

***“Be Patient, Brethren”*** (Part 2).

October 28, 2012

Text: James 5:9-11

**The subject of the passage in James that we are currently studying, is patience.**

As we saw last time, patience is an aspect of godly wisdom seen in a Xn who is walking by the Spirit, not the flesh.

But when we encounter trials/difficulty while walking in the flesh, we can develop hard thoughts about God Himself.

Knowing that He is sovereign, we realize that He must be allowing this trouble to enter our lives, so we may question the Bible’s claim that He is infinitely-good and truly cares for us.

We think thoughts (and may even say words) about the Most High that we ought not to—libelous thoughts.

We may sigh, & the sorrow of those sighs may be tainted w/ rebellion against God’s will.

As we look back at these sinful thoughts/words once the trouble has passed, we are ashamed of our critical attitude toward God.

Scripture says the Lord is good, that His mercy endures forever, & deep w/i ourselves, we know that’s true.

Looking over the whole scope of our lives, we clearly see God’s goodness/kindness running all through them.

Even our apparent problems turn out to be blessings.

We can testify that, *“All things [have worked] together for*

*good” (Rom 8:28).*

Trusting God’s Word, even if we may feel differently right now,  
we know Psa 31:19 is true/right=> *“How great is Thy  
goodness, Which Thou hast stored up for those who fear  
Thee.”*

We can also still affirm, even if only by faith, David’s  
words in Psa 145=> *“The LORD is gracious &  
merciful; Slow to anger & great in lovingkindness. /  
The LORD is good to all, & His mercies are over all  
His works” (145:8-9).*

**Feeling estranged from God in trials is a common experience  
for many Xns, & we need to learn to deal w/ it properly.**

We need to confess it for what it is—inward rebellion against  
God, that has opened itself up to thoughts about Him  
which are not only foolish, but morally/spiritually wrong.  
We need to go back and reaffirm what the Bible says about  
Him—that He is indeed a loving Father of the  
faithful, who tenderly cares for them, w/  
compassion/mercy.

**James 5:7-11 teaches us how to respond properly when we  
are confronted with trials/difficulties...**

- \* Anticipate X’s coming (vss 7-8)
- \* Beware of X’s judgment (vs 9)
- \* Emulate the prophets (vss 10).
- \* Recognize God’s purpose (vs 11)

We considered the 1<sup>st</sup> of these last time, and today we will  
examine the last 3, beginning with=>

### **\* Beware of Christ's Judgment**

**[James 5:9]**=> *“Do not complain, brethren, against one another, that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.”*

The Bema Seat Judgment will be a wonderful time, when we will receive rewards.

But X will also judge our bad deeds.

E.g. complaining/murmuring.

His judgment won't pertain to our salvation, but to our eternal rewards, which we can lose (II Jn 8).

**As we have seen, James' readers were being oppressed by men who were very rich/powerful/wicked.**

Whenever these poor Xns were walking in the flesh, they felt irate because of the mistreatment they had received.

But expressing this irritation to their rich/powerful enemies could well have been suicidal.

So they vented their anger on other Xns, instead.

Believers who had done nothing to hurt them were receiving the brunt of their pent-up/misplaced rage.

*“Complain”* means to groan/sigh, either inwardly/outwardly.

It's the rolling of the eyes, the heavy-sighs/moodiness, that tells you a person is brim-full w/ suppressed anger, & you're likely to become his target if you upset/disturb him.

It's a bitter/resentful spirit, & a critical/judgmental attitude  
that's general, but is looking for any specific  
grievance to pounce on.

**James commands us not to be like this, and not to treat other  
Xns this way, when we are going through trials  
ourselves.**

We are to live our lives surrendered to the H.S., whose fruit  
includes=> *“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness,  
faithfulness, / gentleness, self-control”* (Gal 5:22-23).

We are to be encouragers, not discouragers, helping to  
hold up others who are also going thru hard times.  
People like the complainers James is describing are real  
“downers,” creating doubt/tension wherever they go,  
and making true Xn fellowship, that glories in the  
goodness of God, all but impossible.

Complaining involves a critical/judgmental attitude, that our Lord  
repeatedly rebuked/condemned;  
Critical of man, and critical even of God.  
It's always looking askance at others, never letting them  
feel that they measure up.

**James doesn't treat this merely as the antisocial behavior of  
someone who is difficult to get along with;  
He considers it sin, which X will judge.**

It's the kind of moral behavior that Jesus will confront and repay  
at the Judgment Seat of X.

Paul wrote=> “*We must all appear before the **judgment seat of Christ**, that each one may be **recompensed** for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether **good** or **bad**” (II Cor 5:10).*

Complaining/murmuring judgmentalism is “*bad*” behavior, which X will somehow recompense.

It indirectly accuses God, believing that its misfortunes are ultimately His fault, because He could have protected us from them.

In addition, it mercilessly judges other Xns, instead of loving them.

James has already warned us=> “*So speak and so act, as those who are to be judged by the law of **liberty** [the law of love]. / For judgment will be **merciless** to one who has shown no mercy*” (2:12-13).

For someone who has truly repented of sin & trusted X for the forgiveness of his sin, complaining against other believers won’t lead to his condemnation, because X has atoned for that bad behavior too, by His death, and there is therefore no condemnation in X Jesus.

But it will go up in smoke when X tests each man’s work, at His Judgment Seat, leaving a Xn like this to be saved “*so as thru fire*” (I Cor 3:15).

That’s not some Purgatory, but the Judgment Seat of X, where our works of wood/hay/straw will be tested by fire.

**Wanting his-readers/us to feel the potential immediacy of X's judgment, James adds=>** *“Behold [Look!], the Judge is standing right at the door.”*

Jesus is standing right there behind the door, ready to come and begin His judgment of His people's lives/deeds.

Do you really want to risk His censure at this moment, by venting feelings of hostility created by the wicked-rich, on innocent fellow-believers?

You're 1 heartbeat away from entering the presence of your Judge, so adopt a loving/godly attitude right now, and jettison any angry feelings you've been harboring.

Confess your sinfulness & submit your heart to the H.S.

Meditate on the goodness of God, rather than groveling in self-pity and pampering your own anger.

Be patient toward others who irritate you even when they add further aggravation, as you're already going through trials.

**\* Emulate the Prophets**

**[Verse 10]=>** *“As an example, brethren, of suffering & patience, take the **prophets** who spoke in the name of the Lord.”*

**This is a third truth to keep in mind as we learn to respond properly to trials/difficulties=>**

*“Take”* (hold before your mind) the exemplary behavior of the prophets of old, who also experienced such trials.

Those prophets invariably suffered, because of their faithfulness to God, as they proclaimed His Word, speaking “*in the name of the Lord.*”

They weren’t persecuted *in spite* of their doing the Lord’s work, but *because* of it.

Their faithfulness to Him was what provoked their world against them.

They revealed the truth about God—His “*name*”—and Satan’s world hated them for it.

Whenever they did so, they met opposition, but they wouldn’t stop, because God had called them to this, and they felt compelled to keep on serving/obeying Him.

The prophet Jeremiah suffered so much violent persecution, rejection, and hardship, that he became known as “the weeping prophet,” but he couldn’t stop prophesying in God’s name.

He put it like this=> “*Each time I speak, I cry aloud; I proclaim violence and destruction, Because for me the word of the LORD has resulted In reproach and derision all day long. / But if I say, ‘I will not remember Him Or speak anymore in His name,’ Then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire Shut up in my bones; And I am weary of holding it in, And I cannot endure it*” (Jer 20:8-9).

**Q: Why would James bring up the prophets, in a text about patiently enduring unjust treatment from evil people?**

A: In order to help his readers put their own trials in perspective.

They were suffering simply because of evil people who were oppressing them, not necessarily because of their service to God.

But virtually all the prophets had experienced persecution for doing what God had commanded them to do.

For a prophet, suffering was par for the course.

In Jeremiah's own case, God had said at the beginning of his

ministry=> *"I have made you today as a fortified city, and as a pillar of iron and as walls of bronze against the whole land, to the kings of Judah, to its princes, to its priests and to the people of the land. / And they will fight against you, but they will not overcome you, for I am with you to deliver you," declares the LORD*" (Jer 1:18-19).

Jeremiah's life was threatened, he was placed in stocks, arrested, beaten, imprisoned, and dropped into a cistern to sink into the mire at the bottom (where he would have died, but for an Ethiopian who rescued him).

And Jeremiah is just one of the many prophets who suffered=>

- \* Moses suffered Israel's rebellions against him, in spite of his being their advocate before God.

- \* Elijah suffered Jezebel's hatred/hostility, and said of the people=> *"I alone am left, and they seek my life"*  
(I Kn 19:10).

- \* Daniel was cast into a lions' den because some Gentile politicians hated his praying to the true God.



\* John the Baptist was imprisoned/beheaded for calling Herod the tetrarch's adultery a sin.

\* Heb 11 lists many other OT prophets/believers who suffered for their faith as well, then sums it all up=>

*"They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated / (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts & mountains & caves & holes in the ground" (37-38).*

**Now James adds, that these godly prophets weren't simply examples of suffering, but of "*suffering and patience*."**

He again uses that word for "*patience*" we examined last time.

It is being long-tempered, rather than short-tempered, and it is often associated with "mercy" in Scripture.

In the KJV it is often translated "longsuffering";

Controlling one's emotions rather than being controlled by one's emotions.

It is self-restraint when provoked, & it refuses to retaliate.

It is a state of emotional optimism/quietness in the face of unpleasant-people or adverse-circumstances, that results from trusting in the Lord.

This is what made the response of the prophets to their enemies so admirable—they restrained themselves from acting out in the flesh, no matter how they were persecuted.

So James says, "*Take the prophets*" as an example of patience.

Think about them whenever you feel impatience or you're angry over being mistreated.

Let them become examples for you to emulate.

**We can be absolutely certain that we will need such patience ourselves.**

- \* If we confront the world w/ the claims of X, it will react in a negative way to our testimony, & we will need patience.
- \* Just being believers who are open/public about our faith, will provoke such a reaction from the world, that we'll need patience.

Peter had to make that clear to some Xns who didn't expect

persecution=> *"Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; / but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation"* (I Pet 4:12-13).

I.e., Don't be surprised, don't be appalled, but expect it,  
and rejoice that you are sharing X's sufferings,  
because it will all pay off at His 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming.

- \* God will send trials/testing our way, just to add endurance to our faith/character, because=> *"THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES"* & *"It is for discipline that you endure"* (Heb 12:6, 7).

Patiently accept/embrace God's discipline w/ patience.

\* In addition to all of this, life in a fallen world is full of adverse circumstances, and we need to deal with them all patiently. Whenever we are confronted by difficulty, we can think of the prophets & their patient responses to trials, hardship, and persecution, & make them the standard for ourselves.

### Review

How should we respond to trials/difficulty?

- \* Anticipate X's Coming
- \* Beware of X's judgment
- \* Emulate the prophets.

### \* Recognize God's Purpose

[Verse 11a]=> *"Behold, we count those blessed who endured."*

**The prophets endured, & we count them "blessed" (happy)—  
a word that can really only apply to believers.**

So, genuine/godly happiness is God's 1<sup>st</sup> purpose for allowing  
His people/prophets to endure hardship/persecution.

This is the kind of anticipatory happiness we just read about in

Peter's words=> *"To the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation."*

For now we rejoice w/ anticipation, but when X is revealed  
in His glory, we will rejoice w/ exultation.

This is also the kind of eternal happiness Jesus talked about in the  
Sermon on the Mount=> *"**Blessed** [happy] are those who  
hunger & thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied  
[They shall be delivered from the moral muck/mire of sin,*

& their souls shall become blessed/satisfied w/ righteousness]. / **Blessed** are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. / **Blessed** are the pure in heart, for they shall see God [the greatest privilege/blessing known to man] ” (Mt 5:6-8).

This is the kind of happiness/joy the Apostles experienced when they were dragged before the Sanhedrin, then released.

Acts 5=> “*They went on their way from the presence of the Council, **rejoicing** that they had been considered worthy to **suffer shame** for His name*” (Acts 5:41).

This is the joy of knowing we are right where God wants us to be, doing exactly what He wants us to do, and so we have placed ourselves directly in the flow of His grace/blessings.

We are right in line w/ His benevolent purpose for us.

James says=> “*Behold* [Look!], we all count those who have endured such God-ordained difficulties as blessed by Him.”

Peter expands on this thought=> “*This **finds favor**, if for the sake of conscience toward God a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. / For what credit is there if, when you **sin** & are harshly treated, you **endure** it with **patience**? But if when you do what is **right** & suffer for it you patiently endure it, this **finds favor with God***” (I Pet 2:19-20).

Special favor with God is a blessedness beyond compare.

It does not belong to those who achieve great things, but to those who patiently endure suffering, by His grace/strength.

**“Endurance” is somewhat similar to patience.**

In fact, the KJV translates this word in vs 11 as “*patience*.”

But there are some important differences, as we see here,  
between patience/endurance.

“Endurance” refuses to succumb/surrender to difficulty.

It’s not simply hardened/emotionless resolve, but a hopeful  
determination that won’t give up and doesn’t become  
despondent.

It may get very quiet/thoughtful, but it never stops trusting  
in God.

**Job was a perfect illustration of endurance, even though he  
wasn’t a perfect illustration of patience.**

[Verse 11b]=> *“You have heard of the **endurance of Job** and  
have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the  
Lord is full of **compassion** and is **merciful**.”*

Job started out patiently enough, but his patience soon ran out.

He was remarkably patient/long-tempered at first, saying=>

*“Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall  
return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken  
away. Blessed be the name of the LORD” (Job 1:21).*

We sincerely applaud Job for that response.

He had just experienced a devastating ordeal.

But Job’s emotions soon ran away with him, & by the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter  
he was cursing the day of his birth (3:1).

That is really just a subtle/veiled complaint against God,  
for having created him in the first place.

Such complaints had lost all subtlety by chapter 7, where  
he made direct accusations against God=>

*“I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the **anguish** of my spirit, I will **complain** in the **bitterness** of my soul. / Am I the sea, or the sea monster, That **Thou** dost set a guard over me? / If I say, 'My bed will comfort me, My couch will ease my complaint,' / Then **Thou** dost frighten me with dreams And terrify me by visions; / So that my soul would choose suffocation, **Death** rather than my pains” (7:11-15).*

Job may be engaging in suicidal thoughts, the final form of rebellion against God’s will.

In the very next verse he makes an unthinkable statement directly to God=> *“Leave me alone” (7:16).*

These are not the words of a patient man.

**But when Job’s patience gave out, his endurance took over.**

Thus, James says, *“You have heard of the **endurance** [not the patience] of Job.”*

While patience may keep an upbeat attitude that is a blessing to others as it keeps its temper and praises God, endurance can get very quiet.

Endurance forces a Xn to plumb the depths of his soul.

There he discovers an indestructible commitment to God.

Endurance is the last rung on the ladder of love.

I Cor 13:7 says love=> *“bears all things,”* and when it can bear no more, it *“believes all things,”* and when belief can no longer overcome the evidence, love *“hopes all things,”* and when hope has been stretched until it finally snaps, love simply *“endures all things.”*

Endurance says to Jesus, what Peter said to Him when so many of X's other "disciples" were abandoning Him.

X had asked the Apostles=> *"You do not want to go away also, do you?"* (Jn 6:67-69).

Peter answered=> *"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. / And we have believed & have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."*

I.e., we have no option but to stay, because You alone have the words of life, as the Messiah, and we have believed-in You.

We must endure, because there's no other realistic choice for us.

Job blesses my soul, because there are times when we too must carry on, not because we feel great about it, but because we have given our hearts to Jesus, becoming born again, & that's the bottom line.

We can say, what Job ends up saying by chapter 13=>

*"Though He slay me, I will hope in Him"* (13:15).

**James adds what may seem like a surprising claim=>**

*"You have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings [w/ regard to the prophets and to Job], that the Lord is full of **compassion** and is **merciful**."*

How on earth do we see God's compassion/mercy in Job's story?

First, God restored his fortunes and even doubled them.

But is that a guarantee that God will always treat us like that when we have gone through a time of testing?

Absolutely not; the martyrs of the faith end up being killed.

To answer this, we must first go back to the beginning of vs 11 in  
our text=> “*Behold, **we count** those **blessed** who endured.*”

Q: Who’s “we” who “count” the lives of Job/the-prophets  
blessed?

\*\* A: Believers—only believers can understand such  
blessedness.

James 5 said to the wicked-rich ‘*You have lived luxuriously  
on the earth & led a life of wanton pleasure; you  
have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter*’ (5:5).

They’d count themselves blessed/happy, but we certainly  
wouldn’t.

We have learned our view of happiness/blessedness from Jesus.

He taught (as we saw before)=> “***Blessed** are you when  
men cast insults at you, and **persecute** you, and say  
all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of  
Me. / **Rejoice**, and be **glad**, for your reward in  
heaven is great, for so they persecuted the **prophets**  
who were before you*” (Mt 5:11-12).

Ours is a long-range view of happiness, that anticipates an  
eternal happiness which is unimaginable, right now,  
and about which the world knows nothing.

**There is a happiness, & a sense of God’s mercy/compassion,  
to be found in affliction/persecution, for several  
reasons=>**

1<sup>st</sup>, because, in the hands of God, they are corrective, and that is  
ultimately a very good thing.



Heb 12=> “*All discipline for the moment seems **not** to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the **peaceful fruit of righteousness***” (Heb 12:11).

The believer whom God has enabled to endure His discipline, gains a contentment & a peaceful conformity to God’s will, that hadn’t been his before; and that’s blessed.

2<sup>nd</sup>, because affliction teaches us to trust God more implicitly.

In trouble, we draw closer to our Lord, clinging to Him more tightly than we did in times of prosperity/peace. Our communion w/ Him becomes more vital, just as it was for Shadrack/Meshach/Abed-nego in the fiery furnace, when God was in there with them.

We better understand Peter’s statement=> “*If you are **reviled** for the name of Christ, you are **blessed**, because the Spirit of glory and of God **rests upon you***” (I Pet 4:14).

We also discover God’s power manifested in our weakness.

And we gain a surer sense of hope/buoyancy in the storms of difficulty.

All of this because afflictions increase our trust in God.

3<sup>rd</sup>, in the greatest times of hardship we have an opportunity to do great things for God, knowing He will reward us for them, in eternity.

In the early centuries of the Church, believers who were otherwise poor/unknown allowed themselves to be sacrificed as martyrs, rather than deny their Lord.

In the heat of affliction, their heroic faith emerged, rose to amazing heights, was honored by fellow-Xns, & honored the name of X, whom they loved.

4<sup>th</sup>, spiritual greatness is hardened/tested/proven in the fires of affliction/persecution, endured by faithful believers, preparing them for glory/nobility/power.

And those who are thus proved worthy, will rule/reign w/ X.

II Tim 2=> *“It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; / If we **endure**, we shall also **reign** with Him”* (2:11-12).

When James/John asked Jesus to sit on thrones to His left/right in the Kingdom, X told them=> *“You do not know what you are asking for. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?”* (Mt 20:22).

Endurance of the cup of persecution/affliction prepares a saint to rule w/ X in glory.

**So when James wants to prove God’s compassion/mercy, he points to Job sitting on a dunghill, having lost everything but his life.**

We count him blessed, because of what that terrible trial/ordeal accomplished in his heart/life, and would prepare him for, in eternity.

And we learn that God is ever our compassionate/merciful

Father, blessing our affliction w/ meaning according to His eternal purpose.

And as David said in Psa 56:8, God (in His compassion)

collects our tears in His bottle, and writes them down in His book.

Again quoting David=> *“The Lord is gracious and*

*merciful; slow to anger and great in lovingkindness.”*

***“Be Patient, Brethren” (Part 2)***

October 28, 2012

Text: James 5:9-11

1. Feeling estranged from God in trials is a common experience for many Christians, and we need to learn to [10 deal] with it properly.

Psa 31:19; 145:8-9

**James 5:7-11 teaches us how to respond properly when we are confronted with trials and difficulties...**

- \* Anticipate Christ’s coming (vss 7-8)
- \* Beware of Christ’s judgment (vs 9)
- \* Emulate the prophets (vss 10).
- \* Recognize God’s purpose (vs 11)

**\* Beware of Christ’s Judgment**

**[James 5:9]**

2. “*Complain*” means to groan or [10 sigh] either inwardly or outwardly.

Gal 5:22-23

3. James doesn’t treat this merely as antisocial behavior; he considers it sin which [14 Christ] will judge.

II Cor 5:10; Jms 2:12-13; I Cor 3:15

4. Jesus is standing right there behind the door, ready to come and begin His judgment of His people’s [12 lives] and deeds.

**\* Emulate the Prophets**

**[Verse 10]**

Jer 20:8-9

5. Why would James bring up the prophets in a text about patiently enduring unjust treatment from evil people? In order to help his readers put their [14 trials] in perspective.

Heb 11:37-38

6. These godly prophets weren’t simply examples of suffering, but of suffering and [18 patience].

7. We can be absolutely certain that we will [10 need] patience.

I Pet 4:12-13; Heb 12:6, 7

**\* Recognize God's Purpose**

**[Verse 11a]**

8. The prophets endured, and we count them “blessed” (happy)—a word that can really only apply to [20 believers].

I Pet 4:12-13; Mt 5:6-8; Acts 5:41

9. This is the joy of knowing we are right where God wants us to be, doing exactly what He wants us to do, so we have placed ourselves directly in the flow of His [12 grace] and blessings.

I Pet 2:19-20

**[Verse 11b]**

Job 1:21; 3:1; 7:11-15, 16

10. When Job's patience gave out, his [20 endurance] took over.

Jn 6:67-69; Job 13:15; Jms 5:5; Mt 5:11-12

**There is a happiness and a sense of God's mercy and compassion in affliction and persecution, for several reasons...**

- \*11. First, because in the hands of God, they are corrective, and that is ultimately a very [10 good] thing.

Heb 12:11

- \*12. Second, because affliction teaches us to [12 trust] God more implicitly.

I Pet 4:14

- \*13. Third, in the greatest times of hardship we have an opportunity to do [12 great] things for God.

- \*14. Fourth, spiritual greatness is hardened, tested, and proven in the fires of affliction and persecution [16 endured] by faithful believers.

II Tim 2:11-12; Mt 20:22

15. When James wants to prove God's compassion and mercy, he points to Job; we count him blessed because of what that terrible trial accomplished in his [12 heart] and life.