

**"True Faith and Patience"****Part 4****James 5:7-11**

**Introduction:** Today as we again come back to the book of James we are coming again to James 5:7-11. It is in this passage in which James is dealing with the subject of "PATIENCE".

Now last week in our study of this passage we looked at the people whom James was addressing as those who were in a furnace of affliction. This section is written to a group of poor Jewish believers who were being oppressed and afflicted by the wealthy of their day. The poor were "day workers" for the wealthy and according to the Law the day worker was to be paid at the end of the day. But the day workers whom James is writing to were not getting the money which was owed to them.

**Notice James 5:4**

The money was being kept back by fraud. In other words the wealthy had the money but they made up excuses so as not to pay the workers everything that was owed to them.

These are the people whom James calls upon to be patient. They were in what we could call a "furnace of affliction". We saw 2 points about suffering in the furnace of affliction:

- 1. The times of affliction can last for an extended period of time.**
- 2. Waiting in the midst of the furnace is not wasted time.**

Now last week we looked at how God often permits this within the lives of His children and we also considered 2 reasons as to why God permits this:

- 1. To refine us.**
- 2. To make us long for our Lord.**

We also looked at how in the midst of the furnaces of affliction it is God who controls the heat. He is in full control of all that comes into our lives and He is the One who keeps His hand on the thermostat when we find ourselves in the midst of the furnace.

Now in the midst of this section James gave a command that is very important to see. It is my desire to help you face the furnaces of life.

**Notice James 5:8**

Here in this verse James calls on his readers to "stablish" their hearts. The word means "to fix" or "to make firm". When it comes to "establishing" our hearts we must understand that God also plays a part in giving us the strength to stay FIRM in our stand. Let me show you some verses.

## **2 Thessalonians 2:16-17**

<sup>16</sup> *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,*

<sup>17</sup> *Comfort your hearts, and **stablish** you in every good word and work.*

## **1 Peter 5:6-10**

<sup>6</sup> *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*

<sup>7</sup> *Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

<sup>8</sup> *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*

<sup>9</sup> *Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*

<sup>10</sup> *But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, **stablish**, strengthen, settle you.*

Now here is the point that I desire for you to see: we have a responsibility to FIX our hearts on that which is eternal and when we do it is God who gives us the strength to stand stedfast in the furnaces of life.

This now brings us to where we are in this study today.

### **I. The Examples to Follow**

#### **Notice James 5:10**

James now points his readers to the prophets and he invites them to consider how the prophets who spoke the Word of God were able to endure the suffering and the affliction which they faced.

Now the interesting thing here is that James does not name any of the prophets and the reason is he is writing to Jewish believers and he knows that they would know all about the prophets and for that reason he does not need to mention them by name.

But I want to take some time and look at some of the people whom James was referring to. First of all I want to show you how they focused upon that which was eternal. The writer of Hebrews records the focus of those of the Old Testament who "ESTABLISHED" their hearts.

### **Hebrews 11:13-16**

*<sup>13</sup> These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

*<sup>14</sup> For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.*

*<sup>15</sup> And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.*

*<sup>16</sup> But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.*

These people never seen the fulfillment of God's promises in their day but they knew that God was True to His Word and therefore they set their spiritual eyes upon the promises and thus ESTABLISHED their hearts to live for those promises. They were living for the city of God which was not of this world. It is interesting if we were to search the Old Testament we would find that the Patriarchs all dwelled in TENTS and not houses. There were 3 reasons:

- 1. They understood that they were pilgrims who were just passing through.**
- 2. They lived in a way that they were always ready to move when God called.**
- 3. They refused to be rooted in this world.**

Now let me show you how God STRENGTHENED their hearts in the midst of the furnaces of life.

### **Hebrews 11:32-39**

*<sup>32</sup> And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:*

<sup>33</sup> *Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions.*

<sup>34</sup> *Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.*

<sup>35</sup> *Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:*

<sup>36</sup> *And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:*

<sup>37</sup> *They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented:*

<sup>38</sup> *(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.*

<sup>39</sup> *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:*

But we cannot stop with these verses because the writer of Hebrews continues and it fits with our thought so well.

### **Hebrews 12:1-3**

*Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,*

<sup>2</sup> *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.*

<sup>3</sup> *For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*

We have all of these witnesses who have testified and then we have the ULTIMATE EXAMPLE of Jesus Christ Who endured the cross in order to make us the children of God.

Now I want to take you into the life of one of the Old Testament saints to show you all of this in practice.

## **II. The Life of Joseph**

In the life of Joseph it all started with 2 dreams in which God gave to Joseph when he was 17 years old.

**Genesis 37:1-2**

*And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.*

<sup>2</sup> *These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren;*

**Genesis 37:5**

<sup>5</sup> *And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.*

The dream was that the family of Joseph would bow down to him. This dream infuriated his brothers. When Joseph visited them in the field one day they decided to slay him.

**Genesis 37:18-20**

<sup>18</sup> *And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.*

<sup>19</sup> *And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.*

<sup>20</sup> *Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.*

Joseph's brothers threw him in a pit and then took him out and sold him to travelers who were passing by.

**Genesis 37:28**

<sup>28</sup> *Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.*

When the Midianites arrived in Egypt they sold him to Potiphar.

**Genesis 37:36**

<sup>36</sup> *And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard.*

While working for Potiphar he was then approached by Potiphar's wife.

**Genesis 39:7-9**

<sup>7</sup> *And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.*

<sup>8</sup> *But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand;*

<sup>9</sup> *There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*

In these verses we find Joseph ESTABLISHING his heart to be true to God.

Potiphar took him and placed him in prison where he met 2 men. The butler and the baker who both dreamed dreams and Joseph interpreted the dreams. The butler was released from prison but he forgot Joseph and he was left in prison for 2 years. It was then that Pharaoh dreamed a dream and the butler then remembered Joseph. So Joseph was brought out of prison and he interpreted the dream for Pharaoh. Joseph was then placed in the position of 2<sup>nd</sup> in command under Pharaoh.

**Genesis 41:38-41, 46**

<sup>38</sup> *And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?*

<sup>39</sup> *And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art:*

<sup>40</sup> *Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.*

<sup>41</sup> *And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.*

<sup>46</sup> *And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.*

He entered the furnace of affliction when he was 17 and he was taken out when he was 30. The furnace lasted 13 years!!!

Now let me show you Joseph's response when his brothers came to Egypt for food.

**Genesis 45:3-8**

<sup>3</sup> *And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.*

<sup>4</sup> *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.*

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

<sup>6</sup> *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.*

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

<sup>8</sup> *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.*

Joseph knew that God was in complete control of everything that he went through.

**Conclusion:**

Are you facing a furnace of affliction? Set your heart on things of eternity. Walk by faith and God will get you through. Remember what God told Paul when he asked to be relieved of the thorn?

**2 Corinthians 12:9-10**

<sup>9</sup> *And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

<sup>10</sup> *Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*