

"True Faith Grows in Trials"

Part 2

James 1:2-12

Introduction: As we come back to our study in the book of James today I want to do a quick review and then get right into our message this morning.

James is writing to Jewish believers who had been scattered because of persecution which has come upon them because of their faith in Jesus Christ. In this letter James deals with everyday life experiences. But his main concern seems to be the faith of his readers.

James knew very well that there is a difference between "religion" and "salvation". He was also very aware of the Words of Jesus in Matthew 7:13-14.

Matthew 7:13-14

¹³ Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

¹⁴ Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

These Words spoken by Jesus were at the close of the Sermon on the Mount when He brought every one of His listeners to a crossroads where they were forced to make a decision. But James seems to be concerned with what Jesus said within these 2 verses and that was, "There are only a few who have true saving faith but there are many who have religion which will not save them from the judgment to come."

With these verses rolling through the mind of James he writes this letter which we are entering into. He knows that there are many people who think they are on their way to heaven but really they have been deceived and are on the path which leads to hell. In this letter he presents everyday situations which his listeners would face and then James explains how TRUE faith would respond in every one of these situations.

Therefore, what we have here is a series of tests in which we can use to examine our faith to be sure that our faith is a true saving faith and not a self deceiving false faith.

The first of the tests which we come to in our study of the letter of James is the test of life's trials.

I. The Test of Trials (1:2-12)

Notice James 1:2-3

The last time we were together we looked at the word "temptations" in verse 2. The word does not mean "a solicitation to do evil". The word means "trials". To bring it right into your life it is a reference to anything which disrupts your every day routine.

It can be anything from the car not starting to the doctor telling you that you have terminal cancer.

The same word is also used in verse 12.

Notice James 1:12

This is the same word and so verse 2 and verse 12 are brackets for this first section dealing with trials.

The word in verse 13 is not the same word it is a reference to the solicitation to do evil.

The last time we were together we talked about how trials are just a part of our lives and that if you are not in one at this very time you just wait because there is a trial coming in the near future.

Job 5:7

⁷Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.

If you have ever watched a camp fire you know that sparks constantly fly up from the fire and you cannot stop them. That was the idea which Job had about the trials of life. The will come and we cannot stop them.

The last time we were together we also talked about how God is in control of every trial which comes into our lives. Each trial is used by God to make less self dependant and more God dependant.

But let us get to our message today by asking a question, **"How am I to respond to the trials which come to test my faith?"**

James is now going to give to us several points to help us when we face the trials of life.

A. Attitude and Focus

Notice James 1:2

The first thing I want you to notice in this verse is that James gives to his readers a command. When we face the tests of our faith we are to "count it all joy". That is a command.

But there is much more here that we do not see on the surface so let me help you see how James can give this command.

The word "count" here in this verse can also be translated "consider". Now I want you to think with me for a moment. When you sit down to "consider" something then you are thinking the entire thing through.

Example: If I am going to build something in my shop at home I will first sit down and consider the entire project from beginning to end.

This is the very idea which James has here. When we face the trials of life we are not to just focus upon the trial itself or the moment we are in. There is no joy in that but we are to focus upon the end result of the trial.

Example: When you go to work I am sure there are days when you do not enjoy what it is that you have to do. But there is something which keeps you going in those times and it is that when the work is done you will get a paycheck. You learn to work through the difficult times because you know there is a pay day coming.

It is the very same in our spiritual walk and the trials which we face. There will be an end result and that will be you will be made more like Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:28-29

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

²⁹ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Here is the point; God takes us through the trials in order to refine our faith. Let me show you a verse that will shine some light on what I am talking about.

Jeremiah 11:4

⁴ Which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God:

God had taken Israel through the IRON FURNACE to burn away the dross and when they came out they were more refined. This is what He does in our lives but we must learn to look to the end result. That is a key to getting through the trials.

This can be seen in the lives of several people in the Bible but before I show you that let me just say this does not come natural. It takes a self discipline to look beyond the pain and the suffering to the end result of the trial. Let us consider some Biblical examples.

1. Paul

Do you remember some of the trials which Paul the Apostle went through.

2 Corinthians 11:24-27

²⁴ Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

²⁵ Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

²⁶ In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

²⁷ In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

Notice now what he wrote in the book of Romans.

Romans 8:18

¹⁸ For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

You can see in this verse Paul's ability to look ahead in the midst of the trials to the end result. But Paul had learned to have the proper vision in the midst of the trials of his life.

Philippians 4:11-12

¹¹ Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

¹² I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

Paul had LEARNED to be content in whatever situation he found himself in because he had LEARNED to get his eyes off of the pain and the suffering and to look ahead to the end result.

Job 1:12-19

¹² And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.

¹³ And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

¹⁴ And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them:

¹⁵ And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

¹⁶ While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

¹⁷ While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

¹⁸ While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

¹⁹ And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Job 2:7-8

⁷ So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

⁸ And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.

Now I want you to notice 2 statements which Job made.

Job 13:15a

¹⁵ Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:

This is a tremendous statement made by Job. How could he say this in the midst of his physical and emotional pain? Let me show you how.

Job 23:10

¹⁰ But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

Job had his focus upon the end result of all he was going through.

Let me show you one more example.

2. Jesus

Listen, the suffering of the cross was far greater than anything which we can imagine.

Remember the struggle which Jesus went through in the Garden of Gethsemane?

Matthew 26:38-39

³⁸ Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

³⁹ And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me:

Luke 22:41-44

⁴¹ *And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,*

⁴² *Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.*

⁴³ *And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.*

⁴⁴ *And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

How did Jesus get through the suffering of the cross?

Hebrews 12:2

² *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

What was the joy set before Jesus? It would be the salvation of all who would come to Him for forgiveness of sin.

Conclusion:

Back to James. When James tells us to "count" it all joy he is giving a command to rejoice in the final result of the **iron furnace** which you are in.