

## James 25-05-04a

Greetings, welcome to Grace and Truth Bible Church on this fourth day of May 2025. We're in the book of James. We're in chapter 1. We are about to see that there are unique characteristics of this book and observing them helps us make application.

The standard application of James has always been to compare and contrast his view of faith and works with the Apostle Paul. Any commentary, any article, any casual conversation with anybody that knows anything says Paul talks about faith, James talks about works. I will show you my faith by my works.

That's what's going on. James is trying to counterbalance people who just lean on faith. We're going to see that our investigations into the time of writing and into the authorship of this book make a difference in helping us know how to approach it.

We'll see that this morning. Let's ask God's blessing on our fellowship and study and then we'll begin. Father, we are grateful for another opportunity to be sustained by your grace, led by your Holy Spirit, fed in our souls from the manna that is contained in your Word.

We're grateful for the fellowship of believers of like mind who share an enthusiasm and an appreciation for those provisions, for our opportunity to work through challenges, to enjoy blessings, to persevere, to represent the Lord Jesus Christ on this earth, and to anticipate his return and our entrance into the life that is to come. We pray that our study this morning will benefit each one who listens, that we will grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to more fully and fitly represent him in the time that remains to us in this life. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Reading our passage, James, of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, slave. To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, each of these words and phrases should now resonate with some fresh understanding.

We have dwelt on them in detail. You know what it is to be a slave. You know where the authority to write and send this letter comes from.

You know the destination to whom it is written and what their situation is. And we began looking in the past two Sundays at verses two and following. My brothers, account it, judge it, hegemon it to be an occasion for rejoicing when you fall into various kinds of trials.

Knowing, verse three, circle, put asterisks around it. How do we persevere? How do we overcome? How do we become overcomers in situations like this? What makes God proud of us? To put it colloquially, it is to be able to view negative circumstances in a positive light because of what we know. Not just positive, but to actually have a sense of celebration, of appreciation.

Rejoice is a spectrum like happiness is a spectrum. Learned this a long time ago from a pastor before me. Happiness can be anywhere from contentment or even resignation without sorrow or bitterness all the way to ecstasies.

And you can be on the low side of the happiness spectrum or the high side or anywhere in between. And rejoice is another word for what is your happiness level? What is your contentment level? Paul says, I have learned in whatever state I find myself therewith to be content. Our subject this morning is going to be patience.

Mentioned at the end of verse 3, knowing that your faith produces patience. Let patience have its perfect work that you may be perfect and complete lacking nothing. Patience.

What is the nature of patience? What is the definition of patience? If you look at what has been written in the current day about patience, you find that first of all you need a definition. So the Oxford languages book says patience is the capacity to accept or tolerate delay trouble or suffering without getting angry or upset. I think that's a great definition.

If we are going to anticipate that the testing of our faith is going to produce patience and that patience needs to have its perfect work in us to come to completion and make us perfect, complete, lacking nothing. What is patience? Again, it is the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without getting angry or upset. That's from Oxford.

If you pull up a list of articles in any forum online you will find dozens and dozens of articles that talk about impatience. It is a pandemic according to one article. It is a cultural problem in America says another.

So addressing this just in the last two years, here are articles. Why your patience is sabotaging your success, your impatience. Confronting impatience, taking steps to improve your EQ.

Here is a centenarian doctor who taught me how to heal self-doubt and impatience. Turning impatience into peace. Why the future does not feel as good as the present.

Impatience. Is patience or impatience your middle name? What impatience brings and what it takes. A modern pandemic impatience.

Impatience is the enemy of achievement. There's one just called impatient. I'm struggling right now with being patient.

I want some things and they are not coming to me fast enough. Is your impatience actually time blindness? I'm so impatient is how the conversation started. Conquering impatience.

Seven strategies to reclaim time and find balance and so on. So how important is patience? There are two Greek words in the New Testament that are translated variously. Patience, endurance.

Endurance and patience. They are two sides of the same coin and each of these words is

translated with each of those terms. One is hypomene which meno is the last part of that.

The vowels kind of get reversed. Meno is the verb but mone is the word that means to bear up and the hypo in front of it is under. So hypomene, hypomene, it's like hypodermic, something that is under, to bear up under, hypomene.

This is patience, endurance, perseverance, forbearance. The other is macro thumia. Macro is something that's big and thumia is to continue, to not be moved.

So it is a lot of stability under pressure you might say. So what do we know about James's view here of patience versus impatience? He begins his letter talking about patience in our verse, verse 3 and verse 4. He is going to re-address this same issue in chapter 5 of this letter at length. So how important is it? The Lord Jesus addresses this.

You have it in Luke chapter 8 verse 15. This is in the midst of Luke's telling of the parable of the soils, Luke chapter 8. And in recounting the interpretation of that parable to his disciples, Jesus says, the seed that fell on the good ground are those who having heard the word with a noble and good heart keep it and bear fruit with patience. That is such a concise parable, such elegant descriptions of the response to God's Word.

And this goes back to our view of the book of James, why it was written, to whom it was written, when it was written, because this concentration, this focus on patience as a response from those who have a noble and good heart and bear fruit. The seed is the Word. If you have the Word of God in your soul, what should it be doing? A, it should create qualities in our heart.

We should have a good heart. We should have a noble heart. Remember the things that we should think on, whatsoever things are, true, honest, noble, same word.

Lovely, a good report, think on these things, peace comes. So, the seed that falls on good ground. We obviously, in principle and instinctively would say, I want to be good soil.

I want the Word of God to come and be deeply implanted in me and bear fruit. I want to be the Luke chapter 8, verse 15 type of person. Nobody would say, oh no, I want to be the thorny soil.

I want the soil to spring up amongst the rocks and not be able to take root. I want it to be hit by the sun and die. Nobody would ever admit that that is what they really want.

It is what ends up happening because we don't follow through on our good intentions. It requires focus. It requires knowing that the testing of our faith is what produces this patience and that this patience is going to change us.

It is going to have a work in us to make us perfect and complete, lacking nothing. We want to strive for patience, cultivate patience. So, Jesus talks about this.

Again, in Luke 21, verse 19, you can just flip a few pages over. Jesus says, let patience possess your souls. What does that come on the heels of? What is that the conclusion of? In chapter 21,

he is talking about the signs of the times and the end of the age.

In verse 12, they will lay their hands on you, persecute you, to deliver you up to synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake, but it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Notice, opposition, hardship, the testing of our faith is an opportunity for witness.

We don't have to create these opportunities out of whole cloth. Opposition is one of the ways that God gives us occasion for testimony. What are we like under pressure? When the fruit is squeezed, what comes out? Is it orange juice or is it lemon juice? Is it sweet or is it bitter? Pressure reveals what is on the inside.

It will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony, Luke 21, 13. Therefore, settle it in your hearts not to overthink, not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer. This is a species of patience, isn't it? You know that there's going to be a pressure situation.

You're going to be called on the carpet. You're going to be held to account. Someone is going to question and make demands and want answers.

And you could lay awake at night trying to strategize, what am I going to say? How will I respond? What should I talk about? What should I keep quiet about? And Jesus says, settle it in your hearts not to meditate, not to think too hard beforehand on what you will answer. I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. Be patient.

Wait for the words that come from God. This requires faith, confidence, assurance that this promise is going to be fulfilled. Any human being can fret and worry and try out different scenarios in their mind and meditate on how they are going to respond to criticism, adversity, being called on the carpet in front of people who have some sort of authority.

Verse 16 says, you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. This is the extreme form of persecution that many of the disciples experienced and other followers of Christ down through the centuries have been subject to.

But not a hair of your head shall be lost. Are you going to believe circumstances, threats, consequences, the experiences you witnessed that others undergo? Is it going to worry? Is it going to deflect? Is it going to cause failure, recantation? I think this was just a bad idea from the beginning. Let me go along to get along.

Let me try to appease these people. Not a hair of your head shall be lost. It's a promise.

If God before us, who can be against us? Why should I fear what man can do unto me? By your patience, possess your souls. Keep yourself on track. And the means of doing so, interestingly, it is not faith, hope, or love, specifically.

It is patience, which is the outcome and the working together of all of those things. If you love the Lord God, you trust Him, you have faith, you treat as reality the fulfillment of His promises. And as a result, patience has its perfect work in our souls.

We have a noble heart. We have a good heart, a good conscience. We saw that in 1 Timothy, especially, conscience.

Patience perfects that good conscience. It vindicates and justifies claiming the promises of God, ensuring that we meet the conditions for them. So this is really important.

Romans chapter 2, verse 7, remember Paul says, there is eternal life in store, part of our hope, eternal life from God to those who by patient continuance in well-doing are seeking for glory and honor and immortality. All of those things are future, future glory, future honor, future immortality. It is a, I pull it into the presence with my hope and with my faith.

And I patiently continue in well-doing. Romans 12, 12, we rejoice in hope. Count it all joy.

I can do that because of my hope, my confident expectation that God is in His heaven. He is going to protect, vindicate, justify, honor, glorify, grant inheritance, and these other wonderful benefits to those who patiently continue. So we're rejoicing in hope.

We are patient in tribulation, patient. When hard times come, our response is patience, continuing steadfastly in prayer, steadfast continuance in prayer. Romans 12, 12, 2 Corinthians 6, 4, we are commended.

This goes back to that idea of testimony that Jesus mentioned. In all things, we commend ourselves as ministers of God. And the very first thing he lists, what commends Paul and his team as ministers of God, genuine messengers of truth? Much patience in tribulations, in needs, and in distresses.

Tribulation, need, and distress, Paul and his team are patient. This is something, as I said, James is going to return to in chapter 5, because really many commentators have difficulty saying, what is the theme of James? He talks about, I will show you my faith by my works, but there are many other sections of the book that don't really seem to relate to that. There's a lot of practical or pragmatic attention given to subjects.

This is how you should live, but establishing a theme is difficult. But what he starts with and what he ends with is patience. These other things that he is going to address are undergirded, powered by, fueled by patience.

So when he gets to chapter 5, verse 7, notice what he says. Chapter 5, verse 7, Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it, until he receives the early and the latter rain.

James here is interchanging our two words, both hypomone and makrothumia. They are used

virtually synonymously throughout this section. You also, verse 8, be patient, establish your heart.

Patience is in the heart. You need a good and a noble heart. It is knowing the word of God that does that, cultivating patience, seeking it, examining ourselves to see if we're in the faith.

And one of the measures of whether we are in the faith and being faithful is how patient am I? How willing am I to wait without anger, without being upset, and enduring hardship, trouble, suffering, setback, delay? What I want is not what's happening. Our response as believers should be patience, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him. Do you think the Lord Jesus was ever tempted to be impatient as he dealt with the Jews of his day, even his own disciples? O ye of little faith, could you not watch with me an hour? Did you not realize that if I'm in the boat, it cannot sink despite the storm? Did you not get the lesson of the bread? O slow of heart to believe all that the prophet said.

I suspect that one of Jesus' greatest tests was to remain patient with the hardness of heart, with the opposition, with the apathy, with the indifference, with the emotionality of his disciples, veteran fishermen becoming mortally fearful in a bad storm on the sea. Patience. So he continues here.

You also be patient. Establish your hearts. What is the constant hope that fuels this patience? If you sit in a queue, a line waiting for some service, often it is some sort of medical provision.

You're waiting in a hospital. They have a waiting room full of people who are waiting. How do they do that without getting angry? They remind themselves, sooner or later, my turn will come.

Sooner or later, someone is going to come and call my last name and take me back to where the service is rendered. When it is sooner, we're very grateful. When it is longer, and we're tempted to fidget or complain or want to go up and pound on the reception desk.

You said the appointment was at nine o'clock. It is nine o'clock. It's now 9.45. I'm still sitting here.

Do you not think my time is as valuable as the rest of you people? When are they going to see me? How is it that people are patient in these circumstances? It is the certain knowledge that they're going to get to me. I don't know when, but they're not going to keep me here all day and close the place and say, come back tomorrow. I will be seen.

The thing for which I came will happen. I just must wait. I am sure if you're not a sort of sourpuss and a pessimist and a disbeliever in the general goodness of people, there's some reason.

Some patient ahead of us needed something that was unanticipated. Previous appointments took longer. If that were me, I would want them to finish with me and not look at their watch

and say, oh, next patient.

Sorry, come back tomorrow. There are inevitable delays and unexpected circumstances that cause others of us to wait. We take that into account, and we're patient.

We don't give somebody what for when they finally arrive. The doctor walks in. We don't say, where on earth have you been? I've been waiting for thus and such a time, and me, myself, and I was inconvenienced.

We're grateful that it has happened when it happened. Look at the scripture. What does it say here? You also be patient.

Establish your hearts. What is it that you know in this case? Knowing what? The coming of the Lord is at hand. The end of my life is certainly, absolutely, by the promise of God going to be the return of the Lord Jesus.

When my life ends, my last heartbeat takes place. My last wiggle on the electroencephalogram happens, and I die. Or, if miraculously, I'm in the rapture generation, and I hear the shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God from a standing position.

Either way, it is certain that the next thing to happen after my life is the coming of the Lord. It is at hand. I should treat it as at hand.

Any moment, my heart could stop beating. My systems could fail. I could have a massive stroke.

I could be hit by any kind of a truck. It could be a beer truck. It could be, more likely in my case, a FedEx delivery truck, or an Amazon truck, or a UPS truck, or a U.S. Post Office truck.

Those appear around here quite frequently. Any one of those could hit me, kill me, and my next observation is going to be the Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of the Lord is at hand.

This should drive our patience. So, practical idea here. What do we do the next time we're dissatisfied and tempted to be upset, angry, or want to take some kind of impulsive action in a circumstance? I've been waiting.

I don't want to wait anymore. I don't want to wait at all. We're in an age of instant gratification.

When that occurs in my soul, dissatisfaction with the present, I want something to happen, and I want it to happen now. Our response is patience, right? Where do I get that patience? Where does it come from? What should my thought be when I need patience and it's not coming? The Lord is at hand. The Lord Jesus Christ, His coming is the issue.

And what's going to happen at that coming? We will immediately be evaluated. Our test is going to be graded. Each of these problems, did we pass? Did we fail? What was the quality of our answer to that particular problem? Did we do it right? Did we just barely get there? Did we hit it out of the park? You have need of patience.

So, James is going to say, you be patient. I'll tell you something as we go to the break. There are 108 verses in the book of James, 108.

Exactly half, 54 of them contain imperatives. This is a book of what to do and how to do it. 54 commands.

An imperative is a command. Half of the verses in this book contain a command, and the rest of the verses tell us why and how to accomplish those commands. 54 out of 108.

The theme of the book of James, you know what you need to know, get it done. James does not try to teach doctrinal truth. James is a book of application.

Do it, do it right, do it now because of what you know. That's the theme of the book of James. Every different subject falls under that thematic imperative.

So, how valuable a book is this for us? Right at the top of the list. If we think we know the word of God, we've been studying for months, years, decades, are we getting it done? And if we want to get it done and do better at getting it done, how do we do it? This is our book. We're going to see why and how that is true of this book when we come back from the break.