

# Patience Under Persecution

*Studies in James*

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Well, take your Bibles with me this morning and turn back to the book of James. We are almost done. We have got... I was looking ahead as to where my notes will carry me over the next couple of weeks and maybe if I cannot get too long winded we have got about after this message two more messages and we will be concluded with the book of James and I don't have a clue where we are going from there.

I will get to that point when we get to that point. I tell you. It has been an eye opening experience to myself study the book of James and get to the teach the book of James to you and I have enjoyed it and I have learned a lot as I have gone through the book of James.

I think I had taught through it previously on one occasion. I am not really sure. I don't keep real good notes of what I do and do not do. But I think the one thing that I carry away from the book of James is the importance of us as God's children seeking to use the things that he has given us to glorify and honor him by our obedience and our love and our devotion and our dedication to him as men and women who have been justified, who have been redeemed, who have been qualified and made fit for eternal life.

And it is absolutely essential that you and I as God's children perform good works. Now that is just... it is absolutely essential. No good works, no grace. Now that is just what the Scriptures teach us.

Another thing that I have carried away from the book of James is it taught me that lesson last week more than any other it has taught me the brevity of our humanity, how short our lives are.

I tell you what. And I have learned the importance of brethren. And we are going to see that this morning as we look into the opening part of chapter five because there is a difference between men and women who are in the Church and those who are brethren. And I want you to see that this morning as we go through this because chapter five deals with patience during persecution. And that is how he ends out this great book.

I am going to tell you what. As we started this book several months ago James was a pastor of the church at Jerusalem and if anybody understood persecution, those Jews who had come to believe the gospel and who had rested in Christ Jesus as the Lord their righteousness, they understood what persecution was.

You have got to realize. They had been raised all their life in the Judaistic faith. They had followed all the rules and regulations. They had been obedient and subservient to the law and to the priesthood and to the tabernacle and then to the temple in their generation and followed all those ceremonies that were commanded by God. And then God graciously had brought them to know Christ as the Lord their righteousness and they had been, as we talked about in the Sunday school hour, they were part of the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of all truth. They had been called out and been called to separate themselves from their former religion. They had been called to separate themselves from their former brethren or what they considered brethren, even their own families.

And many of them, because of that separation, because of that clear line of distinction made over the gospel, they had lost their jobs. They had lost their relationships with many of their families. They had lost their friends and many people persecuted them and that quite drastically. And that is what he is dealing with here because in this final chapter of James, James chapter five, we come back to this subject of the trial of our faith.

And, see, that is one of the things that we need to understand. And we are talking about specifically persecution that arises over the gospel. Those are the trials that God sends.

Now as we told you at the very beginning, temptations and our dealing with temptations, temptations come from us. God tempts no man. He tries everyone of his children's faith. And so this trying of our faith deals with persecution that comes over our dogmatic, uncompromising stand over the gospel. And, remember, the same gospel light that exposes the lost state of unbelievers and the fact that their deeds which they highly esteem and count as what makes them saved or qualified or entitled to eternal life, that gospel declares those deeds are evil in and of themselves. They might go to church. They might be moral. They might be sincere. They might be dedicated. They might be the kind that is most compassionate men and women on the planet. But if they do any of those things thinking that it saves them or keeps them saved or qualifies them for eternal life, what are they? They are wicked sinful evil deeds. And that gospel declares that to be so. That is what brings the hatred and persecution because of the gospel.

Look over at... hold your place there in James chapter five. Look back over at John chapter three. Look at verse 19.

“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world.”

Light is the gospel. Really, we could think about light as Christ. Christ says, “I am the light of the world.” Right, in Matthew.

Light is come into the world. Righteousness is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light, rather than righteousness. Now we have got to remember who he is talking to. He is talking to Nicodemus. What was Nicodemus? Nicodemus was a Pharisee. As far as Nicodemus was concerned, Nicodemus was going to heaven. Right? What has he already told Nicodemus? He has already told this righteous upright moral kind compassionate man who I can guarantee you we try to make him out like they are some kind of evil men with horns on their head. If Nicodemus was married he loved his wife.

Do you hear me? If he had children, he loved his children. He was good guy.

Now we have got to get that mentality out of our mind that these guys were a bunch of just evil men. That... I am not... I have never denied. Have you ever heard me say that there aren't any good people out there as far as goodness in the world counts? I know a lot of people that are just I know and have come to be friends with in this... they are great people. But listen. Great people and good moral character does not make a Christian. Now it doesn't. Nicodemus was everything the world would count as a Christian. He has told him what? You must be born again, Nicodemus, huh? Twice he has told him he must be born again.

And now this man Nicodemus he tells Nicodemus, "Nicodemus, here is the condemnation. Light, righteousness has come into the world and what do men do? Men love darkness. Now what kind of darkness do they love? Not immorality. We know men love that by nature. Right? Context is everything.

Again, who is he speaking to? This isn't Barabbas that is going to be hung on a cross beside of our Lord Jesus Christ that he is talking with. He is not saying, "Barabbas, I know you love darkness and immorality and theft is going to one day put you on a tree."

Who is he talking to? A moral, kind, self righteous man and he says, "Men," including Nicodemus, the one who he is talking to, "Men love darkness rather than light."

What darkness do they love? Religious darkness.

Why? Because their deeds are evil. For everyone that doeth evil, what do they hate?

Who hated our Lord Jesus Christ? Who really hated him? Who were the ones that nailed him a tree? Huh? It wasn't the prostitutes and publicans. Who nailed him there? Religious folks. The rulers of the religious nation. They were... you might... isn't it amazing? He was called the friend of publicans and sinners. And yet the religious people what were they doing? They were meeting behind dark doors in cloudy rooms plotting his destruction.

Isn't that amazing? Why? Because what had he done? We are done here, but you write down this verse. Write down John chapter seven verse seven. I think that is where, John chapter seven verse seven where our Lord Jesus Christ tells them, "The world cannot hate

you, but me it hateth because I testify of it that the works thereof are the world, what are they? They are evil.”

Why did they hate our Lord? Why could he not go up to Jerusalem where they were celebrating a religious festivity? Now they said, “Lord, let’s go up. Let’s go to Jerusalem. Let’s go up to the festival.”

He said, “I can’t go up.”

Why?

Because what have I done? I have testified that what they are doing up there what is it? It is sinful and it is evil. And because of it what did they do?

See, they didn’t hate Christ for the miracles. They didn’t hate him for the healings. They hated him for the truth. Same reason they hated Paul. The same reason they crucified Peter. Same reason they put John on the isle of Patmos. It wasn’t over their personality, folks. It was over what they preached, what they declared because what does it show? It reveals the evil and sinfulness of man.

So he is saying, because he has already told them now I am going to see that in just a minute. This persecution that we are talking about that arises over the world, it is common to every believer in some degree. All of us are going to experience it. That is how our faith is tried. That is how God reveals to our heart and our mind we believe the truth, because if we don’t believe the truth, what will we do? We are to be like those who our Lord Jesus Christ talked about that they believed on him, but they wouldn’t commit themselves to it because what? They were afraid they would be put out of where? The synagogue, for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

The difference and the distinction between a child of God is when persecution arises over the Word, what do they do? They stand up against it. And they will not compromise even if it costs them their very lives. Do you hear me?

Those who do not believe it, do not love it, do not abide continue in it, when persecution arises over the Word do you know what they are going to do? They will compromise.

They will say, “We don’t have to be that life or death about this thing.”

Now, see, he had already started the book of James. Turn back over there to our text. Listen to this. He had already told them, “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into different temptations,” James chapter one verse two. Count it a joy.

Why? Knowing this that the trying of your faith, and God tries all our faith through persecution that arrives over the Word, he says the trying of your faith, what does it do? It works patience. But let patience have her perfect work that you may be perfected and

entire, complete, lacking for nothing, in other words that you are confirmed in your heart and your mind that you are one of his children.

Now this chapter opens, turn back over to chapter five. It opens with a strong condemnation towards somebody. And he condemns the rich.

And do you know what the rich were doing? According to what we are going to see here in this they were oppressing the poor believers, men and women who believed the gospel. While they themselves were living in lives of pleasure and luxury.

That is why I read Psalm 73. You know, David said, “the heathen, what do they do? They prosper on every side, do they not?” There is no pains in their death. Everything is wonderful for them. And these rich unbelievers were those who persecuted those who were believers in the Church of God. Some believe that they were rich believers who were attending the assembly or else they were rich unbelievers who were attending the assembly but wouldn’t... but that wouldn’t make sense if that is who he is talking about because of several things. First of all, in the first six verses that is why I said a moment ago one of the things I carried away from the book of James is this, the importance of realizing who our brothers are, our brethren.

You know in the first six verses when he talks about these rich people and the end their destruction, he never ever addresses them as brethren. He doesn’t do it one time. Now down in verse seven he starts out talking about how we deal with those who persecute us over the Word.

He says, “Be patient therefore, brethren.”

But the first six verses, he doesn’t mention brethren. He doesn’t even consider them to be brethren.

In verses one through six there is no call. He doesn’t ever... in these first six verses he never calls on them to repent. He never calls on them to have godly sorrow over the persecution that they were performing against brethren or against believers. He doesn’t say repent or perish. He doesn’t say turn or you will burn. He doesn’t ever call on them to do anything. He just basically flat out tells them, “Your end is coming.”

The third thing is this. There is no rebuke for inconsistently with their faith. All through this book when these guys were doing that, when they were putting one man forward over another because of their financial situation, what did James do? He rebuked them. he told them, “Don’t do it. Don’t persecute your brethren. Don’t turn against your brethren. Stand with your brethren. Love the brethren.

He doesn’t mention that here. As a matter of fact, he doesn’t even mention their faith. So it is clear that in these statements that we are going to look at starting in verse one, it is a statement of faith. So from now it is [?] a judgment upon unbelieving rich men and women who were persecuting believers. Some believe he was referring specifically to

rich believers in Jerusalem who were going to be instrumental... you have got to remember now. The Church was in Jerusalem and what happened? What happened in Jerusalem? Persecution arose over the Word and where did they go? They left Jerusalem because they weren't... now go back and read the book of Acts. They were happy and content in Jerusalem, were they not?

Remember, they had 300 saved. Then upwards of 5000 were saved. Then upwards of 15,000 were saved and then we said the whole world is going after in Jerusalem. And they had all things in common and they were worshipping God and breaking bread house to house daily, worshipping God's Spirit, rejoicing in that the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved. And they would... you know what? They, by nature, do you know what they would do? The same thing we would do, stay right there.

But it wasn't God's purpose for them to stay right there. Right? Because at one point in time who is going to be over here in America? Huh? So what does God have to do? God has to disperse them. And so how does he disperse them? Persecution because of the Word arises and what happens?

Our God, even though these rich men and women were condemned over their persecution of these believers in Jerusalem, God used them to drive his Church out and disperse it into the world to proclaim the gospel of his grace to the ends of the world.

And he tells them here that... and you have got to realize now at this point in time we are still several years away from AD 70 when what is going to happen in AD 70? Jerusalem is going to be utterly destroyed. Everything that they knew and loved and held in high respect was going to be taken away.

And the question might be this. Why would James add this if those whom he described wouldn't hear it? If there is unbelievers here that they are not actually going to hear this, if he is talking about a bunch of lost folks in verses one through six, why even put it in there?

Well, his purpose here wasn't just merely to condemn those oppressors, but do you know what he writes in here for? It is encouragement to those who are being oppressed because our natural tendency and we will see this as we go through this fifth chapter, our natural tendency is when somebody persecutes us, what do we want to do back? We want... don't we want to get them back for it? And he has already told them when somebody persecutes you, what are you supposed to do? Let it go. Just take it. Forget about it.

And so the encouragement here to them is he is seeking to dissuade these believers, these brethren from envying these men and women.

Do you know what we ought to do? When people persecute us over the Word, we ought to feel sorry for them. Shouldn't we? You ought to ask God every day. Lord, give me eyes to look at this world as you see it.

We deal with dying men and women in a dying and dead world. Do we not? And I know the end of every man and woman who does not believe this gospel. They can do whatever they want to to my body and to me as an individual. But I tell you what. I know what is going to happen to them one day. Our God is going to deal with it. That is why if I could get anybody back with any wrong they have ever done me, folks, I could just inflict a little pain, a little agony, a little broken heart, a little grief. But he is telling us here that these men and women who stand against the gospel, who hate the gospel and who hate God's children, God will deal with them in vengeance. Vengeance is the Lord's. Let him deal with them. Because I will guarantee you. Like King David said, he said, "When I saw their end, when I saw you put them in a slippery place to where in a moment what happens? Their feet slide and they are gone. And then when they are gone what do they meet? They fall into the hands of this God. And when God deals with them eternally with eternal condemnation, I guarantee you that is a whole lot worse punishment and condemnation than anything you or I could ever inflict on him by some little, you know, sticks and stones break our bones.

You might say something to hurt their feelings. You might even do something to hurt their body. God deals with both body and soul and he can destroy both in eternal flames.

And so he shows us their final end.

So he is writing to believers of such persons and showing that Christ and his Church, look, we are going to be vindicated. We will be [?].

And notice what he says. Look at verse four. Notice the certain judgment is going to come.

He says, "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you."

I like the way he starts this out. He says, "Go to now, you rich men." The main people who due to their own selfishness and their own greed oppress believers and the poor are unbelieving rich and unbelievers who have political and ecclesiastical power and authority. That is who are doing.

He says, "Go to now, you rich man."

Now listen to me. All rich men aren't considered here. You know, some who are rich believe the gospel. And they use the means God has given them. Do you hear me? They use the means that God has given them for the glory of God, for the preaching of the gospel and for the relief of human suffering.

Now I want to tell you what. There is some unbelievers out there that I have some unbelieving friends that are extremely wealthy. Don't believe this gospel. But they have helped me and my family through the years. Good people.

So he is not talking about all rich men and women. Abraham. Was a rich man, was he not? And he is known as the father of the faithful.

Job was a rich man, right? And he was called a just man. He lost everything, but at the end what did God do? God gave him back everything plus. But God called that rich man Job a just man.

Philemon, anybody ever read the book of Philemon? Philemon was a rich man. And he was a supporter of the apostle Paul. And it is thought to be said and told that his home, Philemon's home was where the Church at Colosse met back at the beginning. So James is telling believers here, "You have got to keep things in the proper perspective," that even though many who have persecuted and hated the gospel seem to prosper in this life, they are going to perish if they don't repent and believe the gospel.

Now he says, "Go to now..." And literally that would be better translated, "Come now or listen. Listen up."

Instead of rejoicing in their riches, what should they do? That would be weeping and sorrowing about the destruction that is about to come upon them.

We need to understand that all people, rich or poor who are in unbelief, who are ignorant of or not submitted to Christ's righteousness revealed in the gospel, look, they are in a state of lostness. They are not... they are in their minds they are enemies in their own minds by wicked works and listen they are every single solitary moment of their lives striving to pay a debt to God's law and justice that they cannot pay by whatever means, by whatever agency. But they are all perishing and they are unbelievers.

See, they basically have everything that they could ever... these people that are doing [?] they have everything they could ever possibly want in this life. But they got... they use those things that they have been given instead of using them to supply the needs of others they have gained an air and an attitude of self sufficiency to the point that they thought, you know, we don't need God.

Again, it is not riches in and of themselves that are evil. There is nothing wrong with having money. I wish I had more. If the Lord gave me what I need, but nothing wrong with having money. But those who are rich in this world's goods, I tell you what. They need to remember what God's Word says.

Listen to this. "Charge them that are rich in this world." In other words, if you have got the Lord has blessed you with money, that they be not high minded nor trust in uncertain... do you hear that? Uncertain riches.

You have got a million dollars in the bank? It is still uncertain riches. Even in America. Oh, yeah.



We have got the FDIC.

I tell you. You let this banking system fail in our country, I don't know if you keep up with the news, folks, the FDIC is broke anyhow. We have even bailed out the FDIC. And still ain't given them enough money.

If every bank failed in America there is not enough money to back it up. Now how are they going to back it up with? More printed paper? See, it is uncertain. I hope to God that none of us are trusting in what we have.

Now lay up store for yourself, hear? But don't put any trust or comfort or security in it because in a moment it can go away. He says, "Don't trust uncertain riches, but trust in who? Trust in the living God who giveth us richly all things to enjoy."

That is what they ought to have been thinking about.

Now notice what he says in verse two.

"Your riches are corrupted. Your garments are motheaten. Your old and silver is cankered. The rust of them shall be a witness against you and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. You have heaped treasure together of the last days. Behold the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields which is of you kept back by fraud crieth and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth."

I am going to tell you what. If you didn't get anything else from those particular... that is a strict powerful condemnation of our God of these men who were doing these things.

There is no call of repentance here. There is not any call to them, straighten up. Get this... make this thing right. He just tells them, "Everything that you do, everything that you have trusted, everything that you hope in, what is it? Everything is corruptible."

Isn't that what he says here? He said, "Your riches, corrupt. Your garments, what? They are going to be moth eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered and the rust is... Everything that you have stored up for yourself, it is going to be a witness against you one day."

You think about it. Dean, what he is saying to these men is this. Is they have more clothes than they can possibly wear. But instead of giving clothes to those that are naked what is going to happen to them? Moths are going to eat them up. They are going to hang in your closet and just rot.

They have got more money than they can spend.

You know, you hear somebody say, "Well, you have more money than you can ever spend in life."

They did. But instead of sharing to help others in need, what do they do? They just let it rust. They let it go to waste. And I tell you. All these people that pile up all that money and one of these days they die. You think you lay it all up and you die and who is going to get it? Your children. And if they don't get it the government is going to get it.

Such things are witnessing against us that they are perishing. Those who set their hearts on corruptible things, they are going to reap corruption. They hoarded up all these things for latter days and their latter days is going to end in their death.

I tell you. Many people accumulate wealthy by taking advantage and cheating those who work for them. That is what he is saying. Instead of paying them a fair and just wage, they paid them pittance and became rich at their expense.

So notice the charge against them, because they... he says the cry of them has come up to who? Come up to the Lord of sabaoth, came up to the true God. And here is the charge.

You have lived in pleasure on the earth and been wanton. You have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter. You have condemned and killed the just and he doth not resist you.

All right? That is pretty self explanatory. They lived in a luxury type place on this earth and they lived in self indulgent and self gratification. They fatten their own hearts and he said they did it in the day of slaughter, that is to say in a day when others were suffering and dying and being killed and what did they do? They condemned the just, pronounced judgment against them and murdered the just, murdered believers. And what did believers do? They didn't do anything.

Why not?

Read Romans chapter 12 verse 19 through 21. You will find out why we are not to take [?].

He says if your enemy hates you what are you to do? Think about this. I will read it to you. That is important. Listen to this.

He says, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay saith the Lord. Therefore if your enemy hunger, what do you do? You feed him. And if he thirsts, do what? Give him drink. For in doing so thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with what? With good."

Now if we think about it [?] change anything anyhow. You really don't.

But thank God notice he doesn't stop there, but goes on in verse seven. And this is the thing. He stops talking to these who are going to be condemned and giving us comfort

and security in the fact that God is going to deal with them one day and he tells us starting in verse seven he starts talking about brethren again.

“Be patient therefore, brethren”

James exhorts believers, brethren, who had been oppressed by the rich and he tells them to endure until when? Notice what he said. Brethren, until the coming of the Lord.

“Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.”

He uses an analogy here. He basically tells these people, you and me, James uses an earthly situation to illustrate a spiritual truth. What is an earthly illustration? He says, “A farmer plants a field.”

And what does he do? He waits on the early and he waits on the latter rain and he endures until the time of harvest because what happens? You plant a seed. I remember when the first time you planted that garden for me up there at [?] and I remember I would go out there every day and I would...I don't know what I was... I remember digging around. I never... you know, I was raised in the city. I didn't know what a garden was. And I would go out there every day and where Bart had planted that corn I would dig. I probably killed most of it digging. I dugged down to see if a little corn had popped out.

Well, a true farmer is not way. What does he know? You plant the seed. You water it. You till it. You weed it and you let it grow. It rains early. It rains late. All your worry and all your anxiety and all your fear and your digging down to see the seed is not going to change it. We plant, we water, the Lord gives the increase. And so he says here it is the same with you and I. Don't quit. Don't faint. We may not see the culmination of things working together for our good. When we look at our lives and we wonder, well, why... why... why don't I have anything? Why has the Lord not blessed me with a nice home and a nice car and nice this and nice?

We don't know why. I don't know why God's children have cancer and have heart attack and have strokes and die. Because, look, we don't see the end from the beginning.

But I know this much, whatever comes our way, folks, we need to be patient, establish our hearts, because what happens? It is the Lord's will. So that farmer endures and he perseveres and what is he telling you and I to do? Endure and persevere. Let your heart be established with grace. But listen.

These folks are about to live through the destruction of Jerusalem. These folks that he is writing to, they are going to see that... they are going to see, they are going to witness with their own eyes what our God has told them through this servant James. The end of these who have oppressed them and hated them without a cause they are going to see their end.

He is talking probably about Jerusalem here and notice the warning, verse nine. He says, "Grudge not one against another, brethren."

There it is again. See, before the first six, it doesn't mention brethren. Here he says, "You and me, brethren, don't grudge each other, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the judge standeth at the door."

He tells us don't grumble and don't complain one against another. Don't envy one another because if you do, what is going to happen? You are going to be condemned.

Now listen, condemned here does not mean damned. It does not mean eternally judged. It means here judged by the standards of God's truth to follow sure the same way that we judge people.

In other words, he is saying to us clearly again, believers are not to judge based on wrong standards. You know, we have to judge. We are to judge who is lost and saved.

People say, "Oh, you can't judge a man, a woman's heart."

We can't judge their heart, but listen. Their words reveal what is in their heart. That is why we have to judge righteous judgment.

Listen. You have to judge whether somebody is saved or lost if you are going to share the gospel with him, don't you? You are making a judgment right now whether or not what I am saying is true and correct. You ought to be. So we are to judge. We are to make righteous judgment. But we are never to judge based on outward appearance or reputation or character and conduct during trials and oppressions.

And then he says, verse 10, "Take my brethren..."

There it is again.

"... the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

James uses Old Testament prophets as an example. Do you know what? They stood firm in the gospel, who suffered greatly for their testimony, but what did they receive? And where are they at now?

Go read Hebrews chapter 11. Hebrews chapter 11 in that great hall of faith tells us that there were believers who were sawn asunder. But he tells us we are compassed about with so great... the chapter after that great hall of faith in chapter 11, in chapter 12 he talks about we are compassed about with such a great cloud of witnesses. Let us run the

race with patience because what do we obtain? We have obtained a prize in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Think about Job. Have you ever read the book of Job? Go back and read about Job's life and endure what... read what he endured. Although Job was severely tested and he was, think about it. The first thing he lost was his children. Then he lost all his wealth. Then his wife told him to curse God and die and get this thing... cost his health. Remember, he is sitting out on a mound of ashes scraping the skin off where he is covered with boils and his wife says, "Curse God and die and get this thing over."

He has got three miserable comforters that come along and just basically they tell him, "You have done something to deserve this."

And listen. We know from the declaration of God's Word, Job hadn't done anything to deserve it. It was a trial, a test of his faith. But at the end what did God do? After he went through all of it and this was the thing. He never ever dishonored God. He never cursed God. I think about Job.

And this ought to be ours, too. The Lord gave... Remember what he said to his wife?

"Shall we not receive good from the hand of our God and not evil also? The Lord gave. The Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

It says, "In these things, all these things, Job sinned not against the living God."

And what did God do at the end? God restored to him everything that he had twice over.

So we see that the Lord is compassionate. I guarantee you when Job was sitting out there and all those things were going bad, he didn't have anything to comfort him other than this. Our God is on the throne.

I hear everybody in every place and every religion everybody throwing out Romans 8:28. That is not for everybody. Romans 8:28 applies to one particular group, justified, redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood and righteousness of Christ. Those are the ones all things work together for good.

And then notice how he finishes verse 12.

"But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation."

Now what he is talking about here is complaining when things don't go the way we want them to go. He is talking about complaining and murmuring that breaks forth and causes us to break forth in what? In rash oaths and profane swearing, especially in trials and suffering.

You think about it. We aren't to use God's name in vain, but we are to reverence his holy name, are we not? And swearing by a lesser thing, such as the earth doesn't justify an oath. Because God is the creator of heaven and earth. And we have got to realize, you know, he has not forbidden taking oaths here. If any of you have ever been in a trial or been called as a witness in a trial, they are going to ask you to take an oath. And I have heard people say, "Well, I can't take an oath because I am a saint."

There is no problem with you taking an oath. Put your hand on the Bible and swear to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you God. Nothing wrong with that.

Originally, when we look back at the Scriptures, taking oaths was an act of worship that bound one's actions to the will of God when you look at the origination of oaths. The oaths were used as a promise to God to worship him in the way that was prescribed.

Go back and read Hebrews chapter six. And you will see that as far as preserving peace Paul said there is nothing wrong with taking an oath. But what he is forbidding here is the abuse of oaths, because think about who abused oaths. The scribes and the Pharisees swore oaths to everything. And he told... our Lord told he said, you all will swear by the temple or by the altar or by this. They wouldn't swear by God, because they thought, if we swear by the altar or we swear by the earth or we swear by something else that is lower down here that we have got an out, because at least we didn't swear by God.

But listen. Who gave the directions to build the altar or the tabernacle? Who made the earth? So ultimately who is in... who is the one who we are swearing by, even if we swear by something that is lesser, who is still the one that gave it? And who is greater than it?

See, you can't appeal to anything subordinate to God as an oath for an excuse to break it when things ultimately go back to the God, the creator of all things for whom all things were made.

So instead of swearing oaths and this is what he is telling you and me here, we ought to submit ourselves to God's revealed will by way of command. We ought to pray to him and we ought to submit to his sovereign will and our cry ought to be in everything and every way that comes our way in this life, thy will be done and walk by it and rely upon it.

Listen. Christ's righteousness secured everything that we need eternally as far as blessedness and faith and with that being the case then we have all things are ours. We are guaranteed eternal life. Why should we fret and worry and trouble ourselves because we do not prosper down here?

I tell you. If we have him, we have everything we need.

Now that doesn't mean I don't still want some things. I like what I have. But I tell you what. If we lost everything, folks, we would still have everything. You can't take that away from us.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who we need to always say hath blessed us with all the spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. What better gift could be given to us than eternal life? We ought to count our blessings.

May the Lord bless the reading of his Word and bless us as we are dismissed from this place.

I appreciate your presence this morning. Let's stand together and we will be dismissed.