

"True Faith Grows in Trials"

Part 7

James 1:2-12

Introduction: Today we come back to our study in the book of James and as we do we return again to chapter 2:2-12 in which James is dealing with the trials of life. The word which we have in our Bibles is "temptation" but the word refers to the trials of life or anything which comes into our lives which disrupts our everyday daily routine.

Now this section we are looking at is so important for us to grasp for 2 main reasons:

1. We all face trials.
2. We all need instruction about how to get through the trial.

You see the trials which James has in mind here are trials that we have no control over. They are situations which are out of our control and we need to know how to face those trials.

That is exactly what we find here in James 1:2-12.

Now let me quickly point out the help which James gives to us for when we face the trials.

I. Attitude and Focus

Notice James 1:2

When we face the trials of life we are to do so with joy because as children of God we know the end result.

Job 23:10

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

II. Knowledge

Notice James 1:3

It is so important that we rest in the knowledge that God is doing a work in our lives. He has allowed the trial and He is in control of the trial.

III. Surrender

Notice James 1:4

We are not to fight against the trials of life but we are to surrender knowing that the trial is being used by God to refine us. I will remind you again that there is a sense in this verse that when we resist we hinder the work of God.

We must keep in mind that it is God's desire that people see Christ in us and that only happens when we surrender to the trials just as Jesus surrendered to the cross.

IV. Dependence

The other point which we talked about was dependence. When we face the trials of this life we are often faced with decisions which are connected to the trials.

Notice James 1:5

We are to go to God when in the trials we face decisions and we do not know what we are to do. In this verse we can also see that trials are designed to drive us to God. There is also the promise here that God will give to us the wisdom which we need as we face the trials of this life.

"it shall be given him" - This is a promise that we can hold tight to as we face the cross roads of this life.

But when we ask God for wisdom there is one condition which is required:

V. Faith

Notice James 1:6

We talked about this last week so I don't want to go too far into this again but when we ask God for wisdom we must believe that He will give to us the wisdom we need.

That means when we ask God then we wait for Him to answer. We do not continue look in the world for the answers. We ask God and then we wait for Him to give us the answer.

Hebrews 11:6

⁶ *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

Notice James 1:6 again.

The word "wavering" is very important to understand here. It really has a double meaning:

1. **To doubt.** - We must come to Him in faith.
2. **To dispute or to contend.** - Some people do not ask for wisdom but instead they go to God and dispute with Him about why He allowed them to be in the situation they are in.

Here is the idea. When we go to God looking for wisdom as we face the decisions in life we are to have faith that He will give us wisdom and then when He does answer we must act upon His response. If He opens a door we do not look at the circumstances but we respond by faith.

The person who lacks faith and trust in God is unstable in every area of his or her life.

Notice James 1:5-7

This now brings us to where we are today in this study. The next point which James gives us as we face the trials is:

VI. A teachable spirit.

Notice James 1:9

Here James is addressing the man who is poor. He would be the man who has very little pertaining to the wealth of this world.

This man is to rejoice because he has been exalted. But what does that mean? James is talking about this man's position in God's family.

Application:

Listen, you may be poor, you may scrape to get through this life, you may never have a savings account, you may never have new clothing but if you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior then you are a child of God.

Let me give to you a list of some of your spiritual riches:

1. **You are loved and protected by God.**

Romans 8:38-39

³⁸ For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

³⁹ *Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

You may have been rejected by this world but you are loved and accepted by God.

2. You have an inheritance awaiting you in heaven.

1 Peter 1:3-4

³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

⁴ *To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,*

You may have lost your savings here but in heaven there is an inheritance which can never be lost.

3. You are a joint heir with Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:16-17

¹⁶ *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

¹⁷ *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

You may have very little here but you are rich in Christ.

4. In God's eyes your salvation is complete.

Ephesians 2:4-6

⁴ *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,*

⁵ *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved:)*

⁶ *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*

This is why the brother of low degree is to rejoice. I will come back to this in a moment.

Notice James 1:10a

Now James turns to the rich man. He tells him to rejoice in that he is made low. What does James have in mind here?

Let me explain. The idea here is that through the trials of life this rich man has lost much of his worldly wealth.

Let me remind you that James is writing to Jewish believers who are in the midst of the persecution. Many of them have been stripped of all they had. Others never had much and they are really struggling in the midst of the persecution.

So the man James addresses here in 1:10 is a person who has lost much of what they possessed in this life due to the persecution.

But why should this man rejoice because he has lost his worldly wealth?

- ❖ James knew that a man who has the riches of this world can very easily come to trust in his riches. A man who has the riches of this world can very easily come to rest in his wealth. But James knew that when the rich man went through a trial and lost his riches or found himself in a trial where he could not use his riches to buy his way out then he would then turn to God for what he needed in the trial. The trial will bring the rich man to a place of humility because his wealth cannot fix the trial which he is facing.

This is why James tells the rich man to rejoice when he is made low. Humility is a good thing. The poor brother is humble in his trials and the rich brother is brought to the place of humility in his trials.

Proverbs 16:19

¹⁹ Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Let me show you what Peter tells those who received his letter.

1 Peter 5:6-7

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

⁷ Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Peter is writing to those who were being persecuted under Nero. They were being persecuted for their faith beyond what we can ever imagine. They were set on fire, they were racked, they were boiled, they were cast into the arena with wild animals and that is just a small part of what they were experiencing.

Now listen, Peter is calling for them to surrender to the mighty hand of God. That means that God had permitted all of this to happen. They were to humble themselves and trust God with what they were going through.

Let me remind you that God had allowed them to come under the persecution so that other could see Christ in them.

Now let me get back to James. That is how the trials of life are used by God in our lives also. The poor brother is brought to the place of humility and so is the rich brother when he faces a trial and his riches cannot fix the problem.

When I read this I am reminded that when we face the trials of life and we have no control over them, the trial brings the rich man and the poor man to the same level. It brings them both to the place of dependence upon God.

James now takes the thought for the rich man even deeper.

Notice James 1:10b

Here James reminds the rich man that just as the flower of the field he too will one day pass away.

Notice James 1:11

Here is an illustration from the field. Here is a reminder of how quickly life goes by.

Don't miss what James is saying here, in the midst of trials God is teaching us to release our grip on this world and live for that which is eternal.

If you were here last Sunday night we talked about how the riches of this world are only temporary. When you will die you will take nothing with you. You will leave it all behind and the man who comes after you will get that which you now have.

Ecclesiastes 2:18-19

¹⁸ Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me.

¹⁹ And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity.

Conclusion:

Let me get back to the thought which James has here. When we find ourselves in the midst of a trial we need to have a **teachable spirit** because in that trial God is teaching us humility. We may lose all we have and the world may look down upon us and even reject us but in Christ we are eternally rich. God desires that those around us see Jesus Christ in us and that cannot happen until we are practicing humility.

Don't hold too tightly to what you have here. Enjoy what God has given you but do not look to your riches and your possessions for security because all we have can be gone in a moment.

The most important investment you can make is in a relationship with Jesus Christ.