Sermon Outline

HOW TO BE PATIENT IN SUFFERING James 5:7-12

Introduction
• Job 5:7 said, “but man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.”
• Our so called “persecution” or “suffering” is often the result of our own sin or mixture of genuine testing by God or our faith in God and our own sin and immaturity.
• Nevertheless, whether our suffering is the result of our own sin or genuine testing by God, James exhortation here is applicable.
• Patient (Greek: ‘makrothumia’) means “a long holding out of the mind before it gives room to action or passion.” Or in English is “long-suffering” or “long-temper” as opposed to “short-temper.” It is when dealing with people.
• How can we be patient in the midst of trials and persecution?

1. Look to our eternal hope (verse 7).
• Long for the coming of the Lord; to realize that it won’t always be like this. The suffering will end and the ending is glorious!
• The word “coming” (Greek: “parousia”) means “physical presence.”
• The church at James’ time has always lived in the hope of the Second Coming. It was the focus of the early Christians who was in tribulation (see Rom 8:18ff).
• Why it is not so prominent in the thoughts of most Christians of our present day?
• It seems that the more the church is affluent, self-satisfied, feeling so secure on earth and indulgent the less concerned it is with the coming of Christ.
• But where is the promise of his coming?
• “Do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Pet 3:8).
• The reason of the delay: “The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance” (2 Pet 3:9).

2. Learn from good role models (verses 7b, 8, 10).
(a) The farmer (v. 7b, 8). The farmer plants and then he waits for the harvest. He can do nothing to accelerate the processes of nature. While waiting:
   (i) He has to make a sacrifice which entails a loss on him. He has to buy the grains of wheat (seeds) and bury them. For “unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (John 12:24).
   (ii) To face various contingencies under circumstances that keep changing.
   (iii) He expects for precious fruit as a reward. The reward of hearing the Master says, “Well done, good and faithful servant,” is worth waiting for.
To “Establish your hearts.” It is a word of resoluteness. To prop yourself up. Christ himself who will restore and establish us (1 Pet 5:10). But we have to make the commitment as well.

(b) The prophets (v. 10). Those who spoke the Word of God.

- Two main qualities: (1) the manner they suffered affliction; (2) their long-suffering.
- Heb 11:13, “These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar.” They patiently waited to the end by faith even they did not receive the things promised eventually.

3. Understand the Lord’s blessing (verse 11a).

- The eternal reward is reserved for those who suffer the most. The greater the suffering the greater the reward.
- The word “steadfast” means to exercise patience in respect of things. The word “patient” is in respect of people.
- The Lord never grieves us because He likes to grieve us (Lamentations 3:33).
- It is only heavy enough to serve as a bridge to carry us over in such a manner that others may say after we have gone, “blessed is he who has remained steadfast.”

4. Know the purpose of the Lord (verse 11b).

- God has a purpose in our trial and suffering as in Job case.
- What was God’s purpose with Job? (1) it is to test his faith and prove it real; (2) it is to strengthen his faith so that he would know God more clearly; (3) it is to prove to Satan that there was a man who loved God no matter what it cost; and (4) it is to increase Job’s blessedness.
- Can we then handle the fact that when we go through a trial God has a greater purpose in mind?
- We often do not know what God’s purpose is.
- But one thing we know for sure, “for those who love God all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose” (Rom 8:28). God is doing something to us, He is perfecting us.

5. Understand the Lord’s character (verse 11c).

- Do you ever get into a trial and you begin to question the character of God?
- Job complained a great deal. Yet his imperfections and human weaknesses are scarcely remembered.
- People tend to remember the bad things about us, but God remembers the good things.

6. Guard our tongue (verses 9 and 12).

- James has talk a lot about the danger of our tongue.
• Living under persecution and difficulty can create all kinds of frustration.

• It is natural when we see another Christian suffering less than we do, we will “grumble.” The word “grumble” means “to groan or grumble silently.”

• Even if we don’t tell anybody about our grudge against a brother in Christ, it is sin and will bring about God’s condemnation and judgment.

• It is also natural for us to turn to God in great indignation and say, “But God, why?”

• The use of God’s name (swearing) in the complaints of life is very common.

• It is a repeat of Mat 5:34. What did the Lord and James mean by their absoluteness, “do not swear”? It is the prohibition of the mention of God’s name in vain, or anything else in vain.

• Too much affirmation of truth arouses suspicion. Such a person may be trying to deceive and take advantage of you.

Conclusion
• Patience isn’t a virtue that comes easy for any of us.

• We need to be patient to go through the process required to teach patient to us.