

BE PATIENT THEREFORE BRETHREN

TEXT: JAMES 5:7-12

INTRODUCTION:

1. Five times in this passage we find the word "patient" or "patience" (5:7, 8, 10, 11).
2. Patience is so important that James begins this epistle with it and he ends with it (cf. 1:1-4).
3. "Patient" means capable of bearing affliction with calmness (5:10, 11). Matthew Henry says this means to "bear your afflictions without murmuring, your injuries without revenge."
4. "Patience" is the capacity of calm endurance, even under great stress.
5. One preacher said "patience means to stay put and stand fast when you'd like to run away" (Warren Wiersbe).
6. Pastors often feel like running away (and unfortunately many do), but God wants us to stick it out.
7. The motive for patience is the coming of the Lord (5:7-9). God is going to straighten everything out when the Lord returns, so in the meantime, we must be patient.
8. James gives three practical examples of patience:

I. THE HUSBANDMAN (FARMER) – (5:7-9)

1. Farming takes patience. Crops do not appear overnight and farmers have no control over the weather.
2. Too much rain, or not enough rain, or an early frost -- all these things can kill the crops. Therefore, the farmer must be patient. "Behold, the husbandman waiteth..." (5:7).
3. Soulwinning and church-planting is like planting seed. We sow, we pray, we wait, and God gives the increase.
4. First Corinthians 3:7 says, "So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."
5. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Ps. 126:6; cf. Luke 8:11-15).
6. Soulwinning, church-planting, missions work, building a Sunday School class, praying – all take patience.
7. The early rain (October-December) would soften the soil, causing the seed to germinate, and the latter rain (February-April) would help to mature the harvest and bring it to fruition (5:7b).

8. Back when I first started this church, I used to go out knocking on doors every week night (except Wednesday). People on the street used to ask me what I was doing and I would tell them that I was breaking up the fallow (dormant, left untilled or unsown, inactive) ground (cf. Jer. 4:3; Hosea 10:12).
9. I would ask them when was the last time someone passed through with Gospel tracts (obviously excluding the cults) and they would say "Never."
10. So the Lord began to teach me patience, but I still have a long way to go. The apostle Paul said, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap we faint not" (Gal. 6:9).
11. We are to establish our hearts: "for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (5:8). Is your heart established? Too many Christians have their hearts filled with worldly pleasures. The Lord is coming back; we need to get busy serving Him.
12. Our Lord said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).
13. We are not to "grudge" (5:9) or murmur or complain. This type of behaviour hinders God's work.
14. "Behold, the judge standeth before the door" (5:9b). God is in control. Let's allow Him to run His church. He has given us instructions on what we are to do – it's all right here in the Bible.

II. THE PROPHETS WHO SUFFERED AFFLICTION - (5:10, 11a)

1. The so-called "prosperity preachers" teach that once you are converted you should never get sick or encounter any difficulties. But we know from experience and from Scripture that this is not true.
2. Paul says, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Tim. 3:12).
3. Many of the Old Testament prophets had to endure great trials and sufferings. Micaiah is not a well-known prophet. Not as well known as his contemporaries, Elijah and Elisha.
4. You may recall that King Ahab hated him. First Kings 18:17 says that when Ahab saw Elijah, he said unto him, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" And King Ahab hated Micaiah too, because Micaiah was faithful to God, just like Elijah. He would not compromise. He declared the truth to wicked King Ahab.
5. So after all of King Ahab's false prophets ("about four hundred men") were finished with their foolishness, King Jehoshaphat turned to King

- Ahab and said, "Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might enquire of him?" (I Kings 22:7).
6. But Ahab replied, "There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil" (I Kings 22:8a).
 7. And then King Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say so" (I Kings 22:8b).
 8. Then we read in I Kings 22:24 that Zedekiah, one of Ahab's false prophets, went and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, "Which way went the Spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee?"
 9. It took great patience for Micaiah to endure that (cf. James 5:10).
 10. All of the prophets were mocked and falsely accused. Many of them were arrested, tortured and killed.
 11. Our Lord said to the scribes and Pharisees, "Ye are the children of them which killed the prophets" (Matthew 23:31).
 12. Jeremiah was arrested, accused of being a traitor, and thrown down a pit. Daniel was thrown into the lion's den (5:10).
 13. But they kept on speaking "in the name of the Lord" (5:10).
 14. Hebrews 11:35-38 says, "Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."
 15. The reason the churches in America are so weak is the pulpits are weak. And the pulpits are weak because the preachers are afraid of "suffering affliction" (James 5:10).

III. THE PATIENCE OF JOB (5:11)

1. Job is a good example of patience (Job 1:13-22; 2:7-10). Job suffered greatly, but he never turned from God and his patience was rewarded in "the end" (5:11; cf. Job 42:10-17).
2. Matthew Henry says, "The prosperity of the wicked and the affliction of the righteous have in all ages been a very great trial to the faith of the people of God."
3. We see this in Psalm 73.
4. There can be no mountain tops without first going through the valley. A young Christian asked an older friend to pray that God would give

- him patience. The older man got on his knees and prayed that God would send the young man tribulations and afflictions and pain and problems...when the young man said: "Stop! Why are you praying this for me?" The wise old man showed him Romans 5:3 – "But we glory in tribulation also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience."
5. And James 1:2, 3 – "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations (trials); Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience."
 6. Impatience under stress often leads to swearing. As Christians, we must choose our words carefully (5:12).
 7. There are many similarities between the book of James and the Sermon on the Mount. Our Lord said, "But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Matt. 5:34-37).

CONCLUSION:

1. There was in Colorado a number of years ago a man by the name of William McPherson, who had both of his eyes blown out and both of his arms blown off at the shoulder in a mine explosion.
2. The doctors told him he would soon die, but they were wrong and he lived.
3. Having no fingers or arms with which to read Braille, he had a special table made, and he learned to read Braille with his tongue, spending all night learning to read one letter.
4. The Braille Bible consists of 20 huge volumes. Mr. McPherson read the Bible through four times with his tongue. Oftentimes his tongue became so tender it would bleed!
5. Brethren, that is patience! "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord" (5:7a).