

Patience and Endurance

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[0 : 00] Okay, now, I'm going to tell you, this is confession time. Yeah, I started to make slides for you, and they got so fouled up.

The more I fixed them, the worse they got. So I just closed the program. And I said, you know what? They can do without it. But I'm going to need some volunteers to help read some of this stuff.

But we're in James 5. So we're going to, this is the second to last James sermon. James 5, we're going to do in verses 7 through 12.

And James is in the process of closing up his letter. But he always, if you haven't noticed this, James talks about something, and he always connects it back to something he's already said.

So a lot of the things he's going to talk about here, he's made mention of earlier, earlier, like the tongue. He's going to talk about grumbling. So James 5, verse 7 through 12.

[1 : 06] And he does this. The context here is he's talking about the return of Christ. It's both Savior and Judge. Sometimes I think we really focus on the Savior part, and we never think about the judge part.

All right. I'll read the first passage, and then later I'll ask some volunteers to help me out. James 5, verses 7 through 12. It says, So be patient, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's return.

Think how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the ground and is patient for it until it reaches, until it receives the early and late rains. Also be patient and strengthen your hearts, for the Lord's return is near.

Do not grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be judged. See, the judge stands before the gates. As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the Lord's name.

Think how we regard as blessed those who have endured. You have heard about Job's endurance, and you have seen the Lord's purpose. That the Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

[2 : 19] And above all, my brothers and sisters, 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 into judgment.

Now, I remember when we were having, our house was being built. Now, sort of like we didn't contract with someone to build a house.

We were buying a house that the contractor was building, and the only thing we got to do was a few minor, you know, we'll take this, we'll have that, we want this type thing inside. And I can remember when it was being built, we did all the stuff we needed to do, the paperwork was done, the choices were made, and there it was.

I'd even walked the lot. I knew what was going on. It was going to happen. And I'm going, we're going to have a house, we're going to move, everything's going to be settled. It's all great. Except, I went out and looked at the lot, and it was just a wooded lot.

And I'm going, okay, I'll wait. A week later I go out and I look, and it's just a wooded lot. And I'm going, nothing's happening. And we waited. And we waited.

[3 : 32] And we waited. And then one day, my surprise, there were two guys with equipment out there, and they were taking trees down. I'm going, yes, we're making progress. It's going to happen.

And the trees came down. And I checked it. And we waited. And we waited. And we waited.

Nothing seemed to be happening. I'm going, they're building three or four houses on our street at the same time. And I'm going, they're building that house. Why haven't they started in mine? And then they got the foundation dug and poured, and they started putting block up, and it just sat there.

And we waited. And we waited. And I'm going, you can build a house. In fact, I know they can because they're doing it down the road from us. You can build a house in a couple months if you really put your mind to it.

Here, we've been two months waiting just to get the foundation down. Then one day, I went out there, and they were putting the floor in, and the framing was going up.

[4 : 33] And I'm going, yes, we're going to have a house. And everything went fine until they got it all enclosed, everything, and all the work was on the inside.

Now, that's worse. Because you can see when they're building on the outside, you say, yeah, there's progress. But when they're working on the inside, you can't see anything. And we waited, and we waited, and we waited.

We even got so impatient, we said, we want to go look at this house before it's being built. And they said, okay. And they took us out there, and we walked through it. We go, yeah, it's still got a long way to go. I don't know what they've been doing, but they aren't making any progress.

Some days, I'd ride my motorcycle out there, and I'd stop, and the guy that was the contract supervisor for that area, he hated to see me show up.

See, I'm not supposed to talk to him, but you know, hey, he'd finally walk over as I sat there, and he'd say, you got a question? I go, yeah, when are you going to be done? He said, I don't want to work on it. I don't know how long it took, but it was like nine months.

[5 : 37] We finally had a house. And then they were in a hurry. They wanted it closed before the end of the year. So on the 31st of December, we closed that house and moved in.

They were married, they moved us in. Well, you know, sometimes it's hard to wait. It's just hard to wait.

And you know, we're in that in-between time. We're in that time when we're waiting for Christ to return. If you go read the letters to the Thessalonians, you know, they thought that Christ had already come and they were panicked because they got left behind.

And Paul's saying, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, don't worry. He hasn't come yet. But they all expected, the first century church fully expected that Christ was going to come in their lifetimes.

I mean, you go to Jerusalem and the first church, and they found, what did they do? They sold everything. Why? We aren't going to need this stuff. He's coming back. And then they had to wait.

[6 : 43] And they waited. And they waited. And then you know what? The other churches had to help them out because they had nothing. And there was a famine. And they were just sort of in trouble. And we wait.

And we wait. And we wait. In fact, as I was reading this, you know, James says, he's at the gate.

He's coming back soon. I realized that what James was talking about, you know, he doesn't give us a lot of detail on that, right? He doesn't say, you can tell he's going to come back because of this.

Because of that. You know what he did? He assumed people knew that. All the teachings. Especially the teachings of Christ himself. In fact, all through this book that people are preaching, I'm going, that's what Jesus said.

That's what Jesus said. That's what Jesus said. And if you listen to my sermons, I always go back and I find there's other passages in the letters of the apostles that go, that fit right in.

[7 : 43] Why? James was his half-brother. It was Jesus' half-brother. He knew what Jesus said. And he didn't have to say, oh, remember? He said this, this, and this, and quote, and he just said, he's coming back.

And that automatically brought back all that stuff that had been taught about Christ's return. It's recorded in Matthew 24 and 25. They knew that stuff. We forget because we read it here and we read it there.

And we also live in a time when we're just sort of eat up with popular theology on the return of Christ. How many of you have read the Left Behind series?

Well, I'm going to tell you right now, most of that is bunk. It's nice literature, but it isn't true. It isn't going to happen that way. There's a lot of things like that. How many of you have heard people say, oh, he's coming back.

He'll be here on October 25, 2027. You better get ready. I mean, you hear that stuff. What did Jesus say? I'm coming like a thief in the night.

[8 : 46] No one knows. If you knew, you'd prepare. And James is saying, he didn't have to say that. He wanted them to know. Here's what you need to do to get ready.

Jesus says, get ready. It's going to happen, but you don't know when. So James says, we need to heed Jesus' words and get ready, but not be anxious or impatient.

You know, I was impatient when the house was being built. That's all I wanted. That house finished now so we could get on with it. I want Jesus to come back. I have a feeling I'm going to meet him, but it's going to be in a different context.

You're all going to be here going, woo-hoo-hoo. No, we're actually going to go, ha-ha-ha-ha. He finally left. We got rid of him. You know, and I'm going to, yes, I'm there. All right? That's just the way it is.

Been waiting a long time and we're going to wait more. But you know, it's nearer now than it was yesterday. Amen. And the day is coming. The day is coming. All right, what I want you to do is as we talk about this, let's go back and look at what Jesus said.

[9 : 56] Someone open up, I'm going to give two sets of scriptures. I need somebody to pick these up real quick. Matthew 24, verses 42 to 44. And someone in the chapter 24 of Matthew 45 through 51.

All right? So, someone do 24, 42 for 44. Just raise your hand even if you haven't got it. All right, Glenn's got that now. I need someone to read the same chapter, 24, 45 through 51.

All right, Steve. All right, whenever you're ready. Go ahead. Now, 42 through 44. Okay. Therefore, be on alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.

But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have been on alert and would not have allowed the house to be broken into.

For this reason, you be ready too for the Son of Man is coming at an hour and do not think he will. All right? Read the other one.

[11 : 10] who then is the faithful and wise servant whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time.

It will be good for that servant if the master finds him doing so when he returns. Truly, I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, my master is staying away a long time.

Then he begins to beat his fellow servants to eat and drink with drunkards. The master of the servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and an hour when he is not aware of.

He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place for the hypocrites where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. See, what did Jesus say?

He said you need to be prepared and you need to be busy about doing what you're doing. You know, we're the household of God. That's what we are amongst other things.

[12 : 14] The household of God, the family of God, the church, the temple, whatever you want. But we're the household of God and every one of you has a gift, a talent that God has given you to do what?

Glorify him by serving. We're to be busy doing the work of the master. We're slaves. Dulos.

That's our job is to be busy about the master's work inside the church and outside the church. Now, we've been waiting for a long time.

What happens when you wait a long time? Become a slacker. You become a slacker. That's right. It's easy to become a slacker. You get slack in what you're doing.

You say, well, I can get it done tomorrow. He's going to show up tomorrow. I've got time. Then you go, well, he didn't show up yesterday. He didn't show up today. Maybe I've got a couple.

[13 : 16] Let's go have a party and have some fun. We'll just take some time off. You're never, never, never going to know. I'll get it done before he gets here. The problem is, Jesus said that there's a penalty to be paid if you do it that way.

What's the penalty? He says, you're going to be expected to, you're going to be judged. He's going to show up and he's going to catch it. We were talking about kids.

Have you ever caught your kids in the act? Yeah. And they've got all kinds of excuses and they scrambled. Try to make it look like they're behaving when they're not.

And you know they're not. They know they're not. But you know, they're doing their best to hide it. What are we, how are you going to scramble when the Lord shows up and you're out playing games? You know, I told Teresa, I don't get to play reindeer games very often.

It says, you don't need to. You know, the day you show up, you want to be busy doing his work. You don't want to be out doing something else that might not be so honoring of him.

[14 : 32] You want to be found faithful. Why? Well, because James said, not only is he coming back, he's not only our savior, but what is he? He's also our judge.

And he says, look, the judge is at the gate. You know what that's a reference to? Where did the Israelites hold court?

At the gate, the city gates. The elders met there. The judge would be there. That's where. And he's saying, look, you better be aware. He's not in the next town over.

He's right at the gates. He's, all he has to do is walk in. Then the trials start.

Now, I think sometimes we forget there's two judgments. Did you know that? And we're, I think we're going to read one of them. Yeah, I am.

[15 : 32] And we're going to have to answer to him. I think most of us don't think about that part. We think about he shows up and we're going to go, yes, I'm in my way to you know where and it's going to be good and everything hunky-dory.

But I think we need to also realize that we're going to answer for what we do.

James says it this way, don't grumble against each other so you may not be judged. See, the judge stands before the gate. You know what the problem with grumbling is? When you grumble, I grumble every once in a while.

Teresa will tell me to do something and I'll go. What I'm saying when I'm grumbling is I know what I want to do and I know I don't want to do what you want me to do right now or at least not the way you want I'm going to do my way.

Now, what's that? A very self-centered thing. When we grumble against our brothers and sisters in Christ, what we're doing is we're judging them and saying, I'm more important than you.

[16 : 47] I know better than you. I, you know, it's I, I, I. Is that the way we're supposed to live? No. We're supposed to live in submission to one another.

Submit yourself to one another. We're supposed to live in love for one another. We're supposed to serve one another and there's no I in service. So he says, don't judge because, what?

Brother, yeah, yeah. Yeah. This is a hard crowd. You're listening.

There you go. Thank you, Steve. So, you know, when we need to pay attention and think about this, someone else turn to Matthew 25.

Verses 31 through 40. Somebody read that for us. When the Son of Man comes in His glory and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His throne in heaven with glory.

[18 : 00] All the nations will be gathered before Him and He will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on His right and the goats on the left.

Then the King will say to those on His right, come, you who are blessed by my Father, take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me and I was sick and you looked after me.

I was in prison and you came to me. To what verse? Through 39. Very good. Then the righteous will answer Him, Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or thirsty and give you something to drink?

When did we see you a stranger and invite you in or even close and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison or go to visit you?

[19 : 03] The King will reply, I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me. You know, when you came to Christ in faith, guess what you became?

A sheep. That's right. You became a sheep. And you did that because you believed and put your faith in the finished and effective work of Christ as He lived a sinless life, died in our place to pay for our sins.

and was raised from the dead to new life that we might live in Him with the Father eternally on the new earth. And He will be our God and we will be His people and He will dwell with us.

That's the promise of eternity. That's the purpose of God. That was the purpose of God in Genesis 1 and 2. That He would dwell with us and we would be His people and He would be our God.

And for those who deny Him, He will send them to an eternal fire that's been prepared for them, the devil and his angels. And if you read the next section after we just read, you'll find out He says, to the goats, when they said, when did we?

[20 : 22] And He says, when you didn't do this and when you didn't do that and when you didn't do this and therefore, you're going to be sent to the place of weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Now, did you notice that Christ equates our kindness and compassion and care for our fellow believers and others with our kindness and compassion and care for Him?

I can tell you how much you love the Lord by the way you treat other people. You can tell how much I love the Lord by the way I treat you.

Did you ever think of that? Your behavior toward others screams your relationship with the Lord. Good, bad, or indifferent.

Now, if you're busy doing the work of the Lord, I mean, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for those that are in need, and you're doing that well, that's the kind of thing that He said you need to be doing when He comes suddenly as a good servant.

[21 : 36] But if you aren't doing those things, you're saying to the world, and now, this is a problem, I don't think you stop being a sheep, but this sheep's got some answers to give when He shows up.

and uh, uh, uh, isn't going to work. John says this, and he sort of adds to the same type of thing, just a different perspective.

He says in 1 John 2, 28 and 29, Now little children, remain in Him. Remain in Him. We get in Him, and then we go wandering off like a lost sheep sometimes.

But remain in Him so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shirk back away from Him and shame when He comes back.

And if you know that, if you know that He is righteous, you also know that everyone who practices righteousness has been fathered by Him. What does righteousness mean?

[22 : 40] He means right standing with Him. Are you standing in a right relationship with Him? Are you, as a servant of the Master, serving in accordance with what the Master has told you to do?

Or, are you standing in your own righteousness doing what you want to do for your own purposes? You see the distinction? If you know He's righteous, then you should be standing in a right relationship with Him and doing what He's called you to do.

If you don't, you've got some questions to answer. Now I, I'm just in this confession time number two, sometimes wonder, ponder even, whether I will survive the separation of the sheep from the goats.

Have you ever thought that? Am I a sheep or am I really a goat? Because there's a lot of people, I think, who think they're sheep, but they've never really made that commitment that brings life and hope and assurance of salvation.

They're still goats. Am I really in Christ? Have I a saving faith?

[24 : 06] One that's more than intellectual acceptance? One that puts Him first? Trusting Him in everything? That's a sobering thought.

They often come at 5.30 in the morning when I'm sitting in my study with my cat. And it always leads me to prayer that I might in deed and thought, intention and purpose, always submit to His Lordship and be found a faithful servant in Him.

Just sort of an aside, Paul says, you know, he talked about, you say, well, you're a preacher, you shouldn't have a problem. Paul says, that I might preach in vain and miss.

You understand? Just because you preach does not mean you're same. It may be you're just more deceived than the others. I think the greatest job I've ever experienced, I think, will be when and maybe if I'm included in the sheep.

when the announcement's made. The following sheep, please report to the right. Ta-da! Ta-da! Ta-da! Ta-da!

[25 : 29] And he goes down through all the ages of all the sheep. And I'm just going, let's get where he's, you know, the scroll just keeps going. And my name and my name is God.

I'm going, he's only got like five more names to go. Ta-da! Ta-da! Ta-da! Ta-da! John Howard. I go, yeah! I made it! I made it! I made it! I made it! I made it!

I made it! I just made it in the gate. But, then they'll show you to your shack.

Well, now I haven't got there yet, but I'm hoping to get there. I'm in. I'm on the new earth. And he says, oh, by the way, sheep, when I'm finished with the goats, which won't take long, we got something to discuss.

And this is going to be individually. Oh, my goodness. And so he's going to go, I told you, you're going to answer for every idle word. I told you, you needed to be about my business.

[26 : 39] I told you, you needed to be today. And I'm going to go, yes, Lord. Every failure, every sin, will be exposed and made known.

And I personally know I have a lot to answer for. My answer is going to be the exactly same thing every time. What's the answer? By your grace, Lord, you died for me that I might be free of my sin.

and I'm going to fall down in shame before him and confess. I am not worthy of your forgiveness and cry out for his grace and his mercy.

And then I came across this verse this morning in my quiet time and I'm going, I got to put this in here somewhere. It's Hebrews 4, 16. It says, therefore, let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace whenever we need help.

I'm going to need it then. Fall down before the throne and say, Lord, I need your grace and mercy. Please, forgive me. And he's going to be gracious and forgiving.

[27 : 47] Now the shack comes because my reward will be little. But I found something and this thought came to my mind. It's better to be a beggar in paradise than a rich man in hell.

Do you remember the story of Lazarus and the rich man in Lazarus? Which of them was blessed? You know, Lazarus was comforted in heaven.

He didn't have much in life, but he is going to live contented forever. And the rich man who had everything in life and all the righteousness that man can give himself in hell.

I'll take that little shack. and live contentedly knowing that he accepted me and brought me to live with him.

Now there's one more thing James says that when we have patience, we wait and we wait and we wait and we stay faithful. We also have to have perseverance.

[28 : 56] perseverance. See, I think the patience is the waiting part, the perseverance is the continue to serve part. We don't give up. We remain steadfast, whether things are good or bad.

If we're in suffering or in plenty, we keep on going no matter what. We may not have much to share, but we share what we've got because God gives us everything we need.

James reminds us of that in James 5 verses 10 and 11. He says, as an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the Lord's name.

Think how we regard as blessed those who have endured. You've heard of Job's experience and you've seen the Lord's purpose and the Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

I don't know about you, we did a Job study in our Sunday school class. I don't want to be Job. That man went through you know what. But you know what he never did?

[30 : 01] He never cursed the name of God. Never. No matter how bad it got, how desperate he was, he said, Lord, just kill me and get it over with.

He never cursed God. He still had faith. And the only thing he asked was, Lord, give me a fair trial. Give me a chance to ask questions.

And he got it. Toward the end, God showed up and said, who are you? What have you done? Where were you? I love this.

We're doing Genesis and when Adam and Eve sinned, God doesn't come and accuse him, he just asks some questions. When Job got to the point where now he's got his chance to face God face to face, God doesn't say you, you, you.

He says, where? He asks questions. Where? What? How? And Job goes, oh my goodness, I have heard you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes have seen you, therefore I despise myself and I repent in dust and ashes.

[31 : 15] He falls down and confesses the purposes of God cannot be thwarted and they will come to pass and they're beyond our comprehension and we need to trust in the assurance that faith brings us.

We are blessed in our endurance. Job was blessed in endurance. He was restored with more than he had in the beginning. And he had a richer relationship with the Lord because he actually knew more about him than he did at the beginning.

You see, we're all going to encounter trials and difficulties. Every one of us. Now, some of them don't seem to be real big.

You know, sometimes I look at my line and go, if this is the worst it's going to get, I can say I've been truly blessed richly by the Lord. But some of us have had some really terrible things happen to us.

Whether it be physically sick or economically something or just trouble, family trouble. It's the difficulties. But if you stop and think about it through it all, if you stayed focused on the Lord, what happens when you get through the other side?

[32 : 24] You're blessed. It's all good. You may not understand it. You may not think it was good that you went through that, but you know that the Lord was with you and everything is going to be okay.

You persevere. You keep going. You keep putting one step in front of the other. It's when you lose hope and you lose assurance that what you know of your Lord is true, that you stop.

And when you stop, you fail. You lose. There is no hope. There's nothing. You've got to keep going. You've got to keep going.

No matter what the appearances may be. because you know that we sang it this morning. How has Christ conquered? How has he succeeded? He is what? Victorious.

I like that song because when you sing it somehow that word always gets the emphasis. Because that's what needs to be. He's victorious, which makes us what? More than conquerors.

[33 : 30] There's a church down there, not too far from the high school, it says it's must more than conquerors. Can you imagine?

Where do you go to church? I go to more than conquerors. If you believe that, then that's an important thing. You've got a strong faith, assurance that I've conquered because Christ has already won the battle.

And as John the Baptist says, we must what? Decrease because he always must increase. It's all about Christ, not us.

We've been blessed to be included in him. Let's pray. Lord, I just confess my need for you every day is beyond anything that I can comprehend.

I am at a loss, Lord, when I consider who you are and what you've done, what you offer. I just pray, Lord, that you'll find me faithful in the end.

[34 : 34] I pray that all of us will be found faithful when you come, whether we come to you because we've died in this life or because you have returned. But Lord, my prayer is that you would return soon.

This world is getting worse and worse. Our hope is only in you. Lead us and guide us as your people to be those that are patient yet expectant and persevere no matter what comes.

We thank you for your love and your grace and your salvation and your life and your glory be made known to all the world. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.