

"True Faith Grows in Trials"**Part 8****James 1:2-12**

Introduction: Today we return back to our study in James and as we do we come back to the topic of trials and how true faith grows in our trials. We have been looking at James 1:2-12 and so far we have looked at verses 2-11. In these verses James has given instructions to his readers as to how to face the trials of this life. We have looked at 6 points which James has given to us to help us to endure the trials which we face in life.

1. **Attitude and Focus**- we are to face the trial with joy as we look ahead to a day when the trial will be behind us.
2. **Knowledge** - the deeper your knowledge of God the better you will handle the trial.
3. **Surrender** - we are not to fight the trial but allow God to do His work in us.
4. **Dependence**- we often face decisions in the trials and when we do we are to ask God for wisdom.
5. **Faith**- when we ask we must ask in faith nothing wavering. In other words we do not doubt God nor do we dispute with God about the trial we are facing.
6. **Teachable Spirit**- in the midst of the trial God is teaching us to fix our eyes on that which is eternal.

Now in this section on trials which we are looking at I find it very interesting that James never tells us what these people are going through. We do know that they had been scattered because of persecution but we do not have the details. I believe there is a reason why God chose to not give to us the details. The reason is because without us knowing then we can apply this to every trial we face in our lives. If we had the details then we would be more likely to limit the application to only that which was similar to what these people were going through. So without the details it becomes current for every trial we face in our lives today.

Let me show you another place where the same thought can be seen.

2 Corinthians 12:7-9

⁷ And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

⁸ *For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.*

⁹ *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.*

Here in this passage we are not told what Paul's thorn in the flesh was and therefore we can take this passage and apply it to many situations which we face in our lives. It can be applied to battles with personal weaknesses, it can be applied to chronic sickness, it can be applied to situations you face at work and the list goes on and on. The fact that we are not given the details here in 2 Corinthians or in James allows us to apply these passages to many situations which we face in life.

Now let us get back to James.

We are talking about facing the trials which come into our lives of which we have no control. When these trials come we do not like it. Often times we can see the clouds of a coming storm start to build on the horizon of our lives and we begin to panic.

Illustration:

You go to the doctor and he spends extra time looking at the MRI. He then tells you there may be a problem and he desires to run more tests. That is when the storm clouds begin to build.

Maybe it is the news that a loved one is very sick and you know they do not have the strength to fight the sickness. Your heart begins to break because you can clearly see the storm clouds beginning to build and it frightens you.

Let me take a moment this morning and give you 2 thoughts of encouragement.

- 1. The testing of our faith is a beautiful thing when viewed through the eyes of God.**

1 Peter 1:5-7

⁵ *Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

⁶ *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:*

⁷ That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

In verse 7 we see how God views the trials which we face in our lives. To Him they are much more precious than gold. So that is encouraging to know how God views our trials.

2. Jesus is aware of every trial we face and He comes to us in the trials to bring comfort.

Mark 6:46-51

⁴⁶ And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.

⁴⁷ And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land.

⁴⁸ And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.

⁴⁹ But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out:

⁵⁰ For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.

⁵¹ And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered.

Now let us get back to James. We have now come to verse 12 where James pulls all of the previous thoughts together about the trials of life.

Notice James 1:12

There are several words and 2 phrases here that we need to look closely at.

1. Blessed

James tells us that the man who endures temptation or the trials of life is a man who is blessed. The word "blessed" means "happy". It has the idea of deep inward happiness.

2. Endureth

This word is very important because it helps us to see that James is talking about the trials of life and not the temptation to commit sin. If James was talking about the temptation to commit sin then he would have said, "Blessed is the man who RESISTS temptation". But he did not say that. He used the word "endureth".

Here is the definition of the word as used here in James 1:12.

- a. **to persevere: under misfortunes and trials to hold fast to one's faith in Christ.**

This is exactly what James is saying here. Blessed is the man who when he or she faces difficult circumstances in their lives, does not abandon their faith. But instead they hold tightly to their faith.

Let me refresh your memory on one of the statements which Job made in the midst of all that he went through. I show you this because Job's statement is the very definition of what James says here.

Job 13:15a

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

This is exactly what James is saying here. No matter what God allows me to go through I will never abandon my faith. I will never turn away from God even when I do not understand what He is doing in my life. When the pain is more than I can stand I will still trust in Him and praise Him with my words.

Let us consider the next phrase in James 1:12.

3. "For when he is tried"

This is a very interesting phrase. It tells us the reason why the man who endures trials is blessed. This phrase is one word in the Greek and it is the word "do-ke-mos". Now to understand this let me give you some history.

"In the ancient world there was no banking system as we know it today, and no paper money. All money was made from metal, heated until liquid, poured into moulds and allowed to cool. When the coins were cooled, it was necessary to smooth off the uneven edges. The coins were comparatively soft, and of course many people shaved them closely. In one century, more than eighty laws were passed in Athens to stop the practice of whittling down the coins then in circulation. But some money-changers were men of integrity, who

would accept no counterfeit money; they were men of honour who put only genuine, full-weight money into circulation. Such men were called dokimos, men who were genuine men of integrity who's life styles proved they could be trusted."

Now let us apply this to what James is saying.

Notice James 1:12 again.

The verse could read like this, *"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, because when he has been tested and he is found to have true (genuine) faith he shall receive the crown of life..."*

Now before I pull this together let me just say that the crown of life here is eternal life.

Now listen to what James is saying here. Don't miss this. James is saying that when a person is faced with the trials of life and their faith is tested, that trial will be a test of their faith and will prove it to be either a true saving faith or a false faith. If they endure, meaning if they cling to their faith in the midst of the trial then they have a saving faith. But if they walk away from God then they had a faith that was not a saving faith.

The man whose faith endures the testing is blessed because the trial and his endurance have proved his faith to be real.

Notice what John says about those who walk away from God.

1 John 2:18-19

¹⁸ *Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.*

¹⁹ *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*

Let me now go back to James again. His does not mean that if we fail in the trial or if we doubt God in the trial that we are not saved. Many have failed in the midst of trials. Peter failed in the midst of his trial but he did not abandon Christ forever. It means that when we have true saving faith even if we fail we will never walk away from God. We still hold to Him and we still follow Him.

The people who have a false faith will completely abandon any commitment to God because their faith was not a true saving faith.

Jesus spoke of those who looked like they had a true faith but when the trials came the trials proved their faith to be false in the Parable of the Sower.

Mark 4:16-17

¹⁶ *And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness;*

¹⁷ *And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.*

The bottom line is this: no matter how great the trial which we face it cannot destroy true faith.

Remember what I told you when we started this study? James was concerned about the faith of his readers and here we can see his concern as he gives them a way to check their faith.

Now let us notice one more phrase which James uses here which is another way to check our faith.

4. "Them that love him"

Notice James 1:12

It is the phrase "them that love him". James says the crown of life is promised to them that love him. This is a phrase that is used in the Bible to describe those who are true Christians.

Let me show you some verses.

Psalm 145:20

²⁰ *The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.*

Romans 8:28

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.*

1 Corinthians 2:9

⁹ *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

James 2:5

⁵ *Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?*

Now let me say that many people claim to love God but there is one sure test.

John 14:21

²¹ *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*

John 14:23-24

²³ *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

²⁴ *He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.*

The mark of true love is obedience.

Conclusion:

The trials which enter our lives have 2 purposes:

1. They cause spiritual growth.
2. They manifest our faith and reveal if it is real or if it false.