

James the Just: Waiting on the Lord

There is well known saying that goes like this: "good things come to those who wait".

You may agree or disagree with that statement. But regardless, there will be things in your life that are out of your control. There will be times when all you can do is wait. Sometimes, you will be waiting on people, but other times you will be waiting on God.

During these times, you may be challenged in your faith, challenged in your temperament (be calm or get angry), challenged in your commitment or dedication. You most likely, will not WANT to wait.....especially if you are going through troubles.

Whether you are a Christian or not, you will have troubles in this life. Jesus never promised that following Him would lead to a trouble free life. In fact, it was the opposite. He said you WILL have trouble or tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world!

See what sets a Christian apart from everyone else is their reliance on Jesus. If you are having trouble, why wouldn't you want help from someone who has already conquered that problem?

Jesus has overcome the world, why do people try to overcome it on their own? This is why.....they either don't trust in Jesus or they don't want to wait on Him!

Today's sermon from the book of James is "Waiting on the Lord". James addresses this very issue of believers being under some kind of oppression from man, even to the point of suffering.

James 5:7-11 (HCSB)

7 Therefore, brothers, be patient until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth and is patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. 8

You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, because the Lord's coming is near.

9 Brothers, do not complain about one another, so that you will not be judged. Look, the judge stands at the door!

10 Brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the Lord's name as an example of suffering and patience. 11 See, we count as blessed those who have endured. You have heard of Job's endurance and have seen the outcome from the Lord. The Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

The very first question that most people have when it comes to God's people suffering is: "Why? I can accept that Jesus warned us of the suffering, but why do we even have to go through it?"

Paul tells us in Romans 8 that they sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us.

What you may be going through in your life right now is not even worth comparing to the glory that will be revealed to you if you will just trust Jesus, and follow Him.

It may not be comfortable, in fact it won't be....but it doesn't mean it won't be worth it.

James says "be patient until the Lord's coming".

What does it mean to be patient? The Greek word for patience is makrothymeo (mak-ra-thu-mayo) meaning:

- not to lose heart
- to persevere patiently and bravely in enduring misfortunes and troubles
- to be longsuffering, slow to anger, slow to punish

How long are we to do this? Until the Lord's coming....until Jesus returns! Basically until the end of your life on this earth.

Patience is needed for you to make it to the end. Don't lose heart, don't be discouraged, don't give up! But instead, be of good cheer, because Jesus has overcome the world!

He will avenge His people, if not today or tomorrow, then certainly at His earthly return! Do you know that He is coming back? For His bride....the church. He is not coming back for the people who deny and reject Him.....He already came for them and died for them on the cross! At His return, He will be here for His body, those who have chosen to follow Him.

Lord, let that be every person sitting here today or listening online

I know Christians have been proclaiming this for a couple thousand years, but:

2 Peter 3:8-9 (HCSB)

8 Dear friends, don't let this one thing escape you: With the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. 9 The Lord does not delay His promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.

Maybe you look at your situation and think it will never be worth it, Jesus can't come soon enough....you must not lose heart, because He is faithful, and He is with you.....

James 5:7 (HCSB)

7 Therefore, brothers, be patient until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth and is patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains.

Have you ever considered how much patience it must take to be a farmer? God bless you farmers! They have no control over the rain or the temperature or the mechanical failures that they face. They wait a long time for results. They work hard even while waiting. And they are totally relying on the crops growing and producing well.

Farmers must sometimes wonder if they are ever going to see the fruit of their labor, but if they wait, they will receive their reward at harvest time!

Farming takes patience and faith. Exactly what is required of you to overcome troubles in this life....

You have probably heard of John Wesley. He along with his brother Charles and friend George Whitefield are known for founding the Methodist Church. His writings also played a leading role in the development of the Holiness and the Pentecostal movements. Thank you John!

There is a story that his father once said to his mother "I marvel at your patience! You have told that child the same thing twenty times!" John's mother looked fondly at him and said "Had I spoken the matter only nineteen times, I would have lost all my labor"

How many times do people give up right before the breakthrough? How many times do we lose heart and give up and one more time would have done it?

James 5:8 (HCSB)

8 You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, because the Lord's coming is near.

Along with patience, you must strengthen your heart! Sometimes we expect God to do things for us that He tells us to do. It's YOU who strengthens your heart!

This means to make stable, make firm, one's mind. You decide, "I am going to set my mind on Jesus, and nothing is going to get in my way!" This is something YOU have to do! In the midst of trouble, it's YOU who chooses whether to fix your mind on Him or on the problem.

We don't have time to waste, we can't afford to spend our time focused on our problems. Jesus is the answer, it's His presence we must seek and focus on!

"Wait for the coming of your Lord, but let it be with your lamps trimmed and your lights burning, as good servants attending to the duties of the house, until the master of the house returns to give you the reward. ...If I am a worker, I must look to God for the result, but then I must also use all the means. In fact, the Christian should work as if all depended upon him, and pray as if it all depended upon God." - Charles Spurgeon

Have patience and strengthen your heart! Jesus is coming, and you have work to do...the work of the kingdom, reaching lost souls!

James 5:9 (HCSB)

9 Brothers, do not complain about one another, so that you will not be judged. Look, the judge stands at the door!

The Greek word for complain is *stenazo* (ste-na-zo) meaning to sigh or groan. It speaks more of an inner distress than it does an open complaint. Other translations say grudge or grumble. This is the opposite of patience!

In your suffering, don't groan and grumble! You know who that hurts? YOU!

2 John 1:8 (HCSB)

8 Watch yourselves so you don't lose what we have worked for, but that you may receive a full reward.

When you groan and grumble, you can lose everything you have worked for. Your ability to witness can be damaged. And now you will too be judged for your own actions as a complainer.

I know it's hard, I know you may feel like the person "deserves it" but as I've said before, if you avenge yourself, you have taken the place of God in your life and your revenge will never be as good as God's.

When you feel the need to groan and grumble remember:

- How patient God has been and is with you
- How often God shows you grace when you don't deserve it
- Ask God to help you see from the eternal perspective
- Ask Him to help you have faith and to focus on Him
- Ask Him to show you if you are at fault and what you can work on.....

Jesus didn't say groan, grumble, and complain. He said love God and love people. He said to be of good cheer because He has overcome. He said follow Him. He said be holy because He is holy!

When we give in to the temptation to groan and grumble, we sin, therefore we hurt ourselves, and we miss out on the full reward that Jesus has for us.

James 5:10 (HCSB)

10 Brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the Lord's name as an example of suffering and patience.

Look how Luke writes about them in the book of Hebrews:

Hebrews 11:32-38 (HCSB)

32 And what more can I say? Time is too short for me to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets, 33 who by faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the raging of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, gained strength after being weak, became mighty in battle, and put foreign armies to flight. 35 Women received their dead—they were raised to life again. Some men were tortured, not accepting release, so that they might gain a better resurrection, 36 and others experienced mockings and scourgings, as well as bonds and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawed in two, they died by the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, destitute, afflicted, and mistreated. 38 The world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and on mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground.

These people suffered, and we are to take note of how they handled it....not with complaining, but with faith, with patience, with perseverance.....they relied on Jesus!

James 5:11 (HCSB)

11 See, we count as blessed those who have endured. You have heard of Job's endurance and have seen the outcome from the Lord. The Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

If you have never read the book of Job, I'd encourage you to read it this week. Job loved God. God had faith. Job had patience....

Examples of Job's patience:

- Lost his possessions
- Lost his children
- Lost his health
- Harassed by his wife
- Mocked by his friends

But Job never blamed God, never cursed God. Yes he questioned. Yes he struggled. Yes he even wished he could die.

Everything was taken away from Job, except the one thing that he could not live without....God. His faith in God was the only thing Job needed to persevere through the troubles he faced.

Job persevered, and so can you and I. Job trusted God, so can you and I.

The Lord delivered and restored Job.....and He can do that in you and I.

Just as Job saw, the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.....

You will face troubles in this life....but be of good cheer, Jesus has overcome. Have patience, wait on the Lord.

Psalm 27:14 (HCSB)

14 Wait for the Lord;
be strong and courageous.
Wait for the Lord.

Be thankful for who God is and what He'd done.
Walk in obedience in what God has already called you to do
Be honest in your struggle
Seek God for strength
Realize that the waiting is part of God's ultimate YES!

Isaiah 40:31 (HCSB)

31 but those who trust in the Lord
will renew their strength;
they will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary;
they will walk and not faint.

We are allowed to go through things not because God enjoys seeing His people suffer, but because He desires for us to grow in faith and character. He knows that even through pain and suffering, something greater can be produced.

Maybe difficult circumstances are the only way to get you where you need to be....can you trust Jesus. Can you believe that He wants only the best for you.

He died on the cross so that you could be forgiven and washed clean. He rose from the dead so that you could have new life. Not an easy one, but a new one.

One of patience and perseverance.
One of purpose.
One of victory
One of eternity