

STUIDES IN JAMES (18)

Therefore Be Patient

James 5:7-12

Tonight we continue our study through the book of James. We have noted this to be a very practical book about how to live as Christians, no matter where we are. Our last lesson (5:16) addressed a very strong condemnation of the godless rich who oppressed the poor and righteous (likely including many of James' readers). The warning was a call of judgment – pending condemnation for the ungodly and comfort for those who were be unjustly treated or oppressed. Building on this James encourages an attitude of endurance.

I. Therefore, be patient

- a. Therefore, James here ties this to what has been previously stated. James throughout this letter has addressed troubles Christians face. He has spoken of trials and temptations, wars without and within, possibly including brethren (4:1), those who are self-seeking and lovers of this world, those who speak evil and unjustly judge, etc. ALL of these things can be a frustration to one trying to do right and BE right. So how should we respond?
- b. James says to be patient. There are at least 2 different words associated with patience in NT Greek.
 - i. ὑπομένω (hypomenō) – is the typical word for patience. Its root word means to remain, stay the course. The idea is one who does not give up and maintains control.
 - ii. μακροθυμέω (makrothymeō) – a word meaning to remain tranquil as you wait, to forebear (endure provocation without complaint). To be long tempered. This is the word often translated “longsuffering” (13x).
 - iii. The word for patient here is the Greek word, μακροθυμέω (makrothymeō) – suffering long. Based on the mistreatment of the previous section, this is appropriate.
- c. Being patient involves many things.
 - i. Leaving it in God's hands. In vs. 6, we noted the expression, “he does not resist you.” The one exploited is often powerless to resist (i.e., he does not have the ability or resources to resist, especially without further trouble). But there is another side to not resisting the wicked.
 1. We are not to be the aggressors or to retaliate. 1 Peter 2:18-20 notes that a servant was to be submissive, even to the harsh. Jesus taught us to love our enemies – Matthew 5:43-44 – we are to love our enemies, even to pray for and to do good for them. Matthew 5:38-39 speaks of not resisting an evil person but to turn the other cheek.
 2. Be reminded that we are to leave this in God's hands –. He will rightly avenge – Romans 12:19-21, 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9. He WILL take care of it in the end.
 - ii. Until the coming of the Lord – HOW long? Until the Lord returns. This applies to us with the understanding that one day He will return and then there will be a day of judgment – 2 Peter 3:10, Hebrews 9:27, 2 Corinthians 5:10 – a day when ALL will be judged. MORE imminently this could be a reference to the judgment of the Jewish nation that made it very difficult for Christians.
 - iii. *Establishing your hearts* – our determination must come from a proper heart. This is the only way to avoid bitterness as we are mistreated.
 1. The word establish means to strengthen or firmly set something. When we speak of making up our minds, this is the idea.
 2. We often rightly think of stubbornness as a bad thing. But the QUALITY of being unbending when facing trials and troubles is commendable.

3. This is the word used to describe Jesus steadfastly setting His face toward Jerusalem (Luke 9:51). 5 (of 13) times, it describes the Lord or God strengthening us to stand (cf. Romans 16:25, 1 Thess. 3:13, 2 Thess. 3:3, 1 Pet. 5:10, etc.)
 4. Colossians 3:2 calls for us to “set your mind on things above.” (different Greek word).
 5. Note also 2 Peter 1:12 that it is in “the present truth” that we are established. God word is able to build us up - Acts 20:32, cf. Ephesians 4:12-16 – built up in teaching we will not be “tossed to and fro...”
- iv. *Do not grumble against one another* –
1. A recurring observation we have made in James is how we need each other, especially in times of trials. He has addressed showing partiality, being slow to anger, helping the needy, controlling our tongues, bitter envy and self-seeking (the wisdom from below), wars within, unrighteous judgments, etc.
 2. Now he adds *grumbling* to the list. The word means to complain or groan. Let us be reminded that the body of Christ, will striving to be united, is composed of humans that are different. We know that when one is in sin, we must deal with that (see Jas. 5:19-20), but what about our idiosyncrasies? Brothers and sisters who just think, talk or act differently. Their mannerisms come across as grating to us. How do we treat them in comparison to those who we are closer to? How do we TALK about them? Would we stand up FOR them if they had a need or were being exploited by the wealthy or worldly (fill in the blank with what we have discussed)? Galatians 5:14-15 warns that if we bite and devour one another we will be consumed. Philippians 2:14 – do all things without complaining and disputing.
 3. NOTE: Grumbling and similar qualities are the sort that rob us of harmony and peace with one another. It can lead to skewed judgments. They also lend to misery with the one who carries grudges and bitterness. Ephesians 4:31 calls for us to let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and evil speaking be put away along with malice.
 4. *Lest you be condemned*. Behold, the judge is standing at the door. God is serious about this. Yes the wicked of this world will be judged, but so will we if we do not treat each other properly.
 5. *Be reminded* – in a hostile world, WE NEED EACH OTHER!!! We must band together.

II. Examples of patience.

- a. ***The hard-working farmer*** – by definition, a farmer requires patience – the longsuffering kind. Not only is there the time element, but also the uncertainty of weather and other factors (market, health, pests, etc.), many out of his control, that will determine success. BUT, in the end, he partakes of the reward. 2 Timothy 2:6 describes the endurance and hardship of a farmer, but notes he is first to partake of his crops. ALSO, as he waits, at the appointed time, the harvest will come. Think of the promise made in this letter. 3 times the judgment of God is mentioned – James declares this as fact. The only question is when.
- b. ***The prophets*** – vs. 10 mentions prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as examples of suffering and patience.
 - i. The Old Testament prophets faced troubles and rejection. Both written and oral prophets faced rejection and waited with patience for the LORD to avenge them and right the wrongs of the wicked. As Jeremiah warn of Jerusalem’s destruction, servants of Zedekiah lower him into an active sewer to die (he was rescued) – Jeremiah 28:6; Micaiah prophesies to King Ahab that if he goes into battle he would die. Ahab has him cast into prison until he returned (as if to blackmail God) – 1 Kings 22:26-28; Elijah after his great victory against the prophets

of Baal flees into the wilderness because Jezebel put out a contract on him (1 Kings 19); Habakkuk cries out to the LORD asking how long He is going to put up with the ungodliness in Israel (Hab. 1:2); etc. We see in the prophets a steadfast endurance through troubles of all sorts. BUT, they knew God was in control. Hebrews 11:35-40 likely included prophets who dared to remain faithful to God. But in God's time they WERE avenged.

- ii. But could James be including New Testament prophets as well? We know they were present and working and likely faced persecutions and other trials. Ephesians 4:11ff notes that prophets and apostles, as well as others, were given to equip and ground the saints in God's word. Though Paul, Stephen and Peter are not called prophets, their messages were clearly from God, and they paid a price for their faith. They endured and did not give up. Recall
- iii. Hebrews 12:1-2 – we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses – let us run with endurance the race.
- c. **Job** – yet another power example or perseverance (patience). The word used here is the OTHER word for patience (hypomenō)– meaning to endure without giving up. That is reflected in what happened to Job.
 - i. He was faithful, and through Satan, he lost everything. He was so miserable he wanted to die and regret that he had been born. He did not understand and wanted an audience with God.
 - ii. BUT, while he exhibited bitterness at his condition, he NEVER denied God, nor was he willing to give that up. Job 1:22 he did not charge God with wrong.
 - iii. When his wife approached him in Job 2:9-10 and told him to “curse God and die”, he rebuked her declaring, “Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.
 - iv. NOTICE Job 19:23-27, *“Oh, that my words were written! Oh, that they were inscribed in a book! That they were engraved on a rock With an iron pen and lead, forever! For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*
 - v. AND in the end, he was redeemed (Job 42).
- d. NOTE: In our text James gives 3 examples of patience as we face trials and troubles. Do you think he considered this an important subject? RECALL the very first subject James addressed – 1:2-4 – count it all joy when you fall into various trials...

And thus we see the encouragement of James as he begins to wrap up this short letter. Their lives were NOT easy. But he encourages them to remain faithful because in the end, there would be a reward. Recall the words of Paul in Romans 8:18, *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* Like the martyred saints crying out to the Lord, *“How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”*, (Revelation 6:9-11), we must patiently endure whatever comes our way in this life. It is a part of faithfulness. What about you? How are you facing the trials and troubles of this life? Think about it!