

Round Top Church Christian Fellowship

Sermon Series in James

James 5

7 Values to Patience

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(All Scripture is from the English Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.)

We remember that James, the Lord's Brother, most likely wrote his letter in the 40's before many of the other books of the New Testament were written. James' primary audience is Jews who have been dispersed after the martyrdom of Stephen recorded in Acts 7. James was the pastor of the church in Jerusalem. Remember that the followers of Jesus received their commission to start from Jerusalem (Luke 24:47). As the pastor of the church in Jerusalem, James had respect and influence. James' congregation is scattered across the Mediterranean Sea (James 1:1), and this letter is a way for him to communicate to them and address their situation-in-life.

Like many congregations, they are made of people who are not all the same other than being Jews. There are the wealthy and the working class. There are those that are more gifted, some that work hard and some that are just taking up space in a pew. Many scholars view that the first six verses of James 5 are being addressed to a particular fraction within the congregation who need to be called into account for their behavior. Another view is that these six verses address people outside the congregation who are oppressing the members. James is simply pronouncing judgement like Old Testament prophets (Elijah) who proclaimed God's judgement to those who oppressed His people and did evil in His sight (1 Kings 16, 17 King Ahab). Therefore, these six verses are very sharp and condemning. Basically, James, as God's pastor, is holding them accountable to God for the way they have treated others and the way they have used their wealth in life. They had responsibilities that they did not fulfill.

James has already addressed the "rich" in chapter one, verses 10 and 11. It can be deduced that there is a problem within the Christian-Jewish community with rich people taking advantage of the poorer members. James' congregation had to flee from Jerusalem and make a new start. Like most immigrants, people take advantage of them by paying them lower wages or holding money back from them. This is what James

describes in verses 1 – 6. In verse one, the abusive rich people are given a pronouncement of judgement that will happen. These are not called “brothers.”

There is a **judgement** in verse one declared, and then there are four **charges** identified **A – D**.

James 5:1-20

Judgement Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you.

Charges:

2 **(A)** Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten.

3 Your gold and your silver have rusted;

and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire.

It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure!

4 **(B)** Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields,

and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you;

and the outcry of those who did the harvesting

has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

5 **(C)** You have lived luxuriously on the earth

and led a life of wanton pleasure;

you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.

6 **(D)** You have condemned and put to death the righteous man;

he does not resist you.

There is a shift in the target audience and the demeanor in verse 7. James addressed his audience in verse 7 as “brothers” who are to be patient until the Lord comes. We are also given a glimpse into the forward-thinking of the first century believers who anticipate the return of the Lord. These who are directed to be patient are the ones who are being afflicted by the abusive rich people. In our suffering, God give us a life-outline to navigate a way forward through our pain.

A Way out: Patience

7 Be **patient**,

therefore, **brethren**, until the coming of the Lord.

Behold, the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil,

being **patient** about it, until it gets the early and late rains.

8 You too be **patient**;

strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

In some years, the farmer labors hard to get his crop in the ground and then is totally dependent upon the rain to come. The farmer goes through great hardship(s) and invests his resources into a crop that in-the-end he has no control. Waiting for a pot to boil or sitting in front of a seed that has been covered with earth anticipating its growth will prove a long wait and try one's patience. However, in most years, the rains come and the crops grow. Thus, we wait for the Lord with strengthened hearts, because He is coming; and all things will be set straight.

God has made many things straight in the national life of Israel. Often times making the way straight involves judgement. God judged Pharaoh and made a path for the Hebrew people. Unfortunately, the Hebrews did not follow God's straight path, because they were not patient. They grumbled in the wilderness, and God lengthened their path by forty years. James has precedent concerning judgement and patience. In verses seven through sixteen, God details seven personal attributes in the application of patience. The attributes are numbered **(1) – (7)**.

7 secrets to patience.

How To Carry Out Patience

9 **(1) Do not complain**, **brethren**, against one another,

that you yourselves may not be judged;

behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.

[Jesus said He is the Door ~ John 10]

10 As an example, **brethren**, of suffering and **patience**,
take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

11 Behold, we count those blessed who **(2) endured**.

[**complaining is tied to endurance**]

Luke 21:19 "By your **endurance** you will gain your lives.

⁴ but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much **endurance**, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses,

Hebrews 10:36 For you have need of **endurance**, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with **endurance** the race that is set before us,

James 1:3 - 4 knowing that the testing of your faith produces **endurance**. ⁴ **And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.**

(continue verse 11) You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.

12 But above all, my **brethren**,

(3) do not swear,

either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath;

but let your yes be yes, and your no, no;

so that you may not fall under judgment.

13 Is anyone among you suffering?

[**Pray in your suffering**]

Let him **(4) pray**.

Is anyone cheerful?

Let him **(5) sing praises.**

14 Is anyone among you sick?

Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him,
anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;

15 and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick,
and the Lord will raise him up,
and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

16 Therefore, **(6) confess** your sins to one another,

and **(7) pray for one another**, so that you may be **healed**.

The effective prayer of a **righteous** man can accomplish much.

After we received the seven attributes to apply patience in our lives, we are given an example of a man who prayed effectively to God and things happened. However, James makes the point that we too can be Elijah.

Seven Attributes of Patience

1. Do not complain
2. Endurance
3. Do not swear
4. Pray for yourself in your suffering
5. Sing praises
6. Confess you sins to each other
7. Pray for one another so there will be healing of sins

Righteous Prayer ~ Elijah and Us

17 **Elijah** was a man with a nature like ours,

and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain;

and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.

18 And he prayed again,

and the sky poured rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

Now Elijah served the Lord about 850 years before Jesus. Elijah was God's prophet against the prophets of Baal of whom King Ahab and Jezebel worshiped. Elijah had several hundred prophets of Baal put to death. Elijah was an instrument in God's judgment against those who oppressed His people. We can draw a comparison here to the rich people who were abusing God's people. Like King Ahab and Jezebel and their prophets, the rich people will receive their just rewards. Both Ahab and Jezebel lost their lives. Jezebel fell off a tower, and the dogs ate her.

2 Kings. 9:36-37

³⁶ Therefore they returned and told him. And he said, "This is the word of the LORD, which He spoke by His servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'In the property of Jezreel the dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel; ³⁷ and the corpse of Jezebel shall be as dung on the face of the field in the property of Jezreel, so they cannot say, "This is Jezebel."'"

Who is a righteous man?

Hyperbole ~ Let's sign-up the righteous people in our congregation to have them pray for us, so that we will have a direct path to God and have all prayer answered. Then, we can go to the other churches to get their list of all their righteous people and have them all join in unison to have a more righteous prayer from all the most righteous people. We will have main-lined prayer. Put your hand on the T.V. set and match it to mine to claim your prayer. Brothers and sisters, we have arrived.

You can hear this kind of teaching throughout the airways. What does James say to qualify his statement? What example does he give? James provides the prophet **Elijah** as his example. However, James qualifies Elijah as a person who possessed a "nature" like ours. James is pointing out the fact that Elijah was just a man who had a manhood, a "nature" like he and all the other Jews. This tells us that we too, the average person, can pray and have our prayers answered. Yes, Elijah is used as an example to all of us, but he, like us, had passions and human desires who overcame them and was used by God. With God's Holy Spirit in us, we too can overcome and be considered righteous and have our prayers answered. In fact, all believers can be considered righteous, because faith has made us righteous. After all, what is a Christian? A person who lives by faith and therefore righteous! Are not we all

righteous enough to pray? Paul declares in [Galatians 3:11](#) *Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "The righteous man shall live by faith."* This is the point James is making. We are like Elijah; we too can pray, and God will hear us.

17 **Elijah** was a man with a nature like ours,

and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain;

and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.

18 And he prayed again,

and the sky poured rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

[Here are other English translation of verse 17:](#)

^{TNT (1534)} **James 5:17** Helias was a man mortall even as we are and he prayed in his prayer that it myght not rayne: and it rayned not on the erth by the space of three yeares and six monethes.

^{WEB (1833)} **James 5:17** Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

^{YLT (1898)} **James 5:17** Elijah was a man like affected as we, and with prayer he did pray -- not to rain, and it did not rain upon the land three years and six months;

James closes his letter with strong words concerning sin. To James, we are all in this together. We need to rely upon each other to warn the other person if they are making bad decisions.

19 My **brethren**, if any among you strays from the truth,

and **one turns him back,**

20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way

will save his soul from death,

and will cover a multitude of sins.

As a pastor, it is my opinion that we are all involved in the ministry of turning someone back from sin. This takes place daily. There are two applications. One is that a person is turned back from their life of sin and receives Christ as their Savior and thus

saved. Yes, this person has their soul saved from death. However, James addresses “brethren” in verse nineteen. Therefore, the second application may be better suited to this verse. This is the way we support each other in our lives day-to-day. Here is an exaggerated example, but it has happened.

An example of a friend turning you from sin: Times have become hard, and you have medical bills to pay. You call your good Christian brother and tell him that you plan to rob the bank in Plantersville. Your good Christian friend tells you that you are planning a sinful act and that robbing a bank is not God’s plan for your life. You take your friend’s Godly advice to heart and do not rob the bank in Plantersville. Your friend will have turned you back from a multitude of sins. Robbing the bank in Plantersville can lead the sinner to finding death in a shootout or an innocent bank customer or employee finding death. This is death that is the price of sin, but then all death is the price for sin.

Adam received this death sentence when he ate from the forbidden tree. Adam was removed from the Garden and, therefore, spiritually died being separated from God. Yes, spiritual separation from God is death. Our sinful acts build barriers between God and us. We also know that the price of sin in our lives is that we all will physically die. However, due to our Holy Spirit rebirth (John 3), we are resurrected to new life. King Saul disobeyed God, and he and his sons lost their earthly lives. David committed acts that were not part of the plan for his life. Nathan (God’s prophet) turned David to see that he was the man that sinned against God. David turned his heart and confessed, thereby averting physical death that King Saul found waiting for him. David eventually died, but he died a forgiven man restored by the faith demonstrated in his confession.

It appears to be common-sense, but the Bible has examples for us not to do certain things. These warnings exist, because these sins have been committed by people. Therefore, our participation in witnessing the Bible warns others: Do not kill your neighbor in order to have their spouse. Do not keep the spoils of victory that belong to the Lord then claim that you kept them for God. And above all, do not rob the bank in Plantersville.

God’s plan to bridge the gap, to heal the sin, is found in His Cross as Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.