

CrossWay Church – July 10, 2022
Blessed Hope in the Face of Trials – Sermon Outline
James 1:1-12

Introduction and Greeting (v. 1):

The author of this epistle is James (the Just), the half-brother of our Lord Jesus Christ. His audience is primarily Jewish believers. He refers to them as “my brothers”; this does not indicate male only, but rather male and female. They are dispersed (Babylonian and Assyrian captivities), and no doubt are facing the trials of living in foreign lands.

Interestingly, James also refers to himself as “a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ”. This shows a humble spirit, and a personal commitment to following Christ amidst any trials of this temporal world. James was a leader of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15) and had the mind of a pastor (he thought like a pastor/elder/shepherd).

1. Finding Joy Through Faith (v. 2-4)

The Reality of Trials

- This passage indicates that trials are to be expected. Notice the word “when”.

The Response of Joy

- Our response should be that of “joy”. Not exclusively joy, for the Bible is not foreign to tears, but rather an everlasting joy that recognizes God as creator, sustainer, and sovereign over all. This should permeate our being.

How and why can this joy be possible?

- Trials are testings of our faith that prove our faith to be genuine.
- Genuine faith is evidence of sanctification (complete Christian), which is us becoming more like Jesus Christ, through whom is eternal life (Romans 5:1-5).

2. Seeking Wisdom by Faith (v. 5-8)

Asking for wisdom (prayer)

- Asking for wisdom comes through prayer; prayer that is sincere and honest.

God grants generously in a single-minded way that displays his glory

- Through prayer, God grants us wisdom to handle trials. We may not be removed from the trial, but God is gracious to grant us wisdom to handle the trial so that He is glorified.
- Case study from 1 Kings 3 - King Solomon asks for wisdom.

Asking for wisdom is conditional based on two elements:

1. *We ask in faith.* That is an unwavering, consistent, single-minded faith.
2. *We ask without doubting.* That is not doubting God’s character and faithfulness.

The one who doubts and lacks consistent faith is a double-minded man

- This is someone who vacillates between faith in God and placing hope in the world. This person is unstable in ALL his ways; there is no firm foundation.

3. Understanding our Position in Christ (v. 9-11)

The man (person) in poverty (lowly) should boast in his exaltation

- From the world’s point of view, poverty is nothing to boast about. But the one who is in poverty, if he is in Christ, should cast aside his worldly state, and be able to boast in his exalted position in Christ.

The man (person) with wealth should boast in his humiliation

- We know that wealth is temporary, and so the rich man, in Christ, must lay aside his riches and accept his life in Christ.
- Therefore, the rich man in Christ must boast in his “humiliation” - which is really no humiliation at all! Riches will perish like the flower and grass, but Christ remains.

We are to remember our high position in Christ

- Many times trials are born from a focus on money. Whether your trial is one of money, or of something different, your position in Christ is what matters.

4. Persevering to Christ (v. 12)

Happiness is promised to those who remain steadfast in trials

- Those who keep their eyes fixed on Christ. Their reward is Christ, and in Christ is eternal life and everlasting joy (Psalm 16:11).

Two words/phrases to highlight from verse 12:

1. First is the word “when”; *when he has stood.* Again, trials are inevitable.
2. Secondly, the reward. *He will receive the crown of life.* This “crown of life” refers to a laurel wreath that would have been given to the winners of athletic games.

The Christian’s reward is NOT a perishable reward

- The reward for those who faithfully persevere in Christ through the trials of this world, is eternal life. We have a hope that this world does not have.

General Application:

Trials should not make our lives miserable. Though for a season they may hurt, trials may turn into life’s blessing. What we may perceive as a trial now may be strengthening and refining us for the Lord’s work in the future. Your steadfastness through a trial may be the witness that brings another lost soul to Christ. What God is withholding today, may turn into an abundant blessing tomorrow. And where trials are, we can be assured that Christ is there. If you are not in Christ, you can come to Him today.