

Greetings. Below are some thoughts, notes, and Scripture for the Wednesday pm class on James. Praying that God's Word and faithful promises sustain us during this time.

VIDEO - Session 11: James 5:7–12 (8 minutes)

5:7-12 - Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. ⁸ You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. ⁹ Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

¹⁰ Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹ As you know, we count as 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.

¹² Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple "Yes" or "No." Otherwise you will be condemned.

Francis Chan begins this lesson with the following questions:

What do you hate to wait for?

What waiting experiences have tested your patience?

Are there some things you feel have been worth waiting for?

Most of us do not like to wait! We have express lanes on highways and grocery stores, 1-2-day delivery from Amazon, instant pudding, milk, grits, coffee>no thanks, etc., high-speed internet (remember the dial-up modem days?), and so on.

Has our fast-paced life style and hyper-speed society shorten our patience?

I don't want to be like the guy who said, "I have all the patience in the world, because I've never used any"!

Thought: have the events of the past several weeks increased our anxiety, OR refocused our faith and dependency on God?

Psalm 46:10 He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."

James is talking a lot about patience (using the word four times in four verses). According to verse 7, what did people need to be patient about?

Remember that this was the first generation of Christians. When Jesus ascended to heaven, some surely expected Him to return in a week or a month. When the delay stretched on for years, some were losing hope—especially when life was getting more difficult for Christ-followers.

What analogy does James use in verse 7?

Have you ever planted a garden? How long does it seem to take from when you first plant the seeds to when you get to bring in the first ripe vegetable and cook it up?

Vs 10-11 Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹ As you know, we count as 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.

Review James 1:2-4 Trials & Suffering test our faith and produces perseverance that helps us to be mature

patience to wait until nature does her work; and the Christian needs patience to wait until Christ comes. Peek at the Greek: the word James uses for patience is makrothumia, which literally means something like “long-tempered.” We know what it’s like to be short-tempered, when any little thing can set you off. Patience is the opposite.

During my working days, I traveled many rural backroads. I was always amazed that, out in the middle of nowhere, among the vast agricultural fields, there would be a country church. I always assumed those buildings stood as symbol of the local farmers faith and dependency of God to bless the earth with rain.

Vs. 8 - *You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near.*

Some in the early Church misunderstood the time period of the Lord’s return.

Acts 1:10-12 - They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.” ¹² Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk from the city.

Teachings regarding the 2nd Coming:

1 - No man knows the day or the hour when Christ will return. That knowledge is known only to God Himself (Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32). From this fact one thing is clear – human speculation about the time of the Second Coming is useless.

2 – What we do know is that the 2nd Coming will be as sudden as the lightning and as unexpected as a thief in the night (Matthew 24:27; Matthew 24:37; Matthew 24:39; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10). We cannot wait to get ready when it comes; we must be ready for its coming.

3 – We must be watchful (1 Peter 4:7, Matt 24:36-51)

4 - Long delay must not produce despair or forgetfulness (2 Pet 3:3-4).

God does not see time as we do. ⁸*But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance (2 Pet 3:8-9)*

5 – We must use the time given to prepare for the return of King Jesus

Be sober (1 Pet 4:7)

Strengthen our hearts to be blameless in holiness (1 Thess 3:13)

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify us through and through. May our whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thess 5:23)

Wake from slumber, put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light (Rom 13:11-14)

Continue in abide in Christ Jesus (1 Jh 2:28)

Vs 9 *Don’t grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door*

When our patience is tested, or the wait is long, how do we react?

James says, don’t grumble against each other, and therefore incur God’s judgement.

The word for “grumble” in verse 9 (stenazo) is used elsewhere for a similar situation. Paul talks about all creation “groaning” with us in anticipation of God’s final redemption and about our own “groaning” as we look forward to our heavenly home (Romans 8:22-3; 2 Corinthians 5:2,4). It’s the same word that’s translated “grumbling” in James. It’s a deep longing for a better future, but when we turn it “against one another,” it can become toxic.

The farmer has to wait for his crops until the early and the late rains have come. The early and the late rains are often spoken of in Scripture, for they were all-important to the farmer of Palestine (Deuteronomy 11:14; Jeremiah 5:24; Joel 2:23). The early rain was the rain of late October and early November without which the seed would not germinate. The late rain was the rain of April and May without which the grain would not mature. The farmer needs

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Review James 1:2-4 Trials & Suffering test our faith and produces perseverance, that helps us to be mature, complete, and not lacking anything.

What God wants to do is not just to make you happy—**He wants to make you holy**. He wants you to be a reflection of Him. And it's the trials, the sufferings, that make us more like Christ. He says he wants us mature, complete, not lacking in anything. Have you ever thought about that as the goal of your life?

Learn more about suffering in the following Bible verses. 2 Corinthians 4:7–10; Romans 5:3–5; 1 Peter 4:1–2; 1 Peter 4:12–13

When we suffer and our patience is worn out, James reminds us to remember what God finally brought about (Job 42:12-13, 16) *The LORD blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the former part. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys. ¹³ And he also had seven sons and three daughters. ¹⁶ After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation.*

Heb 11 – 12:1 the Patriarchs, Judges, and Prophets who lived by faith and persevered, some under unimaginable suffering - *There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. ³⁶ Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated (Heb 11:35-37)*

are a “cloud of witnesses” for us.

And that God is FULL of COMPASSION and MERCY!

¹² *Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple “Yes” or “No.” Otherwise you will be condemned*

Have you ever been in conversation with someone and they preface a statement with, “Honestly”, or “I’ll be honest with you”? I’m usually thinking, “well, why wouldn’t you be honest, or if you are now being honest, where you lying before? Just a thought!

Learn more about yes, no and swearing in the following Bible verses. Deuteronomy 23:21-22; Mathew 5:33-37; Colossians 4:6

“Swearing,” as James means it, isn’t about using bad words, but good words. People would use elaborate vows to prove the truth of their words. While good Jews were careful not to use the holy Name of God, they might swear by heaven or angels or the Temple.

It seems that this swearing made a mockery of legitimate vow-keeping. What did Deuteronomy teach about making vows?

Sources: Francis Chan, Righnowmedia.org
StudyLight.org/commentaries/dsb/james-5

Compare James 5:12 to Jesus' statement on swearing in Matthew 5. What similarities do you see?

What is Jesus' main argument against such elaborate swearing?

So, Jesus says, "Just be honest, Say yes or no and mean it." There may be an underlying theme here. People were using religious language to impress others. They were showing off with their heightened expressions of what spiritual forces were vouching for their truthfulness. As Jesus (and James) emphasized, what's most important is the reality of your heart, not the show you put on for the rest of the world.

This was a time of an extraordinary amount of oath-taking. The value of an oath depends to a large extent on the fact of it being very seldom necessary to take one. When oaths became commonplace, they ceased to be respected as they ought to be. Another thing, the practice of taking frequent oaths was nothing other than a proof of the prevalence of lying and cheating. In an honest society no oath is needed; it is only when men cannot be trusted to tell the truth that they have to be put upon oath.

The ancient writers on morals thoroughly agreed with Jesus. Philo says, "Frequent swearing is bound to beget perjury and impiety." The Jewish Rabbis said, "Accustom not thyself to vows, for sooner or later thou wilt swear false oaths."

The Essenes forbade all oaths. They held that if a man required an oath to make him tell the truth, he was already branded as untrustworthy. The great Greeks held that the best guarantee of any statement was not an oath but the character of the man who made it; and that the ideal was to make ourselves such that no one would ever think of demanding an oath from us because he would be certain that we would always speak the truth.

The New Testament view is that every word is spoken in the presence of God and ought, therefore, to be true; and it would agree that the Christian must be known to be a man of such honor that it will be quite unnecessary ever to put him on oath.

How does Paul describe the kind of conversation we should have?

Colossians 4:6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

In these times of COVID-19, I would like to echo the sentiment of Paul in I Thess 2:17

¹⁷ But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short while—in person, not in spirit—were all the more eager with great desire to see your face.

*The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."*

Jeff