

December 5th, 2021

Undivided Devotion: The Letter of James

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Waiting Well (James 5:7-12)

“Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord.” (v. 7a)

Patience is...

1. Staying focused, even when we can't control outcomes (vv. 7b-8)

“See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.” (vv. 7-8)

2. Showing forbearance, even when we can't change people (vv. 9-10)

“Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.” (vv. 9-10)

3. Staying faithful, even when we can't comprehend problems (vv. 11-12)

“Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful. ¹² But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.” (vv. 11-12)

Getting Started:

1. What was helpful to you in this week's sermon? What didn't you understand?
2. What upcoming event are you most eagerly anticipating? Why?

Going Deeper:

3. How do verses 7-12 relate to verses 1-6 (note the "*therefore*" in v. 7)? Why would James' pronouncement of woes against the rich (vv. 1-6) have comforted his hearers? What does this indicate about their present circumstances?
4. How can James be so confident that Christ's return is "*at hand*" (v. 8)? What doesn't this mean? What does it mean (see 1 Corinthians 10:11; Hebrews 1:2)? How does Christ's first coming inaugurate the "*last days*" of God's redemptive plan? How does this shape our view of history, and what Christians look forward to? How does this shape the way we view "*patience*"?
5. Why is Christ's coming judgment not only comforting for believers, but also sobering (see vv. 9, 12)? Why should it be a cause for reflection and self-examination?
6. How does verse 12 connect to what precedes (vv. 7-11)? How was Job tempted to forfeit his integrity (v.11; see Job 2:9)? How might James' hearers have been tempted to do this?

Application:

7. James gives three examples of patience for us to imitate; the farmer (v. 7), the prophet (v. 10), and the righteous sufferer (v. 11). What do these examples have in common? How do they differ? Which example of patience is most relevant for you right now?
8. What's one thing from this week's sermon that you can apply to your life?