

Remember He's Coming

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[0:00] The epistle of James chapter 5 will read the first 11 verses. Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you.

! Your wealth is rotted and moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire.

You have hoarded wealth in the last days. Look, the wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.

You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered innocent men who are not opposing you. Be patient then, brothers, until the Lord's coming.

See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is. For the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm because the Lord's coming is near.

[1:01] Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The judge is standing at the door. Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

As you know, we consider 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.

Jesus is coming again. Physically, visibly, gloriously returning to this earth.

Are you expecting him? I wonder how often you think about that. Once a day? Once a week? Once a month? Once a year? I'm convinced that our few thoughts about this momentous event is proof that the devil is busy keeping us not thinking about his return.

Does the return of Christ consciously affect the way that you live? When's the last time you've changed the way you acted or reacted? Because just of this one thing, Jesus is coming.

[2:18] Jesus is coming. And that made the difference. You see, this truth is to keep us from hoarding wealth in the last days. It's to keep us from living luxuriant, self-indulgent lives, neglectful of the needy and taking advantage of the poor.

The Lord's coming is such a great event that it's to leave its stamp over the whole of our life. Well, for that to be true, we've got to think of it, don't we? We've got to be consciously aware of it.

It's the conviction of the Bible that the Christian life is only lived aright when we're looking expectantly for Christ's coming. And we could multiply texts to that end.

There's something like 1,835 references in the Bible to the second coming of Jesus Christ. One of every 13 verses in your New Testament refers to this great event.

It's to be front and center reality for the Christian as he lives. We simply do not live well without this in view. And especially, we do not suffer well.

[3:32] We do not suffer mistreatment well without this in view. So James, having first given a word of warning to the rich oppressors, verses 1 to 6 in chapter 5, now follows that up with a comforting word to the poor oppressed, verses 7 through 11.

And he encourages the poor oppressed with three reminders of the Lord's coming, verses 7, 8, and 9 all have a reference to it.

That's the heart of his message. The Lord is coming, verse 7. It is near, verse 8. He's at the door, verse 9. And then there are three examples for us to learn from.

There's the farmer, there are the prophets, and there is Job. So, let's get started. The first lesson for us in this passage is that the Lord's coming should inspire patient perseverance.

Be patient then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. Your great need is for patience. You're being oppressed by the rich.

[4:46] These are those that he's writing to. You're oppressed by them. They're not paying you your rightful wages. You're being exploited, dragged into courts. Courts that are controlled by the rich.

Where they falsely accuse you and take advantage of you. You are innocent, but you are so helpless to do anything to oppose these mighty rich.

It's not right. But you're a helpless victim. What is the temptation when treated unjustly? Well, is it not to get all worked up?

Is it not to fret and to fume and to fuss, to pay back evil with evil or to grow resentful and bitter and unforgiving?

Or just to drown in our own self-pity and grumbling? Well, these are all responses of the flesh, aren't they? Responses of the world. Responses that are devilish and have their source in hell.

[5:47] Well, we must resist such temptations and submit to God and his wisdom. So what is our great need when being treated unfairly? It is patience.

Patience. Be patient then, brothers. Now, there's the command for us. Wait composedly. Wait patiently. Not losing your temper. If you were more unjustly treated than David, and he says the same thing to us in Psalm 37.

The Lord is going to cause your justice to shine like the noonday sun. So be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him.

Don't fret when men succeed in their ways and when they carry out their wicked schemes. Refrain from anger and turn from wrath. Do not fret. It only leads to evil. Wait patiently.

And here James picks up on the same theme. That's what we need. And notice the connection with the first part. Be patient then.

[6:49] Be patient, therefore, in light of what I've just said in the first six verses. It points back to what I've just told you, that the Lord's coming. The Lord is coming and that is coming.

All the unrepentant rich oppressors will be judged and will receive such misery that will cause them to weep and to wail for all eternity. In the light of that, be patient then, brothers, until the Lord comes.

You see, the good news in verses one through six is that the Lord is not ignorant or apathetic about what's happening to you. Are you being mistreated? The Lord knows.

The Lord cares, even though you may not think he does. Your cries have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty, and he's coming, coming to judge the world in righteousness, to right every wrong. So be patient until he gets here. He'll make up for all that you suffer unjustly. So you must bring your injustices to this reality of the coming of the Lord.

[7:56] And it ought to inspire patience in your heart. Now, the Lord's coming both requires patience and inspires patience.

How does it do this? Well, consider Farmer Joe. Verse seven goes on. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains.

Farmers are hardworking and they're also patient. And both qualities are spoken of farmers in the Bible. Here, it's his patience that is pointed to.

Farmer Joe works hard, preparing the land, planting the seed, weeding, cultivating. But then he does a lot of waiting, doesn't he? An awful lot of waiting.

I met a farmer yesterday. Asked him if his crops were into the field. If his seed was all planted, he said, yeah, I'm waiting now. I'm waiting. During this time of waiting, you may see him at the coffee shop.

[9:00] You may see him hanging out at the grain elevator, the implement dealer, browsing at tractor supply and maybe even shopping with his wife. And you might be tempted to think that he's doing nothing.

Oh, he's busy waiting. He's waiting, waiting because there's a lot of waiting for the farmer, for the gardener. Waiting for the harvest.

Now, in Israel, they waited for the autumn rains, as he says here. And the autumn rain would soften the ground to receive the seed. And then it would be moisture to germinate the seed.

And then the later rain, the spring that would come in the spring just before harvest was needed, was a critical rain that was needed to further develop the grain and mature it.

And so the farmer's patience is ever being tested. He needs these two critical rains, the early and latter rains, the autumn and spring rains. And he's forced to wait on God.

[10:01] He couldn't hurry up the process. And so the harvest requires patience. It doesn't grow, develop and ripen in a day, but it takes many weeks to develop into a harvest.

Even so, the Lord's coming requires patience. You, too, just like the farmer, be patient and stand firm. For the Lord's coming is near.

He may not come as soon as you'd like. In other words, it's hard to see wicked people prospering as they oppress the poor and needy. It's hard to see them getting off scot-free, not having to pay their fair share when I'm the one that ends up putting in.

And you see it all throughout our society. It seems like the wicked are often rewarded and the righteous are often oppressed. And we would want him to come and bring an end to all this unjust suffering.

But we must wait. His coming requires that we wait. It requires patience from us because he is patient. That's the description that Peter gives.

[11:09] The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise about coming back. As some understand slowness, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

And so we must be patient because God is being patient with sinners. As he's calling them to repentance. So we must wait. Wait like the farmer.

But the harvest not only requires patience, the harvest inspires patience, doesn't it? How is it the farmer is able to wait so long? Well, it's the hope of a rich payoff.

From a valuable crop that's coming and that makes it worth all the hard work and all the long waiting that he must endure. The harvest is coming. As he finally at harvest lays hold of the check from the elevator.

Or stores away all that grain in his barns. That's an end worth waiting for. And so the next year as he works and waits, what inspires his patience?

[12:15] When he gets itchy and waiting is painfully slow, Farmer Joe thinks what he will be doing in a couple months. With the harvest. The harvest. It's that hope of a valuable harvest that functions powerfully in the farmer's life.

So says Crabbendam. Harvest functions powerfully in the farmer's life. It moves him to wait long. Because he knows how good harvest is.

In the same way, the Lord's coming inspires patient perseverance under unjust treatment. It encourages you to persevere. When you feel like you can't hold out any longer.

And you feel like giving in to the flesh. You're going to crack. You're going to lose it. And you feel tempted to strike back. Or to be mean-spirited with your words and actions.

It's then, brothers and sisters, we must remember that the Lord's coming is near. You see, the Lord's coming is something more sure than the farmer's harvest is.

[13:22] He may not get the early and latter rains. He may have all sorts of reasons interrupt a good harvest. And he may end up with nothing or little. Oh, but we are sure of the Lord's coming.

We have his own word and promise. Then let it do for you what the harvest does for the farmer. It inspires patience under trial. Keep yourself steady under provocation.

Controlled in your justified anger. Let it keep you from losing it. Knowing that the Lord will sort it all out when he returns. Now, none of us are very good at waiting, are we?

I think that our culture trains us to be poor waiters. We have instant cash. We have instant relief. We have fast food. We have high-speed internet. We don't like waiting. And the culture keeps reinforcing that about our flesh. But, you know, we're even worse at waiting patiently while being mistreated.

[14:28] We're really bad waiters when we're being mistreated. And so we need something very big. Some motivation very powerful to keep us patient under such trials.

What is big enough to keep us patient and waiting while we're being in the very process of being mistreated? Well, it's his coming.

This is a big thing. In fact, it's so big that it will keep you patient. His coming is not only more sure than the farmer's harvest. It's also more valuable than the farmer's harvest.

The farmer holds out for that valuable crop at the end. Oh, we're holding out to see our Lord face to face. And you will look into the eyes of the one who bore the cross for you.

And you will thank him. All your life you have been talking to him in prayer. You've been listening to his word. But then you will look into his eyes and face to face.

[15:37] You'll thank him for dying for your sins. That's big. And you're looking forward to it. And it's big enough to keep you patient. You're going to see him, the eternal son of God, who took our humanity, who kept the law perfectly for us, who then took our sins on himself and was damned in our place and rose again and lives for us to help us every day in the Christian life.

You're going to see him. You're going to thank him and you're going to receive from him. The well done, good and faithful servant.

Come, you who are blessed by my father, take your inheritance. The kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. It'll be worth it all. Worth the wait when we see Jesus.

You see, the Lord's coming inspires patience. Suffering saints are to be thinking about this. We're to be thinking about his coming and all that will happen when he comes.

It will be the end of temptation. You won't have another day to fight sin for all eternity. That's big enough itself, isn't it? To keep us patiently persevering.

[16:51] It'll be the end of all suffering and pain and tears. All the causes, all that causes you grief in the Christian life. Gone and gone forever. It will be the funeral of death itself.

There will be no more dying. It will be a new heaven and a new earth where only righteousness dwells. You won't see the things you see on the news every night that trouble you because only the righteous will dwell in the righteous new heaven and new earth.

And we will be together with all the saints that have gone before and with the Lord himself forever and ever comfort one another. Encourage one another with these words. This is the stuff that inspires that stick-to-itiveness, that patient perseverance.

And that coming glory at his return. You will say, oh, the half has never been told. If I caught up with you in heaven and asked you, well, was it worth the wait?

You just roll your eyes at me. Here is something big enough to inspire patience under any trial to help you wait through mistreatment without complaining.

[17:59] Now, I asked you, does the hope of Christ's return function that powerfully in your life? Does it carry that kind of weight with you when you are suffering injustices?

That day is to affect this day. So verse 8 says that just like the farmer, you too, be patient and stand firm because the Lord's coming is near.

Stand firm. A lot of things are happening to you that would move you like injustices. What they say about you and do to you. They're trying to move you from your pursuit of holiness.

No, no. Be patient. Stand firm. Hold on to that steely resolve. It's the same word that was used of our Savior when he steadfastly, resolutely set his face to go to Jerusalem.

You too. Stand firm. Unmoved. Unmoved by all these trials. Remembering the Lord's coming and the fact that it's near.

[19:02] You see that in verse 8. It is at hand. You know, God's got a calendar and the Bible reveals not the date of his return, but it does reveal to us that the next major event on the calendar of God is the return of his son.

That's the next. Great event waiting to unfold. You see, Christ has already come the first time he's already been born.

He's already lived that perfect life to secure a righteousness for every soul that trusts in him. His own elect. He's already been crucified in their place. He's already risen.

He's already ascended into heaven. He's already been preparing a place for us. The next event on the calendar of God is for him to come back for us. There's our hope.

The Lord's coming is near. Now, it's been near for a long time. James wrote this 2000 years ago.

[20:05] And that's cause for scoffers to say, well, where is this coming? He promised. But Peter says, 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.

So just a couple of days have passed since James said his coming is near. The next major event on the calendar of God is for Jesus to return.

Is that the next main event on your calendar? Are you looking for that? Martin Luther said, I preach as though Christ died yesterday, as though he rose again today and as if he's coming tomorrow.

It's the next great event. You need to live that way. It's at hand. Behold, he's standing at the door.

So that's the first point this morning.

The Lord's coming should inspire patient perseverance. Don't be moved from your pursuit of holiness. Secondly, the Lord's coming should exclude grumbling. Verse nine, don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged.

[21:11] The judge is standing at the door. Now here in the midst of this encouraging word to the downtrodden is this word of warning. Don't grumble.

Because it's very possible for us to sin when we're being downtrodden. And when we're being sinned against, it's easy for us to sin against ourselves. The strain can build up and explode in frustration.

Whereby we turn on each other and grumble against each other and nitpick and criticize and complain to each other. You see, there are injuries that we receive from each other in the church. Happens in this church. Happens in every other church. Whether maliciously, intentionally. Wronging each other or just out of inconsiderateness.

We are constantly injuring each other. What's the proper response under unjust treatment? It is to be patient and to forgive, even as Christ has forgiven us.

[22:11] To not hold bitterness and grudges. But to be kind and compassionate to one another. Forgiving each other just as in Christ God forgave you. Oh, but we grow impatient under unjust treatment.

And that's what he's warning us against. Be patient. And don't grumble. Because that's the way our impatience often exposes itself. Show me a grumbling person and I'll show you an impatient person.

That's what James is getting at. Be patient. And when you're grumbling, you're not being patient. When you're complaining and carping against others, you're not being patient.

And this is returned not only to the oppressor, the one who's doing us wrong, but it may also spill over to others around us. There's the husband and he's off to work.

Hi-ho, hi-ho, it's off to work I go. And there at work, he's mistreated. And he's kicked around by his boss. And he's verbally abused.

[23:14] And so he comes home. And under the pain of unjust treatment, what's he do? He starts to yell at his wife.

And what's she do under the pain of unjust treatment? She starts to get on the kids in an unkind way. And the kids kick the dog and the dog chases the cat. And that's the sort of thing that happens in the church.

And so James says, in the midst of this injustice that you're receiving, be careful that you don't turn on one another and start grumbling against each other.

And this especially is a temptation when we're being made to wait long under difficult circumstances, isn't it? When the trial is drawn out.

Waiting times are tempting times. We can get edgy. And our patience grows thin. And we spout off something hurtful.

[24:15] This is why kids have a difficulty in long trips. Have you noticed that? You're going to grandmother's house. And grandma lives five hours away. And you're 30 minutes out of the garage.

And are we there yet? And you say, no, we're just getting started. And under the pressure of the long wait, they can start getting edgy and getting on each other's nerves. And then they all get on your nerves as you're trying to drive.

Even so, waiting is irritating to our flesh. And we're tempted to lose patience and to take it out on each other with muttering complaints and grumbling.

James knows this. He's inspired by the Holy Spirit to say to us, don't grumble against each other, brothers. That's the devil's agenda for you in your trials of injustice.

Resist him. God calls for patient perseverance. Submit to him. We can afford to wait till the Lord comes.

[25:21] He'll settle all accounts and right every wrong. You know, the one who's coming was himself once oppressed, wasn't he? Mistreated, abused.

And when they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate. When he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

So you, he's left you an example to follow in his steps. A warning for the oppressed. They are dangerous, tempting times.

Now, we may not think that grumbling and complaining is such a bad sin. And especially when we're being mistreated. In fact, we take that as a coupon that says you are free to grumble. Because after all, what she said or did or was not right or fair. And we take that as a license to grumble. And we think that it's nothing.

[26 : 17] All that, you know, God doesn't share that opinion about our grumbling at all. Grumbling at each other wounds the peace and unity of the body of Christ.

In chapter three, we found at the end that that is devilish. That is not wisdom from above. That peacemakers who sow in peace, in the soil of peace, raise a harvest of righteousness.

And when we grumble against each other, we are marring the harvest of righteousness that God seeks in our midst. It's a serious thing.

So don't grumble against each other, brothers. Because if you do, you will be judged. The judge is standing at the door. Suppose you're coming to my house.

And you live in Mishawakins. So you get on 331 and you start driving down to my house. And you come to Bremen. You're getting closer. Then you come on out to my subdivision. You're getting closer.

[27 : 22] Then you're on to Redwood Court. And you come down and you turn into my driveway. You're really close now. You park the car and walk down the sidewalk and step up onto the porch and stand at the door.

The next event will be for you to enter through the door. That's where you're at. You've come all this way. You're standing at the door.

The next step will bring you inside. The judge is standing at the door. Just waiting for the nod of his father. And he'll come through the door.

And will judge the world in righteousness. And the judge for the unrepentant oppressor of verses 1 through 6 is the same judge for the unrepentant grumbler who is being oppressed.

Did you notice that? Yes, the abused, unrepentant grumbler will be judged even like the oppressor who does not repent.

[28 : 37] Remember Israel. They weren't very good waiters either. They had to wait because of their unbelief. They had to wait for 40 years to enter the promised land, didn't they? It was a long wait. But people died before they ever got in.

They endured great hardship. That was not unjust. They deserved every bit of it. But in another sense, you could say the children had to suffer that.

And it wasn't for their sins. It was for their fathers and mothers' sins. And they weren't very good waiters, were they? And so when Paul refers to this event of the children of Israel, in the wilderness, 1 Corinthians 10, he says to the church at Corinth, church at Grace Fellowship Church, do not grumble as some of them did and were killed by the destroying angel.

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us on whom the end of the ages have come. So if you think you stand firm, take heed lest you fall.

No temptation has taken you, but such as is common to men. But God is faithful and he will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able, but with the temptation will also make a way of escape so that you may stand up under it.

[29 : 58] Do not grumble like some of them did. There is judgment for unrepentant grumblers. And the judge is standing at the door.

Now, according to some Christians today, judgment is never supposed to enter into the mind of a Christian as a motive for living the Christian life. Try telling that to the Apostle Paul.

Try telling that to James, who is here taught by our Lord and says, don't grumble against each other, because if you do, you will be judged. Brothers, you will be judged.

For your grumbling. Is judgment the only motive for living the Christian life? No. Is it the highest motive for living the Christian life?

No. Is it therefore a motive unworthy of the Christian? Something that can be safely ignored by the Christian? No.

[31 : 02] No. According to the Bible, the remembrance of the judgment that is coming when Christ returns is a necessary component for living the Christian life in the passionate pursuit of holiness so that we are not moved away from it.

And it's meant to keep us on track, to keep us from grumbling, to keep us from every sin. We're to remember. The judge is coming and he's at the door.

So let others pretend to be holy, so holy that they don't need the warnings of judgment as Christians. As for us, let's take all that the Bible gives us.

Let's embrace it as helps to our holiness. Friend, if you're honest, you'll know that there are days when you need a healthy fear of hell to keep you out of the ditch.

God gives it to us. His kindness, you see, his kindness in warning us. So the Lord's coming should both inspire patient perseverance and it should exclude grumbling.

[32 : 14] And he ends with two examples of patient perseverance and shows us their end. First of all, the prophets. Verse 10, brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. Maybe the reason he doesn't give us the example of Jesus is that we would excuse ourselves and say, well, after all, we're not God. So sure, Jesus was patient, but come on, I'm not God. I don't know what was behind him. Peter uses the example of Jesus in the face of suffering. But here, James doesn't let us use such an excuse.

He rather points to another mortal man like you and me. Plural, the prophets. Consider the prophets. You're not the first one to need patience in the face of suffering, he says.

Consider the prophets, not the false ones, but the true ones who spoke in the name of the Lord, who spoke what God gave them to say. It was the assignment of a prophet.

[33 : 25] Hear me. An assignment. Here's your assignment, prophet. You go to my sinning people. Yeah, yeah. They turn their back on me and they're going their own way. And you go to them and you point out their sins and you call them to repentance.

And you tell them, if you repent, God will have mercy. But you also tell them, if they don't repent, God will judge you. Now go. That's the assignment for the prophet of God.

There was a confrontational element to his work. Remember the prophet Nathan? You are the man, David. That's an element of all prophets. They had to point out the sin of the people and call them to repentance.

One commentator likened their work to sticking their heads into a hornet's nest. They either repented or they took out their animosity on you. And too often it was the latter.

The prophets suffered. In fact, Jesus cries out in Matthew 23. Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who were sent to you.

[34 : 35] And Stephen, just before they start throwing the stones at him in Acts 7, 52 says, Was there ever a prophet that your fathers did not persecute? Persecution seemed to come with the territory of a prophet.

If you've got to point out the word of the Lord and expose their sin, be prepared for suffering. Okay, prophet, what are you going to do? Well, I'm going to announce the word of the Lord.

What are you going to do when they start to persecute you because of what you're saying? You see, it called for patient perseverance, standing fast in their assignment.

Because at any point they could evade the suffering. By just telling them what they wanted to hear. That's what all the false prophets did. They prophesied peace, peace.

When there was no peace to be announced by God. That's all he had to do. No, you're not going to be down in Babylon 70 years. No reason to start planting your gardens and all that.

[35 : 39] You're only going to be there two years. That's what the false prophets announced to the people in exile. That was a tempting thing for Jeremiah to think that I could miss all the suffering if I just agree with these other prophets.

It called for patient perseverance. There is Jeremiah announcing the Lord's message of doom. Judgment is falling. And so his life is threatened.

He's hated. He's beaten. He's thrown into dungeons and cisterns. And eventually he's hauled into Egypt where he dies. Faithfully proclaiming. Thus saith the Lord. He persevered.

He stood firm. He didn't back down in the face of suffering. And because of it, we consider him blessed. We consider him happy.

As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. Yes, as we know, chapter 1, verse 12. He told us, blessed is the man who perseveres under trial. Because when he has stood the test, he will receive what?

[36 : 42] The crown of life that the Lord has given to those who love him. So where's Jeremiah this morning? He's in heaven. You talk about blessed.

The man who perseveres in the face of suffering. Those prophets. They have received an end worth waiting for.

If you want to ask a redundant question when you get to heaven, ask Jeremiah if it was worth it. We consider him blessed. You see, the farmer waits for that great valuable crop.

The prophets labored faithfully and patiently because he knew that that was the way to blessedness. The other example given to us, and these examples, by the way, are not just to be admired and praised.

They're to be copied. What are examples for except to be followed? And these are examples.

Christian, up and follow. Abuse, suffering in your face.

[37 : 53] The one who is patiently persevered is rewarded. And then the other example is Job, verse 11. You've heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about.

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy. We still speak of the patience of Job, don't we? He's got the patience of Job. And here it is.

You've heard of the patience, the perseverance of Job. What was that patience, that perseverance? Well, it was under unjust treatment, wasn't it?

Remember, it was the Sabaeans who stole much of his wealth, his oxen and donkeys, and just made off with it and killed his servants. And it was the Chaldeans who sent raiding bands and carried off his camels and killed his servants.

It was injustice. And he didn't chuck his faith in God. No, in all this, he did not sin in what he said.

[38 : 49] Then he even lost his health. That was taken from him by God. And God brought storms that took all his wealth, his ten children. And in all this, he did not sin.

And then even his three friends falsely accused him of being an evildoer. That's why you're being treated so harshly in life, Job. You're a great sinner. And that's why you've got great judgments happening in your life.

That was not true. He was a righteous man, more righteous than any on the face of the earth, according to God's estimation. So he suffers unjustly. He has his brothers saying nasty things about him.

He didn't do so well with that. His response was not perfect. He sinned in his responses to that trial. But he persevered. He would not let go of an afflicting God.

And by grace, he persevered to the end. And what a kind end. What a kind end the Lord finally brought about for Job. That's what's mentioned here. I think that's mentioned as much to us.

[39 : 59] As Job's own perseverance and patience is what did the Lord finally bring about?

Remember, it's the harvest at the end of the season that the farmer waits for. What was the harvest at the end of Job's life that God?

You have heard. You have seen what the Lord brought about finally for Job. And he restored his health and he restored his wealth and he restored children.

And he forgave his sins, his sinful responses. And he took him to heaven. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

It's seen in the end that the Lord prepared for Job. Calvin says afflictions ought ever to be estimated by their end.

We must wait for the rest of the story. What James is teaching us here is keep your eye on the end. What is Christ going to do in the end when he returns?

[41 : 02] And in that day, you will see just how compassionate and merciful Jesus is. And you'll say, but Lord, what about my sins?

And he'll say they're all forgiven. They're all forgiven. He is a gracious and compassionate God who forgives wickedness, rebellion and sin.

When he comes, you have just you've just learned a little bit of his compassion and mercy. But when he comes and you see other sinners cast into eternal torments and you yourself spared, you will say, the Lord is full of compassion and mercy for his own.

You'll marvel at his mercy. John Newton, who wrote Amazing Grace, said, when I get to heaven, three things will surprise me. First of all, I'll see people there that I didn't expect to see.

And second, I'll find others not there who I expected to be there. And last of all, that will cause me the greatest surprise is that I will be there.

[42 : 12] The Lord is full of compassion and mercy. Lord, what about that thing that I did? What about that thought? Gone, gone for the sake of Christ, forgiven, never brought up in judgment

against me.

Trust me. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. And we will see what the Lord will finally bring about in that day. So be patient and so stand firm and let nothing move you, even though you're being.

Treated unjustly or for whatever trials you're going through. Some of James trials were just trials from the Lord, not from unjust oppressors. But we have this wonderful lesson.

Remember the farmer, what he waits for. Remember the prophets and what was waiting for them. Remember Job and what the Lord did for him in the end.

And you will find the same for you. You see, there's one return of Christ. And to one, it will be a great torment. And to other, it will be a great comfort.

[43:18] And it all depends whether you're in Christ. If you're in Christ, you will look and receive his coming with joy. If you're outside of Christ, you have every reason to start weeping and wailing now because of the misery that is coming upon you.

Come to this Christ and you will find him to be so full of compassion and mercy in all that he forgives you and gives you. You know, it may be that a passage like this will only come alive to us when the harder days that are coming for the church finally come upon us.

And we've been hearing about the oppressed, the righteous who are oppressed, and they don't get justice in the courts. And when the bubble pops that has provided such protection to Christians in the United States, and we begin to see something of the hatred of the world and the hell and the devil against Christ and his church, then I say a passage like James chapter 5, verses 7 to 11 will come alive.

And we'll be tempted to grow impatient under unjust treatment. And we'll need this word as never before to be patient.

But let's not miss the message altogether for us even today, living as we do in free America. James is directing our thoughts to the Lord's coming.

[44:40] Nothing looks the same when seen in the light of his coming. Not injustice, not long trials, not temptations.

And so it's something we need to do a whole lot more thinking about. It ought to be in our minds at least once a day, don't you expect? Once a week? I mean, how often ought we to be thinking Jesus has come?

Should we ever be able to think of him without his next step soon following? Yes, we think of what he's done for us. Yes, we think of what he's doing for us presently.

But we're looking forward and yearning for what he is about to do for us when he comes. We need to remind one another of it.

We need constant reminder. Let the farmer's field, every time you pass a farmer's field, remind you that Jesus is coming. And you, like the farmer, needs to be patiently waiting, persevering holiness, not moved.

[45:44] Every time you go out into your garden and work, you're long wait for harvest. Let it remind you Jesus is coming. And be patient until he comes.

We can't afford to live forgetful of this one great momentous event. You know, when you're expecting someone, it affects how you live.

You get ready for them. A couple weeks ago, we were expecting the Hutchison's. They were going to stay at our home for a week. And so that was a date on the calendar and it was circled and there it was.

But as it got closer, you know, that date started to affect the way things were done in our house.

Some of you were contacted. Would you like to have them for a meal? And you, it was all arranged that they would be at your house at such a time and date.

And then as it got closer, well, the cleaning lady went into action. And one of my sons thought it'd be a great day to have the gaggle of his friends meet at his house.

[46:51] And so I found them down in the basement. And I said to them, I'm sorry, guys. You either help clean up or you get out and find another place.

We're getting ready for someone who's coming. They're coming today. And so we're getting ready.

We're getting the house clean. I say if we're expecting someone, it changes the way we live.

And unless we're thinking often of Jesus coming, I don't expect it to weigh in powerfully enough to change the way I live, the way I respond to the inconsiderate remark or deed.

I don't expect it to carry that kind of power. But, oh, if God is pleased to bring this reality before my mind regularly, I will find it inspiring patience.

And keeping my mouth from grumbling and complaining against you, my brothers and sisters. May God help us.

[47 : 54] Let's pray. We thank you, Lord, that you came the first time as a gentle Savior and lay down your life as a lamb slaughtered on behalf of guilty sinners.

And it's because of that and because your Holy Spirit has brought faith to our hearts to rest in Christ and who he is and what he's done, that we can even lift up our hearts and voices and sing with enthusiasm.

Come, Lord Jesus, quickly come. Would you make us helpers to one another to remind each other often that Christ is coming? Would you help those who are being unjustly treated to be patient?

Would you help us all to wait until you're coming and not be moved from pursuing holiness?

Forgive us our sins. Cleanse us and make us to be a glorious people who are waiting, ready and watchful.

When you come, we ask in Jesus name. Amen.