

The Power of Patience

James 5:7-12

James was still addressing the suffering Christians when he wrote, “Be patient.” This was his counsel at the beginning of the letter and at the end of this letter. God is not going to right all of the wrongs in this world until Jesus steps back onto the earth, so we believers must be patient until then.

- James uses two different words for patience: Long tempered and endure. It literally means “to remain under.” Patience means to “stay put and stand fast when you’d like to run away.”
- The million dollar question is how can we as Christians experience this kind of patient endurance as we wait for the Lord to return? James gives us some thoughts on that.
 - The Farmer (5:7-9) If a man is impatient, then he had better not be a farmer. No crop appears overnight (except weeds), and no farmer has control over the weather.
 - He must also be patient with the seed and crop, because it takes time for plants to grow. He has to wait for many weeks for his crop to grow. Why does the farmer wait so long? Because the harvest is worth the wait!!!! Galatians 6:9 “In due season you will reap a harvest if you faint not.”
 - Read spiritual growth takes time. The two seeds.
- James pictured the Christian as a spiritual farmer. “Be patient and stand firm.” Our hearts are the soil, and the seed is the word of God. There are

seasons for your spiritual life just as there is seasons for the soil. Sometimes our hearts grow cold and the Lord has to plow it up before he can plant the seed. (show pictures of dry ground, plowed ground and corn field)

- Here is the secret of endurance when the going is tough: God is producing a harvest for our lives. He wants the fruit of the Spirit to grow and the only way He can do it is through trials and trouble.
- The ministry of the Word of God and prayer are important if the heart is going to be established. A heart that is not established cannot bear fruit.
- A farmer is constantly working in expectation of the harvest. James did not tell the suffering believers to put on a white robe, climb a hill and wait for Jesus to return. Keep working and waiting was his advice.
- A farmer doesn't get into fights with his neighbors. Impatience with God often leads to impatience with Gods people; if we start using a sickle on each other we will miss the harvest.
- Let's look at the Prophet in James (5:10) James uses the prophets as an example of victory over persecution. What encouragement do we receive from their example:
- For one thing, they were in the will of God, yet they suffered. They were preaching, and they were still persecuted. Satan tells the faithful Christian that his suffering is the result of sin. We must never think that obedience automatically produces ease and pleasure. Jesus was obedient and it lead Him to the cross.
- Many of the prophets had to go through many trial and suffering, not only at the hands of unbelievers, but sometimes by professed believers.

- Why is it that we have to endure difficult trials? It is so that our lives might back up our message. The impact of a faithful, godly life carries much power. We need to look at the bigger picture when we are faced with trials. Our trials are a testimony to others around us. How did you respond to trials before coming to Jesus? Did you respond with raw emotion, alcohol, depression?
- The better we know the Bible, the more God can encourage us in the difficult times of our lives. The important thing is that, like the farmer, we keep working, and, like the prophet we keep witnessing, no matter how hard the test may be.
- You cannot persevere unless there is a trial in your life. There are no victories without battles; there can be no peaks without valleys. If you want the blessing, you must be prepared to carry the burden and fight the battle.
- When you find yourself in the fire, remember that God has His hand on the thermostat! Job23:10-12 “But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold. My feet have closely followed his steps; I have kept to his ways without turning aside. I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words from his mouth more than my daily bread.”
- Satan wants us to get impatient with God because an impatient Christian is a deadly weapon in the devils hands. Moses’ impatience robbed him of seeing the Promised Land. Abraham’s impatience led to the birth of Ishmael, the enemy of the Jews; and Peter’s impatience almost made him murder someone.
- Remind yourself in the midst of your trials that the Lord has a great purpose in all of our suffering, and He will work out His purpose in His timing for His glory.

James wants to encourage us to be patient in times of suffering. Like the farmer, we are waiting for a spiritual harvest, for fruit that will glorify God.

And, like Job, we wait for the Lord to fulfill his purpose, knowing that he would never cause his children to suffer needlessly. And, like Job, we will have a clearer vision of the Lord and come to know Him better for having been in the furnace of affliction.