

"True Faith Grows in Trials"

Part 4

James 1:2-12

Introduction: If you have joined us for the first time today then you have joined us in our study of the book of James. Now this is our 4th study in the first section of this letter. We are currently looking at how true faith responds in the midst of the trial of life.

Just as a reminder James is writing to a group of Jewish believers who have been scattered because of persecution. He writes this letter in order to teach them how to deal with the practical situations of everyday life. But at the same time as these people would read over the different situations which James presented they would also be able to see how true faith would respond in every one of the situations which James records.

In other words while James instructs his readers as to how to deal with everyday life situations, he also presents a series of tests (in these situations) in which each reader can use the test as a mirror to examine his or her faith to see if it is a real faith.

Now as I said we are currently in the first section of James' letter which is 1:2-12. Here in this section James is addressing the subject of trials in the life of the believer.

Notice James 1:2

The word "temptations" here means "trials" in the sense of anything that comes into our lives that disrupts our daily routine.

Over the past weeks I have told you that trials are just a part of our lives. You cannot avoid them and if you are not facing a trial now all you need to do is wait because eventually you will be in the midst of one.

Job 5:7

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

In our study of this section we have been looking at points which James gives to us that will help us as we face the trials of life.

I. Attitude and Focus

Notice James 1:2

James give a command to his readers in this verse and he tells them to count it all joy when (not if) they fall into different trials of their faith. The word "count" means "to consider" and the idea is to look beyond the immediate testing and suffering to the end result.

This is best seen in a statement made by Job.

Job 23:10

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

Job was able to look beyond the trial to the end result.

Attitude - joy.

Focus - the end result.

II. Knowledge

Notice James 1:3

James knew from experience that the testing of his faith was for a purpose and that we "spiritual endurance". God is constantly at work within our lives.

Philippians 1:6

⁶ *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:*

The point which we need to understand is that as believers God's desire is for Christ to be seen in us. So the trials which we face are for the purpose of stripping away anything which keeps the world from seeing Christ in us.

This can be clearly seen in the life of Joseph. He was sold into slavery by his brothers, he was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife, he was forgotten in prison for 2 years, then he became the savior of Israel in the midst of a 7 year famine.

The trials were far more painful than we can imagine but the end result was a man who became a type of Jesus Christ. That is exactly the end result which God has in mind when He allows us to face the trials of life.

Now the knowledge of this is found in the Word of God and nowhere else. In order to get through the storms and the trials of life we need to learn God's Word.

2 Corinthians 1:3-5

³ *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;*

⁴ *Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*

⁵ *For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.*

God is the source of comfort and comfort is found in His Word in the lives of Bible characters.

Today we are going to look at the next point of help which James gives to us. This point is easy to teach and very difficult to practice.

III. Surrender

Notice James 1:4

The key word in this verse is the word "let". This means to allow God to do His work through the trial. Stop fighting the trial, stop trying to do all you can to get free from the trial. Just accept it as the will of God for your life and trust the Lord in the midst of it.

When we face a trial or a storm in this life we put so much pressure upon our own selves trying to figure out how to get out of it. Or we can drive ourselves crazy trying to figure out what God is trying to tell us. Here is some valuable insight, He may not be trying to tell you anything He is simply testing your faith in the process of building your endurance. You see, He desires for Christ to be seen in you.

There are so many things to consider here:

First of all I thought about what it is that can really trouble us in the midst of trials and I came up with several situations that can cause us to really struggle.

1. When we look around and we see someone who does not live for God and they seem to have a smooth path to walk. But you are in your world trying your best to serve God and walk in obedience and you are faced with a storm that is keeping you awake most of the night. God has an answer for us when this happens.

Psalm 37:1-8

Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

² *For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.*

³ *Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.*

⁴ *Delight thyself also in the LORD: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*

⁵ *Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.*

⁶ *And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.*

⁷ *Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.*

⁸ *Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.*

2. Something else that can cause you to question God's love is when you are suffering and it seems like no other believers around you have any trials to face.

John 21:18-22

¹⁸ *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not.*

¹⁹ *This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.*

²⁰ *Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?*

²¹ *Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?*

²² *Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.*

Peter was told how he would die. He would be crucified and it would be to glorify God. That is so important to understand. It would be very painful but it would be for God's glory.

Then Peter asked about John and Jesus basically told Peter if I choose to let him live until I return that is not your concern but your concern is to follow me.

Application:

That helps me to know that if God's path for me is lined with storms and trials it is my responsibility to follow Him not to get all caught up in what others are going through.

Let me explain something to you that may help you with surrender in the midst of the trials of life.

God has a specific path ordained for you to walk. It is not the same path that I walk nor is my path the same path you walk. God has ordained a path for you to walk and along that very path you and I will encounter many trials and storms which God will use to make us more like Christ. We are to submit and to surrender to the path which is before us. Let me show you some verses that may help.

Let me take you to the Sermon on the Mount and the outline Jesus gave for prayer.

Matthew 6:9-13

⁹ After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

¹⁰ Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Here are two points in here that I want you to see:

1. We are to pray for God's will to be done in our lives.
2. We are to pray that God will lead us not into temptation.

Now both of these petitions require surrender. To pray for God's will to be done means I must be willing to set my will aside. It means that I must be willing to surrender to His will even when it is the complete opposite of my will.

Then to pray that that God would lead us not into temptation is to acknowledge that God knows our future and He knows what is best for us and even when I have plans, dreams and desires it means that I am willing to surrender to His leading and abandon the plans, dreams and desires that I have.

Neither of these petitions is easy to pray for when you stop to think of how we may have to abandon our own dreams. But surrender is expected from us. We cannot change the path which God has ordained for us to walk.

Proverbs 16:9

⁹ *A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.*

Getting our minds back to James again. James tells us to surrender to the trials of our faith which we face. God has allowed them to come upon us and we cannot stop them. To spend our time and energy trying to escape will do 2 things:

1. It will completely consume you.
2. It will hinder the work of God.

Notice James 1:4 again.

James tells us to let patience have her perfect work THAT we will be perfect and entire wanting nothing. The word "THAT" introduces the reason for surrender. When we fight against the trials of our faith then we hinder the work of God in the midst of that very trial. Really we are fighting against God. Let me show you what I mean by that. Remember all that Joseph went through and how it all started with his brothers?

Let me show you what Joseph said to his brothers when they stood before him when he was sitting in Pharaoh's palace. This is 13 years later and his brothers have come before him because they need food but they do not know him but he knows them.

Genesis 45:4-8

⁴ *And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.*

⁵ Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

⁶ For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.

⁷ And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

⁸ So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

When we complain and blame others, that's a sign we do not fully grasp that God is sovereign and He has allowed it all to happen for our good.

If Joseph had complained and sought revenge he would have ruined himself as an Old Testament type of Jesus Christ. When we fight against the trial and blame others and complain we also keep others from seeing Christ in us because that is not from the Spirit.

Conclusion:

There is much more to be said but I am out of time so let me leave you with 1 very important thought about facing trials:

1. There is peace in surrender! When Jesus was in the midst of His battle in the Garden the night before the cross He was sweating as it were great drops of blood. He was terrified and afraid because of what He would suffer on the cross. But after He prayed He stood up and He met His arresters head on. Jesus had a peace from that point forward. He was fully surrendered to His Father's will.

"WAIT"

- > Desperately, helplessly, longingly, I cried, Quietly, patiently,
> lovingly God replied.
- > I pled and I wept for a clue to my fate, And the Master so gently
> said, "Child, you must wait."
> "Wait? You say, wait! " my indignant reply.
> "Lord, I need answers, I need to know why!
> Is your hand shortened? Or have you not heard?
> By Faith, I have asked, and I am claiming your Word.
- > My future and all to which I can relate Hangs in the balance, and YOU
> tell me to "WAIT"?
> I'm needing a 'yes', a go-ahead sign,

- > Or even a 'no' to which I can resign.
- > And Lord, You promised that if we believe We need but to ask, and we
 - > shall receive.
 - > And Lord, I've been asking, and this is my cry:
 - > I'm weary of asking! I need a reply!
 - > Then quietly, softly, I learned of my fate As my Master said once
 - > again, "Child, you must wait."
- > So, I slumped in my chair, defeated and taut And grumbled to God, "So,
 - > I'm waiting... for what?"
 - > He seemed, then, to kneel, and His eyes wept with mine, And he
 - > tenderly said, "I could give you a sign.
 - > I could shake the heavens, and darken the sun.
 - > I could raise the dead, and cause mountains to run.
 - > All you seek, I could give, and pleased you would be.
 - > You would have what you want - But, you wouldn't know Me.
- > You'd not know the depth of My love for each saint; You'd not know the
 - > power that I give to the faint.
 - > You'd not learn to see through the clouds of despair; You'd not learn
 - > to trust just by knowing I'm there; You'd not know the joy of resting
 - > in Me When darkness and silence were all you could see.
 - > You'd never experience that fullness of love As the peace of My Spirit
 - > descends like a dove; You'd know that I give and I save... (for a
 - > start), But you'd not know the depth of the beat of My heart.
 - > The glow of My comfort late into the night, The faith that I give when
 - > you walk without sight, The depth that's beyond getting just what you
 - > asked Of an infinite God, who makes what you have LAST!
 - > You'd never know, should your pain quickly flee, What it means that
 - > "My grace is sufficient for Thee."
 - > Yes, your dreams for your loved one overnight would come true, But,
 - > oh, the loss! If I lost what I'm doing in you!
 - > So, be silent, My Child, and in time you will see That the greatest of
 - > gifts is to get to know Me.
- > And though oft may My answers seem terribly late, My most precious
 - > answer of all is still, "WAIT."