

Book of James

Peter J. Scott . Transcribed 2019

I will be speaking from the letter written by James to the churches at large. James is considered to be the half-brother of Jesus by most. He was definitely a prominent elder in Jerusalem. This epistle actually predated all the Pauline epistles, 45-50 AD. Before Romans and Corinthians were written, this document was already in circulation. A lot of the verses in this book have common Hebrew metaphors that are played on and this makes it tough to translate. James is also considered one of the wisdom books in the bible, Proverbs being the other most noted one.

He starts out by introducing himself and to whom he is writing the letter, the Hebrews in Jerusalem and also all those throughout the known world. There is an obvious concern on his heart about the behavior of Christians and how we should behave. What is it that is going to get us through? What kind of expectations do we have for the New Testament believer and how he and she should walk in it? He starts off in James chapter one, verse two.

Count it All Joy . Christian Behavior

² *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,* ³ *knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.* ⁴ *But let patience have its perfect work, . . .*

- Patience isn't enough; you have to have its *perfect work*.

. . . *that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*

- We know that we all have a ways to go to be conformed into the image of Christ (Romans 8). It is interesting that this verse comes up here as the *purpose* for the trials that we go through. Why am I going through this? I prayed this just yesterday! Right?! Why do we have to go through these things?

Most of us who are getting older think of our trials as physical ones of just growing old. However most of what James is going to address in this letter has nothing to do with the physical or healing values, except for the very few last verses. All the rest is talking about how we behave and what causes the trials. He is outlining for us the behavior which is going to cause you to understand what it is to be conformed into the image of Christ. In James' mind isn't good enough for you to just come to the Lord but you need to be washed. We know that in water

baptism our sins are washed away, but we still have to die to the deeds of the flesh as it says in Romans.

So there is a ways to go concerning the things we have to do and the things we should NOT do. These believers to whom he is writing already believed in the Lord. James never mentions in this letter about the resurrection and the second coming of Christ because that is taken for granted. Mary and Martha knew about the resurrection when they talked about bringing Lazarus back to life. They already knew those kinds of doctrines. It was intrinsic in the Hebrew faith. So Jesus didn't have to mention it again. (But Jesus did need to mention to Martha what she needed.)

How to Prosper from the Trials . Ask

⁵ *If any of you lacks wisdom, . . .*

- In the natural we think that we have to work hard for it. We have to study and seek hard. But Jesus says, “*No. The only thing you have to do is . . .*”

. . . let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

- So what are the conditions for wisdom? **Ask for it!** How many times do we forget to ask? It is like we are getting through this trial by hanging on and forget to ask for wisdom. I'm guilty, guilty as charged. Well that is why we are being conformed into the image of Christ. That is why the character of Christ is so important. Because there wasn't ever a time when Jesus didn't ask the Father for wisdom.

When they asked Jesus what should we do with this woman caught in adultery, He knelt down and was waiting for things to unfold, the wisdom of God to come and then He said, “*Let he who is without sin cast the first stone.*” What more wisdom could He have had than that?

Faith

. . . let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶ *But let him ask in **faith**, . . .*

- This is the first time James talks about faith as a process not just a faith in knowing God, but faith as a **process of hope**. There is a faith that needs to be nurtured and built up in us. There is an aspect here in which we need to encourage each other. What has

God been doing already this morning through body ministry?
Encouraging us in the very things that we go through in life.

... with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

- Believe me, the waves have no mind of their own. They just let it happen.

⁷ *For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

- So we need to encourage one another. When we come to the Lord, that's how we should come. I don't know how many times I hear people's testimonies, whether it is in a home group or in casual conversation, and they say "this" is what the Lord wants and then they come with the circumstance. I can see the doubt, but also see them **feeding** the doubt. I can see them nurturing it. *"This thing is so evil. This thing is so dark. There doesn't seem to be any hope."* I think, *"Whoa, which side of the boat are you on? Cast the net out on the other side."*

I'm going to read James' letter in the context of our Christian behavior. There are ways that we can be in the trials and be victorious over them, not only victorious but to have that joy that he is talking about. It is so important that we don't lose that hope, our joy set before us. How many people have lost their joy? It is so easy to do. *It is the first target of the enemy in your life.* Satan thinks he may not be able to get to you but he can steal a little bit of your joy.

Trials are from the Temptations of Our Own Desires

¹² *Blessed is the man who endures temptation;*

- I don't want to endure. I want to be delivered out from it! The first reason you are going through a trial is because there is something in you that has a *temptation element*. A portion of the trial has something the enemy can get at in your heart, that's tempting you away from the way, the truth and the life.

¹² *... for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.* ¹³ *Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.* ¹⁴ *But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.*

- So some of the trials, not all but some, maybe most trials have to do with God getting at those “things,” those desires that entice you away from God. So, in the trial you should be looking and thinking, “*What is God saying in this?*” You already know what the enemy is saying, “*Let’s get him away from God.*” But what you want to find out is what God is saying in this thing.

¹⁵ *Then, when desire has conceived, . . .*

- We may think, “*It’s not so bad. It’s just a little sin.*” What is a little sin? I don’t even know what that means. I’ve used this analogy before but I was a football freak. When I was in college, I watched every single game on television. I didn’t miss a one. I knew all the players and all the contenders. If my team lost I was devastated! I eventually realized that I had been enticed. You could say, “*Football is not a sin.*” I can go to a football game now with no problem, but when things come to entice you, they have a way of getting in and taking hold. This is what James is saying.

¹⁵ *Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.* ¹⁶ *Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.* ¹⁷ *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*

- Now that is a Hebrew phrase, “no shadow of turning.” Does that make any sense in the English language? But it makes sense in our heart because you have the Holy Spirit. In Him there is no shadow of turning. Isn’t that good!

¹⁸ *Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth,*

- How did He bring us forth? By the word of His truth. So in that circumstance, in that trial, He wants to bring to your heart the truth of what is in there, in your heart. And, you are going to see the truth of what is going on in the trial and the circumstance. That’s almost beside the point. Remember he says, “*Count it joy,*” because it is conforming you into the image and character of Christ.

. . . that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

- We’ve heard that before in other context.

What Qualities Are Needed in Trials

PATIENCE: not responding in anger. Oh, oh. Sometimes it really bothers me when I see other people respond to things in anger when they shouldn't. But it doesn't bother me so much when I do it. True? So when you see somebody else having road rage and here they go, you back away. But when it involves you, you think, "*Oh well, he deserved that.*"

¹⁹ So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; ²⁰ for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

- So put it away. What do you do with anger? You die to it. It's human anger; just die to it. Put it away. That's a part of the old man you left in the water's of baptism. Don't let it take hold of you. Then James says:

Filthiness

²¹ Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, . . .

- Why are you going through such trials? Because there is something filthy in you that needs to be put aside, an overflow of wickedness. And overflow means it is being manifested.

. . . and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

- The meekness of God is not something that is to be despised. We say, "*Why can't the word just come to some of these guys in Congress and blow them away!*"

You know there are people who pray in Congress and in the Senate! I go to Twitter now because I have Mark Rubio as one of those I love to follow. Almost every day he gives a scripture and a good one that is very poignant to current situations. Before he even says anything about the Republicans or Democrats or Venezuela, he first says something from the bible either from the old or new testament. He really seems to know his scripture! So God has a way of bringing forth a man of God. Sometimes they are not going to be as demonstrative and boisterous as some, but their meekness and the word planted in them is going to be true and on the mark and on the target. It will not miss or return void. It will not come back without fruit.

Now if you believe that, that means it is also true for yourself. The word of God is important.

Be Doers Not Hearers Only

²² *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, . . .*

- I could say that over and over. We should write a song about that.

. . . deceiving yourselves.

- How do we deceive ourselves? By hearing something and not doing it. Who's guilty? We all are. You remember I've used the 80/20 parallel. There are some statements that have 100% truth, some 80% and some even less. Maybe you are doing pretty well but there is a percentage of part of you that still needs to die, the old nature.

²³ *For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for he observes himself, goes away, and **immediately** forgets what kind of man he was.*

- Now when I look into the mirror in the morning, (you may laugh) I say, "*There he is the 'man of God.'*" Then I laugh! Go ahead, laugh. I always smirk a little bit, but the Lord says, "*Oh no. It's true.*" Does God answer you in the mirror? He brings me right to this scripture. I walk away and say okay, "*I'm a man of God this morning.*" I take my pills, whatever, brush my teeth, shave my face. I'm ready for the world. My shoes are tied, ready to preach the word. I leave the mirror and I forget who I am. That's someone who knows but doesn't do the word. If you don't do it, you are like that man. So this morning when I looked into the mirror and smiled and smirked, I said, "*No, I am a man of God!*" Amen.

The Lord confirmed this. I told Him I didn't want to teach out of the book of James. But just recently I was in the Fort Lauderdale airport and this man comes up next to us and starts talking. His wife Anna just went back to Venezuela (crisis there in 2019) to get out two children enrolled in college there that she is trying to get out. It is going to take a miracle to get them out. My wife Cheryl said, "*We'll pray for you.*" He said, "*Definitely. Pray.*" Later on he asked, "*Is that your husband? I can tell he is a pastor.*" He looked right at me and said, "*Preach the word!*" How prophetic can that be? How did he know that or anything? He doesn't but the Holy Spirit does and when you look in the mirror and the Holy Spirit looks back He is saying, "*You are a man of God, O Gideon, O man of valor!*" Was Gideon? Well in the Lord's eyes Gideon had what the Lord wanted him to do in his bones! He wasn't going to fail.

He wasn't going to shrink back. He wasn't going to seek mercy from the enemy. He was going to seek mercy from God. The grace and mercy of God is what makes these things happen. The Holy Spirit within us is inevitably drawn upon within us to make any of this happen.

²⁵ *But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, . . .*

- Isn't that good? The perfect law of liberty is what? **Grace**. When you look at that and continue not doing it you are a forgetful hearer. But if you are not,

. . . a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

Bridle the Tongue

²⁶ *If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.*

- Immediately he says it isn't just about what you feel inside, it is what you say with your mouth.

Now days you just go on Facebook and see even half of what people say and so much of what they've written has to be blocked since so much is vile, filthy language, even if they are trying to communicate a good thing. Where does that come from? It's crazy. That man's religion is useless. You make it worth nothing.

Good Works

²⁷ *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*

- It has nothing to do with vileness. It is to *do* something, to keep oneself unspotted from the world. Listen, you can't tell dirty jokes any more. You are not allowed to swear and constantly refer to genitalia and the physical body. The human race seems to be enamored by it. It is crazy, silly stuff! You might think it doesn't mean anything. Yes it does to the Lord. It is filthy. What God wants you to have is love from your heart, and that will bring forth good work. If we continue to just spew out evil and evil language, it isn't just words. It is what is coming out in intent as well. Hello, the Lord asked me to pray for governor Cuomo. I'm not really up to this. "*Lord, pick someone else.*" Oh

dear now I'm in trouble. Out of my heart comes, "Lord, judge this man. Lord, take him down; I don't care how far, as far as you can!" But the Lord's heart is mercy and kindness, rescuing. We read that later on in the same letter. The Lord's heart is so different. Let's go ahead a little.

5 ¹⁹ Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, ²⁰ let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

- Wow. Back to 1:27.

. . . and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

- That means it is a continuing task. Do I still have to do that. Yes, I do.

Partiality, Chapter Two

2 ¹ My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality.

- So the next thing he talks about in your trials is partiality, and I think this is a good one to talk about. A lot of trials that I hear about result from deifying or elevating men or women to a place where they shouldn't be. Another words looking to someone as better than others.

² For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, ³ and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," ⁴ have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with **evil** thoughts?

- So James doesn't say it is just bad. He says it is **evil**! This partiality that we display is more subtle in our current culture. For instance, how many people are wearing jeans today. Maybe you don't like jeans. Maybe you don't like a lot of things, for instance the way a person talks. That partiality is what has just cropped up in you. I don't know how many times my trial process comes from my boss or some of the doctors I know, the ones I revere, the ones I am looking to for approval. I'm looking for a handout for my next raise or whatever it might be. But the Lord says, "Well, what about the man who just walked in who

can't even hold his urine and is a mess? What about him? Are you going to go see him today? He smells, doesn't take care of himself. Are you going to go see him today?" "Yes. Yes, Lord, I will." Let's skip to verse fourteen:

Faith without Works is Dead

¹⁴ *What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?*

- Most of us would say, "Well if it is the faith in the Lord Jesus and the blood of Jesus Christ, yes." But it isn't just about that. That faith brings forth something.

¹⁵ *If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?¹⁷ Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

- So this is really one of the most controversial scriptures in the reformation. In the reformation it wasn't about works at all; it was about faith. Faith is what saves you. But what James is saying here is that faith is *precipitous*. It has consequences that follow it. You can no longer see a brother or sister who is in need and say, "God bless you. I'll pray for you," and walk away. But if that faith in you is a true faith, it is going to be inseparable, cannot be torn away from the actions of love, mercy and kindness in a real tangible way. It doesn't mean the church has to be relevant to the world. It means the world has to be relevant to the church. But when the church is in the world and surrounded by the world, which we indeed are, there are needs set before us we know God Himself has set before us. There are other needs set around us and we know that God has **not** set them before us to do. But there are *good works* that God has for us to do. Amen.

The Untamable Tongue, Chapter Three

³ ¹ *My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, . . .*

- Why? Because the teachers are going to be talking a lot about scripture. They are going to be quoting truth. They are going to be quoting absolutes and their lives have to measure up. They are going to have a stricter judgment. So, what we say does make a difference. My question is, "Are you called to be a teacher?" Well, everyone of us is called to be a teacher. In fact,

does a mother not teach her children? Does a father not teach his sons and daughters? Of course they do. What are we teaching them? The wisdom and the character of God in the biblical context, the word of God. We have them sometimes memorize scripture, more importantly, to learn the character of Christ.

Heavenly Versus Demonic Wisdom

There is a wisdom that we ask for from God, but it is not the wisdom of men. Listen.

¹³ *Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.*

¹⁴ *But if you have bitter envy . . .*

- He's talking to the church here. He is not speaking to unbelievers. A church filled with grace, mercy and loving kindness.

¹⁴ *. . . but if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.*

- This is an exam time to look at your heart. Most of our tendencies are to say, "Oh, it is not there."

¹⁵ *This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, **demonic**.*

- That's a pretty strong characteristic of that kind of wisdom!

¹⁶ *For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every **evil** thing are there.*

- So that speaks of a brother going through some trials and we could think that what God is ultimately trying to get at are those things which *we* would consider wise, or those things the *world* would consider wise. You see, we have been imprinted by the world, by grade school, junior high. You've been imprinted by your friends, by the peers you grew up with to have a certain classic wisdom. Example: fairness. How many times have we heard, "That's not fair!" in the playground, in pre-school, in junior high. College? "That's not fair!" Graduate school, "That's definitely not fair." We are pre-set to know something about fairness **but** the wisdom of God says that *it doesn't have to be fair to the world at all*. It might even be very *unfair* for you to go through this particular trial or tribulation. However, the character of Christ that it is bringing out in you will go beyond the worldly concept of fairness.

- We need to be delivered from this. James did not just say we should be delivered from it, but *we need to confront it.*

¹⁷ *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, .*

..

- Do you want to know if it is wisdom from God or the wisdom of men? What is it doing to your heart? Is it pure, peaceable?

... *gentle, willing to yield, . . .*

- Sometimes God says *not* to yield but be **willing** to yield. We don't go in there with all our guns loaded and ready to fire, but be *willing* to hold off.

... *full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.*

- I have been there. I have been in conferences and meetings where all they wanted to do was destroy others or myself. I had to come into the place in meekness, not in anger.

¹⁸ *Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.*

- That's for you. It's not going to come from the world. You think, "*Oh if I could only change the heart of this person, my trials would be over.*" The Lord says, "*That's immaterial.*" The heart He wants to change is yours. James lowers his guns again to the Hebrew believers and now to us, the Gentiles.

Pride Promotes Strife . the State of World Affairs

⁴ *Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?*

- James is saying there is something in you that needs to die.

² *You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.*

- You didn't even ask.

³ *You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.*

- Why didn't God answer your prayer? There is probably something in your heart, to spend it on your pleasures. You just want things to go your own way. "*I don't want to be in this trial! I just want things to go my way.*"

⁴*Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?*

- Now James is saying it like it is. It is the friendship with world that causes most of this problem. The friendship with the world is enmity with God. Remember what Jesus said, “*Why are you surprised that the world hates you? They hated Me first.*” Mike Pence our Vice President was saying that yesterday to the graduating class at Liberty Academy (2019). They are not going to be as blessed as Christians in the future environment they are headed to. They are going to be ridiculed for their faith. And we are too. If I got up and read this sermon in the New York assembly right now, you can imagine what would happen! I might even be arrested for a “hate speech.”

Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

- That says it just like it is. Do you want to be a friend of the world? You are going to be an enemy of God. How can both of those exist? In many Christian’s lives it does exist. That’s why the trial is there!

Submit and Resist the Devil

⁵ *Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously”?* ⁶ *But He gives more grace. Therefore He says:*

“God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”

- This refers to Proverb 3:44. God resists the proud. There is something in us that wants to be right in this trial, something in us that wants to win. *Maybe God wants us to lose!* I might not be happy about that. Why didn’t you win? Why didn’t you choose that direction? You would have been better off. Maybe God isn’t concerned about your winning or losing. God is concerned about the eternal things in your heart, not just in this world but in the world to come.

¹⁰ *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*

- Humility, mistakes. We have discussed why but now he points out some real mistakes you might make.

Mistakes

¹¹ *Do not speak evil of one another, brethren.*

- That's a big mistake. He's not talking about the world now. He's talking about you and me. For instance, "*You know I really love Wayne as an elder, BUT . . . Let me point out his faults.*" I may know his faults but I shouldn't point them out. I don't like it when he points them out about me unless of course the Lord might lead him to point out a few things in my life that need to change, because he is a fellow elder and I have given him the liberty to so. But here it says, "*Don't speak evil of one another.*" And that evil means with the ***intent to destroy***.

¹¹ *He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.* ¹² *There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy.*

- Who is that? Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Who are you to judge another?

- Amen.

Boasting about Tomorrow

¹³ *Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit";* ¹⁴ *where as you do not know what will happen tomorrow.*

- You are in the middle of a trial and you say, "*Oh, I am going to go on vacation! I need a vacation. It's not always going to be like this; My 401 k will come in. It will not always going to be like this; I will have another degree. It is not always going to be this way; The trial will change and it will be a new day.*" You don't even understand the whole picture. You don't know what's going to happen tomorrow. I thought today was going to be a nice sunny day. That forecast is busted. My dad was a weatherman and when he busted a forecast he got all gloomy. I'm not so gloomy because this scripture is true. Here is the perspective, your life versus eternity. We see our life on a day to day basis. Mirror in the morning, pillow at night. That's how we see our life.

- The scripture says, “*No, no. There is a different way of measuring your life. But what is your life? It is a vapor that appears for a little time!*” Oh great, I’m a vapor.

For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. ¹⁵ *Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.”*

- The will and the purposes and intent of God’s heart ought to be foremost in your heart. And that’s why we pray. That’s why we are committed to God. That’s why we encourage one another. That’s why we gather together on Sunday mornings and in home groups and don’t miss a moment when the Holy Spirit can encourage us.

¹⁶ *But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.*

- Now, I don’t know too many people would say that in our world today. They would say, “*This is a better time for you. We are going to have another four years of the next president or whatever Party you want to pick. Things will get better; things will change. I will just move to another country, etc.*” But James says that isn’t just the world imprinting on you; **it is evil!** That’s evil because it *misses the mark of what you are made for in eternity*. You are made for something more than this. After your body is gone, your spirit will still be alive. When Jesus comes back in the Resurrection, you will be resurrected in a glorified body. I’m looking forward to that. How old do you want to be then? 29, 39? I don’t care. Pick one. That glorified body will be strong though. It is going to be able to do things I never thought of. Whatever you can imagine, it is going to be better, That is the eternal nature that God wants for you, not what is going to happen here on earth. What did He say to the Thessalonians? Oh by the way it may not get better for you here, but when Jesus comes the judgment will come. “*Oh great, I have to wait until the judgment to get over this trial?*” Exactly!

¹⁷ *Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.*

- Sin, in this context of “let’s just wish our life away.” So we know what is good. We have good works to do, but if we don’t do it, to him it is sin. When my father was dying after a stroke, his attention span was about twenty seconds. I know that because he couldn’t watch a commercial from the beginning to the end. They were about thirty seconds long. He said, “*Why does*

*the Lord still have me here? Why am I still here? I should be gone.” I said, “I feel pretty good about giving you this lecture, dad, for a change after all the ones you have given to me. But number one you are not God. And you know what you can still do. There are good works for you to do.” He asked, “What good work?” What good work could he do in a hospital bed with a stroke? What would God’s will be for him to have any good work? He wouldn’t remember the scriptures. He wouldn’t be able to give you the character of Christ maybe. If he couldn’t even do all that, the thing he **could do** was to smile! He always had a wit and was able to encourage people. He could always do that. So I said, “Well, with that nurse that comes and takes care of you every day, you can make her smile.” Right? That is the work that God had set before him if he didn’t do it, there would be sin. And that is exactly what I said to him. You know what? He smiled with understanding which caused me to smile. Amen.*

Rich Oppressors will be Judged

5¹ Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you! ² Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

- We look at the riches and say, “*Oh boy, if I only could have “x” number of dollars or I could only have this or that. . .*” James says, “*Your riches are corrupt and your garments are moth-eaten.*” Isn’t that an echo of what David says in the psalms over and over again. He says all those things that we think are so wonderful in the world, in God’s eyes, they are just rotting trash.

Patient and Persevering

7 Therefore be patient, . . .

- I am patient! Until when? Until the coming of the Lord. His patience is long enduring.

See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. ⁸ You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

- The coming of the Lord will happen even in the beginning, in the midst of your trials and tribulation.

Grumbling

⁹ *Do not grumble against one another, brethren, . . .*

- Not only don't speak evil but don't grumble.

. . . lest you be condemned.

Oaths

¹² *. . . my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes" be "Yes," and your "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment.*

- Don't just swear because that might be a great thing to do, to make an oath before God or on the bible. Your words should be true, either yes or no. Then lastly James finishes up with healing and physical suffering.

Solutions to Trials . Praying

¹³ *Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.* ¹⁴ *Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.* ¹⁵ *And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. . . .*

- All kinds of things can be included in this. The faith of our Lord Jesus Christ can show up in this trial no matter what it is, physical, mental or spiritual. The Lord will save us in ways only He can do.

. . . And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

- Sins are always there to be forgiven, aren't they? Is there sin that He cannot forgive? If there is, they are few and far between. Most of the ones that I can think of are the sins you embrace when you refuse to give up.

Confession of the Sin

This next one is an interesting one. This is why we have home groups, why we have relationship with other Christians. Is it easy to be a Christians without other Christians? No, you can't.

¹⁶ *Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.*

- Part of the healing that God has for us, the wholeness of the scripture in the context of the Holy Spirit within us, is that we minister to one another in the body of Christ. Isn't that what we were doing this morning as one by one, people came up and shared the mercy and testimony of God in our lives? When Helen was suffering and sometimes not here, she still wants to give her testimony. The Lord is not going to let her go! Once you have seen Helen's smile when she says that, you will never be the same person again.

The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

- How much? Elijah was human flesh just like ours.

¹⁷ Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. ¹⁸ And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

- Woah. Do you have that kind of prayer? Do you have that kind of faith? He is saying, "You do!" Amen.

Summation

So in all the things that James has taught us this morning, he has taught us how to behave as Christians. He has taught us what to do and what not to do. None of it is easy. The Holy Spirit says, "*If you are yoked with the Lord, His burden is easy and His yoke is light.*" So it can become since all of the tools for you are here, for you to not just go through the trial but to prosper in it. To ***prosper in the trial***. The intent of the enemy is for you to die, wither and fade away. The intent of the Lord is for you to prosper. The Lord says, "*The world has evil intent for you but I have plans for you,*" says the Lord. "*I have plans for you and they are not evil, but that you would be rich and prosper.*" Those are the plans the Lord has for us. And that is why we count it ALL joy when we go through the trials.

There are some trials I have gone through, I don't want to go through again. Absolutely do not want to have another kidney stone. I absolutely do not want to be diagnosed with prostate cancer again. Absolutely do not want it! I absolutely do not want to go through bladder cancer again. Don't want it. Don't want to be there. The pain wasn't of those things. The pain was in my heart since the very first thing I think of is that I've been betrayed. But God immediately comes and His Holy Spirit says, "*That is NOT true. No matter what I put you through physically, you are able to endure.*" Is that right? He hasn't put anything in

front of us that He hasn't equipped us to be able to go through in mercy, loving kindness and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Not under the Law, not under some person's teaching, but **under the word of God which will not go forth void**. Amen.



Now if you are going through a trial and need prayer, let's stand up we'll pray.

Lord, we confess to You that we are like those old beans in the back of the refrigerator. Sometimes there is stuff there we just don't want any more. The trials that we are going through, we don't want to go through them. We pray that You would lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one. That is a good prayer. We don't shirk from that. We ask for wisdom in the situations we are in. We ask that the word of God that we heard this morning, to not honor men or the wisdom of this world, but we would look towards You, the foundation of our faith. We would look to You, the Holy Spirit within us, to You to save us, to make us whole and to make us prosper.

*Lord, that the word wouldn't just stop with us but in that trial we would infect those around us even in the world. They would see the inprintation of the word of God and not the wisdom of men, that they would see the inprint of the Holy One that came upon this earth and walked upon this earth, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who was resurrected for the very purpose for us to be here this morning, **not in disaster but in victory!** Victory not just in the circumstances but through the circumstance, bringing forth the power of the resurrection, the power to roll that stone away from the grave. The power to come forth and bring life where there is darkness.*

In Albany, let it be. Lord, let your prayer warriors there speak the word of truth. In Washington, let it be. In the World, even the Middle-East, where things can be so terrible we just don't know. In so many places in the world, evil is increasing. But we are praying that the people of God stand up and be doers of the word and bring forth the righteousness of the gospel of the Kingdom, that we would not just be here but our prayers would avail much. In Jesus' Name. Amen.