

Patience

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Date: 30 October 2024

[0 : 00] 12, James chapter 5, reading again at verse 7. Be patient, therefore, brother Shanda, 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.

You also be patient. Are you a patient person? I guess that's the obvious question. When we look at these words, are you a patient person?

Or do you find at times your patience tested and you often just want to hurry things along and get things done in your own time? I'm sure there's always situations where we find our patience put to the test.

For example, you might get a phone call that says, I'll just take two or three minutes of your time and 15 minutes later you're still on the phone just trying to get out of this conversation and your patience is waiting out.

Or patience when you're driving. Maybe you're stuck behind a car that's just not going above 30 miles an hour and you're just in a rush and you're like, come on, get a move on.

[1 : 11] Your patience is running out. There's so many situations where our patience can be tested and we see ourselves in a new light sometimes. But what about when it comes to waiting patiently upon the Lord?

Can you sing Psalm 40 and have these words as your words that you're waiting patiently on the Lord? You're waiting for him in prayer.

You're waiting on him for something that's going on in your life or just your desires for people around you or the church and you're able just to wait patiently on the Lord. It's a hard thing to do at times because we all want things done in our own time.

But God's work is in his time and his purposes work out in his ways. His plans are not hurried in the same way that maybe we want things hurried along.

There was a famous preacher in America called Philip Brooks and he was noted for patience and just his calm demeanor so often. He was a very gentle man in so many ways and yet at times he too suffered that frustration of wanting things done quickly.

[2 : 29] And there was one day when a friend was watching him and he had started pacing back and forth on the floor and his friend was wondering what was going on. And so he asked him, what troubles you, Mr. Brooks?

And Philip Brooks replied by saying, the trouble is that I'm in a hurry but God isn't. He was wanting things done in his time.

And so our patience is often tested even when it comes to the things of the Lord. We want things done. We want things to happen. We want people to be saved that we've been praying for.

We want to see the church grow. We want to see things in our community changing. But much of it has this idea of just patiently waiting on God and waiting for him to work out his will and his purposes.

And as James is writing here to the people, he's writing to them in a world and in a time when their patience was being tested. You see the heading in the ESV Bible is patience and suffering.

[3 : 35] They were suffering for their faith. They were seeing so many things going on around them in their community and their patience, their faith was being tested. But James is writing to them to be patiently waiting on God.

And they were being tested in so many different ways. As you read through the book of James, you see there was a lot of people around them who were rich and prosperous and seeming to get on well in life.

And this was testing the patience of God's people. And yet as James writes, he writes in this wisdom, in his wise ways, and he's warning people who are living their lives in that way, boasting about tomorrow.

You see that at the end of chapter four, where we read that they're going to do this, that they're going to do that. And the next thing, they've got all their plans laid out instead of waiting patiently on the Lord.

You see at the beginning of chapter five, that warning to the rich, where the Lord is saying to them, look at what you have. You've gathered up this wealth, but it's all going to waste away.

[4 : 48] You're putting your trust in the wrong things because the day of the Lord is coming. And that's going to be of no help to you. And so after saying these things to the people around them who are not trusting in God, he turns back to those who are.

When you see him, they're calling them brothers. In verse seven, he's saying, be patient, therefore, brothers. He's saying, as you look around you, as you are Christians, as you are trusting in the Lord, and you're becoming impatient, and you're wondering why all these things are happening, he's saying to them, brothers, be patient.

Be patient until the coming of the Lord. Don't lose sight of the Lord himself. And so this patience is highlighted for us here by James in verse seven to 12.

And I want us to see this patience in three different ways. He says, first of all, why patience is required, why it's such a necessary thing.

Then we see him showing the examples of patience. He speaks about the prophets and Job. So he gives us examples of patience.

[6 : 08] And then thirdly, we'll see just how this shows itself in our lives, how we should apply this patience in our lives. So the first thing is the call to patience.

Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. As I said, this is in light of the warnings that he's given to those who are boasting in their plans and their purposes, those who are boasting in their riches and what they have materially.

In that, he turns back to God's people and focus on how they should live and why. And that phrase, brothers, he shows there who he is speaking to.

He's reminding them that they belong, that they have a belonging and that their belonging is in Christ. That they are brothers and sisters in Christ.

That they are the ones who are looking to the Lord and are waiting until the coming of the Lord. And what kind of people are they? Well, they're just like us.

[7 : 20] As we put our trust in the Lord, they are people who could say, just like Psalm 73, that confidence in God, the God who is patient towards them, they could say, whom have I in the heaven but you?

Nobody else but you. And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Isn't it a blessing and a privilege to be able to sing these words ourselves and to sing them in a way where we know that is our portion too.

Who do we have in the heaven but you, oh Lord? And in the earth there's no one I desire besides you. We have God with us. God who is patient with us and God who gives us patience too.

For it is to him we are to look to and to put our trust in. In the beginning of this book we see James in chapter 1.

[8 : 29] He's already made the point of calling the people to be patient under trial. In chapter 1 verse 12 he says this blessed is the man who perseveres under trial because when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

To be patient under trial and that there is this reward. He will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

So again he's reminding them there of the Lord's great patience towards them and for them to wait patiently and for us to wait patiently on him in that knowledge of receiving the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

So he's reminding them again of this great need. A need that's seen throughout scripture and throughout history. when you think of God's people throughout the scriptures as we'll see in a few moments examples of it we think of just that need for patience among God's people down through every generation these words have spoken be patient therefore brothers until the coming of the Lord.

So often you see people in scripture their patience has gone if it was ever there when they're saying where is this God of yours? You know if he was going to come he'd have come by now.

[10:01] Their patience either was never there or they've lost it. The coming of the Lord means absolutely nothing and we see that today there's no interest in God there's no thought that God is coming again that has gone but we are told to be different to wait patiently on the Lord.

John Piper in his book *The Roots of Endurance* in that book he highlights the endurance of Christians in the past such as John Newton Charles Simeon William Wilberforce he speaks about them and their patience and their waiting on the Lord their endurance and he says this the aim of all our endurance is that Christ be seen and savoured in the world as our glorious God.

Isn't that a great way of thinking of our patience? The aim of our endurance our patience is that Christ may be seen and savoured in the world as our glorious God.

But there is something different in the Lord's people. that's why James is here showing them this great need of patience because it is such a powerful witness it is such a powerful example and he's talking here about this patience this call to patience in a twofold way it's both a patience in the midst of suffering and adversity but it's also patience knowing that the Lord is going to deal with all things again Psalm 73 speaks about that and the Psalms that we've sung remind us of the greatness of God that he will take all things in charge that he's in control of all things that the Lord is going to return and that the blessing of God's people will be finally fulfilled you see there how he says in verse 7 see how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth being patient about it until he receives the early and the late rains the temptation would be after the early rains to think that's it it's done we can take our harvest up now but it needs patience to wait for the late rains to come and again that's the way we are to live to waiting patiently on the harvest waiting patiently on the Lord of the harvest remembering the Lord will come until the coming of the Lord and so we need patience that's what he was teaching here that's what we see for ourselves today we need patience we need patience in our lives whether it's individually or collectively in our community in our world everything's so rushed everything needs to be done instantly everything's demands demands demands but as we look to God he teaches us to be more patient to stand firm here as he says to establish these things in your heart he's talking there about standing firm on the truth standing firm on the truth of God to be patient in verse 8 there to establish your hearts for the coming of the Lord is at hand to stand firm on the truth of

[13:51] God so we have this word to us our need for patience patience the second thing we see here is how he gives examples of patience and he looks examples that are found in scripture of what endurance means for the Lord's people and in verse 10 he says there 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 how you have seen the purpose of the Lord how the Lord is compassionate and merciful wonderful examples there for us of patience what you notice in the New Testament is the Old Testament is never forgotten constantly you see looking back to the Old Testament to the prophets to the fathers

Abraham Isaac and Jacob you see looking back always the book of Hebrews is full of looking back to the Old Testament Jesus himself taught so much looking back to the Old Testament and we should never forget the Old Testament and here's another reminder to us of the great examples the great teaching that we have in the Old Testament as an example of suffering and patience consider the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord he doesn't mention any other specific prophets by name there but you can look back to them and you can see for yourself their patience and suffering you can take for example Jeremiah one of the prophets you look at him and you see just how patient he was in the midst of suffering he was rejected by his own people he suffered at the hands of foreign kings but he stood for the Lord and he knew the coming of the

Lord was in his own mind and his own heart not knowing exactly when it would be but that this was going to come you look at Isaiah and the way that he was able to have this vision of God the coming of Christ the suffering of Christ as you see it in chapter 53 and he stood up against all those who were outspoken against him who would not listen you think of Habakkuk as we've looked at Habakkuk recently you think of the situation the circumstances that he was writing into it would have been so easy to back off and back down and yet consider the example of suffering and patience and prayer in the midst of it all just waiting on the Lord to work they stood firm in the Lord the great chapter of Hebrews chapter 11 is a full list of those in the Old Testament were believers in the Lord and those who suffered in their faith and yet had patience looking to the Lord so many are named but then later on in Hebrews 11 chapter verse 36 and 37 they're not named but it says this of them others suffered mocking and flogging and even chains and

imprisonment they were stoned they were sawn in two they were killed with a sword they went about in skins of sheep and goats destitute afflicted mistreated but they were all commended for their faith it says faith waiting patiently on the Lord patience in the midst of suffering and what is so great about this is it doesn't show us extraordinary people it doesn't show us people who we just look up to and say we can never be like that they were ordinary people but they were ordinary people doing extraordinary things through an extraordinary God and it was God who had given them faith and vision and this looking to God and trusting in him that's where their patience came from they were trusting in the coming of the Lord now can we be spoken of in the same breath as the prophets do you think you can be put in that list of the prophets and commended for patience well Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount includes many people even ourselves in that ceremony says in verse 11 and 12 of Matthew 5 blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in heaven for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you so they shall list there of God's people to this very day blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you for they persecuted the prophets who were before you in the same way and so there is that reminder to us to be patient in these things and the example is there for us we have the example of Job as well you have heard of the steadfastness of Job and you have seen the purpose of the

[19:30] Lord how the Lord is compassionate and merciful and yet when you look at the outset of Job and the beginning of that book you think well how could he possibly have that patience in the midst of all his suffering and yet he's able to say the Lord gives the Lord takes away blessed be the name of the Lord because he knows his God he knows who God is and he knows as it goes on to say there Job you have seen the purpose of the Lord how the Lord is compassionate and merciful in the midst of such great suffering God is still compassionate and merciful and therefore Job was patient the prophets were patient they are examples to us of how we are to be patient too reminding ourselves of chapter 1 verse 12 they will receive the crown of life as we look to the Lord's return the reward for patience and faith is there for us and so thirdly and finally we just want to think of the outworking of patience what is it to look like for the people here that

James is writing to and for ourselves as well well what we see here is James speak about something he speaks about throughout this book of where patience is so often seen and it works out for us in two ways it works out in how we deal with each other how we deal among ourselves as the Lord's people and also how we deal with those around us patience is being tested often in our lives we see it so often but we see it among the Lord's people we can see it among ourselves at times when we can be impatient when we can start to grumble it's natural because we're sinners and yet what do we do when we start to find ourselves in that well we're going back to that word patience but it also says in verse 9 do not grumble against one another brothers so that you may not be judged behold the judge is standing at the door and what

James is saying here he says it too in verse 12 but above all brothers do not swear either by heaven or by earth he's talking there about what we say our speech and it's so often something that James highlights in this book seen as a book of the New Testament Proverbs the wisdom book in the New Testament and he's talking here about our relationship among each other our relationship with those around us and how so often boils down to how we speak to each other and James he has a whole section on this in chapter 3 verse 1 to verse 12 I'm sure you've read it I'm sure we've all tried to apply it to our lives taming the tongue where he speaks about the power of the tongue of how our words from such a small thing the tongue of the damage that the tongue can cause and so it goes on it speaks much of the power of the tongue and so as he speaks here of patience it so much boils down to just how we speak with one another do we grumble against one another do we speak ill against each other or against those around us what are we saying about people what are we saying to people how are we dealing with them the tongue can do a lot of damage but in our patience in our patience looking to

God the tongue can be used for great things as well it has a healing power and it's far better to use it for that so as we look at number verse 9 do not grumble against one another be patient with each other be kind to each other encourage one another so we are to be patient in our fellowship we are also to be patient with those around us you think of another example of that from the Old Testament Daniel you take Daniel as an example of patience and dealing with those around him who did not trust God who did not believe God Daniel chapter 6 tells us the story of Daniel being thrown into the

lion's den because he wouldn't compromise his faith he stood firm and God shielded him God was patient towards him and he was patient towards God he didn't turn against God but he trusted God and what was the outcome King Darius declared that the nation was to worship Daniel's God God his patience his long suffering was seen by those around him the wonder of God protecting him was seen by those around him and King Darius declared that the nation should worship Daniel's God you see there the power of our Christian witness and what kind of Christian witness do we have what do we say to those around us how do we say it there's so much we would maybe long to say there's so much so many arguments we might want to enter into but let us be careful how we speak let us be careful what we say so that we can learn the lessons that we see throughout scripture by showing love and compassion and still being steadfast in the word of [26 : 20] God that we might heap burning coals on their head as it says elsewhere and they might see something in us of the wonder of God the patience of God towards us that we have come to know a saviour who has been patient with us a people who are lost and helpless like we sung in psalm 103 the wonder of God's patience towards us that he has shown us steadfast love that he has shown us compassion and forgiveness and all of these things let us learn above all from the example of Christ the one who showed patience the one who showed mercy and grace and long suffering the one who endured the cross for our sakes that is above all what James is teaching the people here to keep faith in the Lord Jesus Christ be patient therefore brothers until the coming of the

Lord that their focus is to be on the Lord and that they are to be patient with him and with those around them so let us endeavor to learn patience the patience that depends on God alone and is secure in Christ as our Lord and as we wait his return let us do so seeing the need for patience the need is there before us it's such a powerful thing to be patient in the midst of everything that comes our way I'm sure we can all as we've heard of examples in the Old Testament as we see examples in the New Testament as we think of the examples that John Piper highlighted William Wilberforce John Newton and others we can all look at examples we see around us too of people who are patient people whose faith and endurance in the midst of great trials and suffering has been such a powerful witness that we would have that patience too and pray for that patience ourselves and that we would put that patience into practice among ourselves and among all of God's people together and in the world and in the world in which we live that our patience would be seen and make people wonder how can they be so patient what is it that gives them that patience in the midst of everything that's going on it is the

Lord it's the Lord's wonderful patience and grace and mercy towards us that gives us patience to endure to go on and to be strong and to stand firm in the Lord and to endure waiting on the Lord's return let us pray our father in heaven we thank you that in so many things that we lack that we can pray to you as the one who is able to provide you know the book of James we read of a lack of wisdom and when we do we can ask God who gives so graciously and when we think of patience Lord we acknowledge how much we lack it at times and how much we need it more and more and we thank you that as we come in prayer to you that you are able to give it to us that we would learn from your word of the need of it that we would see the great examples given to us and that we would be reminded of the great reward that there is for those who wait on the Lord who will receive the crown of life and so help us to practice patience among ourselves and with those around us too that you would help us to be witnesses and examples through these things to others that they might see the beauty of Christ one who endured for us so much hear our prayers continue with us Lord go before us pardon all our sin as we ask it in Jesus name Amen