

James 5:7–11

⁷ Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. 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.

⁹ Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

¹⁰ My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.

¹¹ Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

Be Patient **James 5:7-11**

INTRO:

This paragraph is located after James' scalding warning of the rich unbelievers who oppressed the poor believers. He told them in **verses 1-6** that judgment will soon be coming upon them because of their misuse and oppression of the poor in their midst. One can imagine as this was read that there went up a hardy, "Amen! Preach it, James!" from the crowd. But now James turns to teach us how we are to endure in difficult times. The key word in this text is the word patient. He tells us three times that our response to oppression is to be patient until the Lord makes it right. As we explore this text together we will see it in terms of three parts.

I. Wait With Expectation (v. 7)

II. Wait Strengthening Your Heart (v. 8-9)

III. Wait Counting On God's Blessing (v. 10-11)

I. Wait With Expectation (v. 7)

James 5:7 “Therefore be [long suffering] patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.”

A. James commanded us in the first word of the sentence, ***“Be Patient.”*** The Greek word translated patient is the word, ***“longsuffering.”*** The word ***“longsuffering”*** generally is used when we are talking about being patient with people. This is not a suggestion. This is a command. The verb is in the imperative mood. When we endure oppression and opposition our duty is to be longsuffering. It is God's will that they be patient.

1. These people were suffering. Why should they be patient? The reason is found in the little word translated, ***“then.”*** It is the word for ***“therefore.”*** James wrote how the wicked rich people who took advantage of them and sometimes defrauded them. Be longsuffering because you know God will set all things right!

James 5:1–4 ***“Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.”***

This brings to mind another passage from the pen of the Apostle Paul in **Romans 12:17-21,**

“Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. Therefore ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

2. How long did they need to be longsuffering? ***“until the appearing of the Lord.”*** The word ***“appearing”*** used here is quite frequently used in an eschatological sense for when He returns again in the clouds. This could be the sense in which James used this word. The other alternative is James was thinking of the Lord coming in judgment or to bring blessing to His people.

Remember **Revelation 2:5**

“Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place; unless you repent.”

B. Being longsuffering did not imply their patience was supposed to be inactivity. James gave them something to do while they were waiting for God to make things right. They were to wait upon the Lord with expectation. He explained they needed to wait like a farmer. Look at the farmer and see how he waits for the precious fruit of the earth. If you have ever worked on a farm, you know a large part of the farmer's

labor is expended before any evidence of reward is seen. They prepare the field by plowing it, fertilizing it, planting it and so forth. I had farmers who in the spring would work all night. Stop for a shower, breakfast, church on Sunday morning, and then go back to the field to prepare it and plant it.

C. A farmer also waits and counts on God for circumstances he cannot control.

“[The farmer] waits patiently for the early and latter rains.”

This referred to the rains which fell in Israel in the spring and late autumn. These rains were vital to their crops.

D. These suffering believers busily obeyed and expected while waiting for God to vindicate them. They were to be working at the job He gave them to do, and to count on God's providential provision in their lives. God would be faithful in making things right in His time.

II. Wait Strengthening Your Heart (v. 8-9)

James 5:8–9 *“You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door.”*

A. The second thing that they needed to do while they were waiting upon the Lord, was to ***“Establish your hearts.”*** The verb means to *“confirm, establish, or strengthen.”* This word is used elsewhere in Scripture. For example, it is used in **1 Thessalonians 3**, of Timothy's ministry to the church. Timothy was ***“to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith.”*** Appropriate for the context in **James 5**, Peter used this word in **1 Peter 5:10**.

“But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.”

Whether we like it or not, sometimes God uses suffering to bind our hearts to Him. Sometimes God's goodness is expressed in suffering so that our hearts and minds will be fixed on Him.

B. How do we bind our hearts? How are we to strengthen ourselves in God? We do this by focusing on what we know to be true about our God. He is sovereign ***“or the LORD of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?”*** **Isaiah 14:27** God is in control of the situation no matter how bleak it appears. Add this assurance James gave us at the end of **verse 8**, ***“The coming of the Lord is at hand.”*** Remember He could come at any time.

C. There is with this positive command to establish their hearts, a negative warning. ***“Don't grumble against one another, brothers.”*** This is the *“kick the dog”* syndrome. James was wise enough to understand when we are under stress we

tend to take our stress out on others. We need to remember God hates murmuring. Paul exhorted us in **Philippians 2:14**, *“Do all things without complaining and disputing.”* James' warning comes with a threat. *“The Judge is at the door.”* He is ready to deliver justice.

III. Wait Counting On God's Blessing (v. 10-11)

James 5:10–11 *“My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.”*

A. They were to wait expectantly.

They were to wait while working on strengthening their hearts,
Finally, they were to wait counting on God's blessing for their suffering.

B. Remember the prophets! They sure endured trouble for their obedience.

Remember Micaiah who had the unenviable privilege to deliver God's message to Ahab?

“Then the king of Israel said, “Take Micaiah, and return him to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king's son; and say, ‘Thus says the king: Put this fellow in prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and water of affliction until I return in peace.’”

Then Micaiah said, *“If you ever return in peace, the LORD has not spoken by me.”* We are reminded that they will someday have a greater blessing because of the trouble they endured in this life. Remember what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5:10-12 *“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”*

C. The greatest encouragement to me is Job. There are two lessons here we need to see.

1. First, there was more going on in Job's suffering that meets the eye! There is an interesting little passage in **Ephesians 3:9-11**

“and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,

according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

2. Second, consider the end of Job's suffering. **Job 42** is there to remind us Job was vindicated before his friends and God gave Job a double blessing when the time of his trial was over. If we find ourselves suffering for righteousness sake, take heart in this exhortation. In the end, God Himself will make all things right.

Hymn #544 ***We'll Understand It Better By and By***