be still.

My soul. The Lord. Is on. Thy side. Bear patiently. The cross. Of grief.

Of pain. Leave. To. Thy God. To order. And provide. In every change.

He. Faithfully. Will. Remain. Be still. My soul. Thy best. Thy heavenly.

Friend. Through. 20. Ways. Leads to. A joyful end. And then the second. Verse. Of the song.

Reads. Be still.

[39 : 31] My soul. Thy God. Doth undertake. To guide. The future. You got to listen to these words. Thy God.

Doth undertake. To guide. The future. As he has. The past. Thy hope. Thy confidence.

Let nothing. Wake. Wake. All now mysterious shall be bright at last. Be still, my soul.

The waves and winds still know his voice who ruled them while he dwelt alone.

Let me remind us of what 1 Corinthians 12, 26 says. Tells us that if one member suffers, all suffer together.

[40 : 36] If one member is honored, all rejoice together. What's the point? It's the point I'm making. The point I'm making is that we rejoice in community and we suffer in community.

But it calls for us to be transparent. God has blessed us with this. He's blessed us and we ought to take advantage of it.

We ought to use it to the boon. As we conclude this message, we must recall that grace to be patient during suffering is because we have it.

We have the grace to be patient during suffering because of the suffering that Jesus endured on the cross. He's not only our perfect exemplar, he is the one who gives us grace to hold up under the pressures of life to the non-believers.

Perhaps you say that if believers suffers like you say they do, what's the point? Well, there's an answer for you in the Bible too.

[42 : 00] Read 2 Thessalonians 1 verse 9. It says, They, that is unbelievers, will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his might.

For you suffer here and you suffer there. Believers, listen to this beautiful promise that you and I have.

In Revelation chapter 2 verse 10, Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prisons that you may be tested and for 10 days you will have tribulation.

Listen to how this verse concludes. Be faithful unto death and I will give to you a crown of life. That's what you and I have to look forward to. As I close, I want to read for you the fourth stanza of the beautiful song, Be Still My Soul.

[43 : 24] Listen to what it says. Be still my soul. The hour is hastening noon when we shall be forever with the Lord.

When disappointment, grief, and fear are gone. Sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored. Be still my soul. When change and tears are past, all safe and blessed, we shall meet at last. Let us pray. Lord, we need you.

We need your help. We need grace to be patient. We need grace to endure. Father, calm our hearts.

[44 : 35] Lord, some present are dealing with situations that they haven't even told anyone about. Father, we pray in the name of Jesus that you would give to each one the grace to endure.

Lord, let there be fruit from the word that was preached today in all of our lives. Lord, let it be true that from the simplest thing in our lives to the most significant.

The patience is evident. Let us keep our eyes fixed on the return of Christ.

Cause us, oh Lord, to establish our hearts, to make firm decisions that come what may, we're going to be patient in suffering.

We're not going to grumble. Lord, help us. We need your help. From the smallest child to the eldest among us, we all need your help.

[45 : 54] And Lord, help us also to help one another. Help us to rejoice and to suffer with one another.

In Jesus' name and our God's people say, Amen. Amen. Amen.