

# Faith Perseveres

Lesson for Sunday, January 14, 2024

## INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ We have made it to the final lesson in our study of the book of James! Take a few moments to review the five keystone verses we attempted to memorize: 1:22; 2:17; 3:10; 4:4; 5:8.
- ⇒ As we learned last week, the chief subject of chapter 5 is the coming judgment of God.
  - In verses 1-6, James sends a strong warning to those who trust their riches and not the Lord.
  - The rest of the chapter (vs. 7-20) James gives final instructions on how Christians are to persevere until the Lord returns.
- ⇒ Here's the question we are thinking about: In these difficult times, when the world seems to be totally against Biblical Christianity, how are Christians to think and what are we to do as we wait for the Lord's return?

## BIBLE STUDY:

1. Be Patient in Suffering (vs. 7-11)
  - a. The theme in these verses is clear: be patient while waiting on the judgment of God. It is mentioned twice in verse 7 and once each in verses 8, 10, & 11. In verse 11 we also see the word "endure." James gives us three pictures of patience to encourage us.
  - b. First, be patient like a farmer waiting for harvest (7-9).
    - i. A farmer (especially in James's days) were at the mercy of the elements, and were truly dependent on God's provision.
    - ii. This example reminds us that our faith involves trusting God with what we cannot control. A farmer can't control the rain.
    - iii. At the same time, the farmer must be diligent. Following this example, we must trust God with what we can't control while we honor God with what we can control.
    - iv. DISCUSS: What are some of the things we can control vs. what we cannot?
  - c. Second, be patient like a prophet speaking the truth (10).
    - i. Again, the prophet reminds us that patience does not necessarily mean inactivity. A farmer doesn't just sit back and wait. He works!
    - ii. The prophet stood boldly and spoke out against the evils of his day in the middle of persecution, and we are to follow this example.
    - iii. In the middle of our hardships, we are to speak about the goodness of God, His grace, mercy and the message of the Gospel. Times of suffering are often wonderful opportunities to speak for the Lord.
  - d. Third, be patient like Job hoping in God's purposes (11).
    - i. Remember that it took 42 chapters for the purpose of Job's suffering life to be revealed.
    - ii. Job is a reminder that whatever we are walking through is not the end of the story. The end will reveal (11) that God is "very pitiful (compassionate) and of tender mercy (merciful)."
2. Be Trustworthy in Speech (vs. 12)
  - a. Seemingly out of nowhere, James starts talking about oaths.
  - b. Throughout the book, James has had a lot to say about our speech. In this last admonition, he is emphasizing that our speech must be trustworthy.
  - c. The words of our mouths must be consistent and dependable.
  - d. QUESTION: Does your speech measure up?
3. Be Prayerful in Sorrow (vs. 13-18)

- a. Remember that James was the leader in the Jerusalem church during the book of Acts. When we read Acts, one of the things that jumps off the pages is that those early Christians prayed all the time!
  - b. Vs. 13: Are you afflicted (suffering hardships and troubles)? Pray.
  - c. Vs. 13: Are you merry (happy, joyful)? Praise God through the singing of psalms!
  - d. Vs. 14: Are you sick? Call for the prayers of your pastor(s).
  - e. Vs. 16: Pray one for another. A command for the need of corporate prayer.
  - f. Prayer should be the first response to every situation for the believer.
  - g. DISCUSS: How open are we to prayer? Often, we keep our requests to ourselves, not wanting others to know our "issues." Is this a Biblical attitude?
4. Be Loving Toward Sinners (vs. 19-20)
- a. The last word from James to the church is to look out for one another.
  - b. Brothers and sisters will at times wander from Biblical teaching, and James wants us to see that we should be there to help them come back. God intends for us to help spur one another to a closer walk with God (see Hebrews 10:24).
  - c. The word in the KJV "convert" means to cause to return, to bring back.
    - i. This is a picture of a backslidden Christian being restored back to a right relationship with the Lord due to the influence and concern of their fellow Christians.
    - ii. DISCUSS: What keeps us from reaching out to brothers and sisters in Christ that have strayed from the faith?

**APPLICATION:**

- ⇒ How would you summarize the Book of James in one sentence? Allow the class to work on a one-sentence summary that they might write in their Bibles.