

## **“A Word To The Oppressor and The Oppressed”**

**James 5:1-12**

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**Introduction:** James returns to a previous topic but this time with a sharp word and a prophetic statement to the rich. Now at the first let me say that I know that there are many rich and powerful people in this world that are good people and that serve God with a faithful heart. There are actually many rich and powerful people that are not Christians that are generous and fair. That being said, James has no word for them except the warning that would come to us all to not fall into the sin of oppression. Our text deals with the hoarders and rich land owners of James' day that were evil and mistreated the poor people that suffered so desperately in the ancient days.

**Here are the previous statements that James has admonished these believers with.**

### **James 1:10-11**

10 But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wild flower. 11 For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business.

NIV

### **James 2:3-7**

3 If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," 4 have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

5 Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the

kingdom he promised those who love him? 6 But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? 7 Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong?

NIV

The scripture has a lot to say about the poor and how they are treated. Now there is a difference between oppression and enablement, too. Just this week there was a group of refugees from Australia that decided to stay where they were because they found out they would not get welfare but would have to work. Neither I, nor James, are against helping those who need help, but to enable others not to do for themselves is just simply wrong.

James has a message however for the oppressor.

**Prov 3:27**

Do not withhold good from those who deserve it,  
when it is in your power to act.

NIV

**Read Text:**

**James 5:1-6**

5 Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. 2 Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. 3 Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. 4 Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. 5 You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you.

## I. Listen To The Declaration: Verses 1-3

James is pretty serious here. He starts with a ***prophetic word***. James even treats his brothers as if they were not even saved.

- He calls them, “***you rich people.***” Paul and John do this as well. Paul, John, and James speak to their “*brothers*” as “*unbelievers*” due to the way they are living. Their actions are so egregious that it contradicts their profession of faith. If I counted correctly, James calls them “***brothers***” 15 times in this book. Now he addresses them as “***Hey, you rich people***” (ago).

### Quote:

- Kurt Richards, in the NIV commentary says, “***Envy creates its own worldview by which a person will justify any action in order to secure more wealth. The worldview created by envy will rationalize the evil consequences of any act in view of selfish interest.***
- Notice how Jesus deals with the rich young ruler.

### Matt 19:21-24

21 Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

22 When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

23 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "***I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.*** 24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

NIV

- Literally “come now” you rich folks... weep and wail.

~**Weep:** To cry with a low sobbing noise.

~ **Wail: ololuzo** an onomatopoetic term. It means to howl or shriek. An understanding of what is coming. The verb form is a hapax legomenon- a single occurrence word in a given corpus.

~ **Misery: Talaiporia.** A wretchedness or calamity and misery.

- James tells the people that their self-indulgent behavior has not gone unnoticed and that there will be a payday for it. The land owners had abused the poor and abused their authority, their power, and their wealth. Instead of using their influence after God blessed them to bless others, they became selfish and greedy.

**Illustration:** Does this sound familiar to you? Well, it should. You need to look no further than local politics to find every abuse known to man. The further you go up the ladder the more corrupt it gets. Just remember that the farther up the ladder you go, the harder the fall when you hit the bottom. The taller the ladder, the deeper it must get so that it doesn't fall.

The dangers increase when power and authority are given to fools. The selfish, innate greed, of man and his sinful desires, set the table for foolish and dark behavior. Kickbacks and “under-the-table-deals,” with other people’s money, are rampant in Washington. How can a godly man survive that atmosphere?

**Greek: “That is Coming upon you” eperchomai-** (To attack, come in or upon, occur or arrive) Present Middle Participle: James says, the judgment of God had already started, and would continue. The culmination of this would happen in the last days. No one, I repeat, no one, escapes judgment. The

middle verb indicates they brought this judgment upon themselves.

**Verse 2: Sepo- (Say-po)** are corrupted, rotten, and putrefied... and still rotting (PAPTC). The truth of the matter is that all the wealth we have is temporary. You can literally see it being corrupted with the passing of time. Fortunes are lost in a day. To trust in riches is foolish. You look at a rich man differently than God does. We see fame, fortune, power, and pleasure. God sees sin, selfishness, humanity, impotence. God sees the heart not the car or gold chains you wear. God sees the arrogance of men. God sees pride and self-reliance.

- **Motheaten:** Our wealth is corrupted and our garments are being eaten by moths. There is no such thing as a lifetime guarantee. All things decompose. All things fall apart. All things wear out. Here today, gone tomorrow.

### **Luke 12:13-15**

13 Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

14 Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" 15 Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

NIV

### **1 John 2:16-17**

16 For everything in the world — the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

NIV

**Prov 27:20**

20 Death and Destruction are never satisfied,  
and neither are the eyes of man.

NIV

**1 Tim 6:6-10**

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9 People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

NIV

**Eccl 5:10-11**

10 Whoever loves money never has money enough;  
whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income.

This too is meaningless.

11 As goods increase,  
so do those who consume them.  
And what benefit are they to the owner  
except to feast his eyes on them?

NIV

**Eccl 6:9**

9 It is better to be happy with what you have than to always want more and more. Always wanting more and more is useless. It is like trying to catch the wind.

Easy To Read Version

### **Mark 4:18-19**

18 "Others are like the seed planted among the thorny weeds. They hear the teaching, 19 but their lives become full of other things: the worries of this life, the love of money, and everything else they want. This keeps the teaching from growing, and it does not produce a crop in their lives.

Easy To Read Version

### **John 4:13-14**

13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

NIV

**Illustrations:** Ever bought a grill? Sure you have. Nice and shiny. New. Chrome or metal. Painted to perfection. You get lots of good meals out of a good Weber grill. Let me tell you... I have never seen anything rot like a grill. One day you go out and you have to move that grill to cook on it. You grab the handle and lift only to have it come off in your hand. Or the burners crumble because they are rusted so badly. What was once so strong and mighty is now like sand in your hand. James says our wealth and clothes are like that. *I usually grow out of mine before they rot but you get the idea.*

Have you ever noticed a house that is left vacant for a while? It will literally rot away right before your eyes.

**Here's the point... why put your trust in something that rots? Why worship what you will leave to others. The scripture speaks of the temporary and the eternal.**

**2 Cor 4:18**

18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

**1 Peter 1:3-6**

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance **that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven** for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation (Not the misery that will come upon the rich) that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

NIV

**Prov 11:28**

28 Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.

NIV

**1 Tim 6:17-19**

17 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 19 In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

NIV

- My desire is to get you to think **eternally** today. Most of the anxiety that we have is due to worrying about tomorrow and not living for today. Yes, we are to take care of our families and plan for our necessities, but **Wealth** is never to be our God.

**Matt 18:7-9**

7 "Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! *Such things must come*, but woe to the man through whom they come! 8 If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. 9 And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.

NIV

**Rom 2:5-9**

5 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath (Like The Oppressor) against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. 6 God "will give to each person according to what he has done." 7 To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality, he will give eternal life. 8 But for those who are **self-seeking** and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. 9 There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil:

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**Verse 3:** The key word in verse 3 is the word "**testify.**"

**Greek- marturion:** A martyr or a witness. That's what a martyr is. A person that has sealed their testimony with their own life/blood. That's the ultimate witness. ***In this context the rich's wealth would testify against them.*** How you handle your money says everything about you; it explains who you are.

We must also decide if we are rich. And we are! And our wealth will testify against us. Your finances describe your morality.

- James tells the rich that their gold and silver has cankered (**Katioo**). We don't often think of gold and silver as corroding. This wealth had become corrupt and was testifying against the rich. WOW! How can this be?
- James even says that the corrupt wealth was eating away at their flesh. It was like a consuming fire. My mom used to say that our money was *burning a hole in our pocket*. That's a true statement, and the bigger the kid, the bigger the fire. Wealth is a cruel God, and it can take the mind of a person on a trip they are not prepared for. **Wealth is much crueler than poverty.**
- Notice these passages about wealth or ill-gotten gain. There is several sermons right here.

### Prov 1:10-19

10 My son, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them. 11 If they say, "Come along with us; let's lie in wait for someone's blood, let's waylay some harmless soul; 12 let's swallow them alive, like the grave, and whole, like those who go down to the pit; 13 we will get all sorts of valuable things and fill our houses with plunder; 14 throw in your lot with us, and we will share a common purse" —

15 my son, do not go along with them, do not set foot on their paths; 16 for their feet rush into sin, they are swift to shed blood.

17 How useless to spread a net in full view of all the birds! 18

These men lie in wait for their own blood; they waylay only themselves! **19 Such is the end of all who go after ill-gotten gain; it takes away the lives of those who get it.**

NIV

### Prov 3:13-18

13 Blessed is the man who finds wisdom,  
the man who gains understanding,

**14 for she is more profitable than silver  
and yields better returns than gold.**

15 She is more precious than rubies;

nothing you desire can compare with her.

16 Long life is in her right hand;  
in her left hand are riches and honor.

17 Her ways are pleasant ways,  
and all her paths are peace.

18 She is a tree of life to those who embrace her;  
those who lay hold of her will be blessed.

NIV

### **Prov 10:2**

2 Ill-gotten treasures are of no value,  
but righteousness delivers from death.

NIV

### **Prov 10:22**

22 The blessing of the Lord brings wealth,  
and he adds no trouble to it.

NIV

### **Prov 11:4**

4 Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath,  
but righteousness delivers from death.

NIV

### **Prov 23:4-5**

4 Do not wear yourself out to get rich;  
have the wisdom to show restraint.

5 Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone,  
for they will surely sprout wings  
and fly off to the sky like an eagle.

NIV

### **Matt 6:19-21**

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth  
and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But

store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

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**Prov 13:11-12**

**11 Dishonest money dwindle<sup>s</sup> away,  
but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow.**

12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick,  
but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.

NIV

- Well, there you go. *That's how your wealth can burn up your flesh like fire.* Ultimately it will be the fires of hell.
- Look at the absurdity of what wealth can do to us. You become a **hoarder**. Not only a hoarder... *but a hoarder in the last days.* That's hoarding things that are about to perish.

**Greek: To Hoard, to treasurer up. Thesaurizo from thesaurus-** We get our word thesaurus from this word. And what is a thesaurus? It is a wealth of words. A treasure chest that has been amassed. It means to store up or heap or reserve something. **To Hoard.**

Now I must be careful here but I would like to know if there are any pack rats in the house? If so, I would like to know why you are keeping all that junk? LOL. And why are you packing all that stuff up in the latter days of all things.

**Illustration:** There is a show on TV called hoarders. This show is obviously dealing with extreme cases, but you get the idea.

I have a question. Why do we think that our security comes from saving stuff? Why do we keep stuff in the first place? I have a

theory. It May be wrong but it's just a thought. We are trying to slow down the inevitable. We like to stay tied to the past cause we don't like what the future means. Our stuff helps us keep things the way they used to be.

### **2 Cor 4:18**

18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

**Greek: The eschatos is coming. The eschatais hemerais-The last days.** Eschatology is the study of last days or last things. I can promise you this. Your stuff won't be worth moth droppings compared to the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Better realize now what's important.

### **Ps 62:1-2**

My soul finds rest in God **alone**;  
my salvation comes from him.

2 He **alone** is my rock and my salvation;  
**he** is my fortress, I will never be shaken.

NIV

**Illustration:** Dust in the wind. Kansas guitarist, Kerry Livgren, wrote this after reading a book of Native American poetry. The line that caught his attention in the poem was "*For All We Are Is Dust In The Wind.*"

This got him thinking about the true value of material things and the meaning of success. The band was doing well and making money, but Kerry realized that in the end, he would eventually die just like everyone else. No matter our possessions or accomplishments, we all end up back in the ground.

## **Dust in the Wind**

### **Kansas**

Dust in the wind  
All we are is dust in the wind  
Dust in the wind  
All we are is dust in the wind  
I close my eyes  
Only for a moment, then the moment's gone  
All my dreams  
Pass before my eyes, a curiosity  
Dust in the wind  
All we are is dust in the wind  
It's the same old song  
We're just a drop of water, in an endless sea  
All we do  
Just crumbles to the ground, though we refuse to see  
Dust in the wind  
All we are is dust in the wind  
Life's too short brothers and sisters  
Dust in the wind  
All we are is dust in the wind  
Don't hang on  
Nothing lasts forever, but the earth and sky  
It's there always  
And all your money won't another minute buy  
Dust, all we are is dust in the wind  
Life's too short brothers and sisters  
Dust, all we are is dust in the wind  
Open your eyes you've acquired quite a bit  
Keep your balance don't you slip  
It could all end instantly as you will see  
Time waits for no one, it just moves on  
There is a white one  
Who won't accept the black one  
Who won't accept the yellow one  
Who can't accept the white  
When will we learn  
That all we are is dust in the wind  
Time for the healing to begin  
All we are dust in the wind  
Time for the healing to begin  
All we are is dust in the wind  
Everything is dust in the wind

## II. Look At The Destruction: Verse 4-6

Here is James' description of what greed can do to those who get oppressed.

**Verse 4:** The workers get cheated. The land owners don't pay as they should, and at times, they don't pay at all.

### Lev 19:13

13 "Do not defraud your neighbor or rob him.  
 "Do not hold back the wages of a hired man overnight.  
 NIV

- **“Behold” or Look.** Used as an imperative here. The wages that you were supposed to pay the workers in your fields are crying out against you. **Apostereo here means to defraud, to keep back or make destitute.**
- God is listening. We trust in our God to protect us and provide for us. Remember the first verse I told you about at the start of this message. When it's in your power to do so you are to bless others. God treats this as a serious matter. To cheat the workers is to call judgment upon yourself as an employer.
- Many people today are mistreated and abused by their employers. They are also mistreated by the customers. You better be careful how you treat God's little lambs. He hears the cries of the poor and the oppressed.
- Just as God heard the cries of the slaves in Egypt He hears the cries of the oppressed. What politicians have done to our health care and wages is despicable. They fight for power, hoard wealth, and the poor go wanting. They give criminals rights and steal from the workers. Pay day is coming for both groups. Pay people what they are worth.

- The cries of the harvesters has reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. He knows.
- We as Christians have to likewise be careful not to cheat our brothers who work for us. When you cheat the worker, you are saying that you don't trust God with your business or your money. You feel as if you have to cheat others so as to keep more of your money. **God can make all grace abound towards you. If you believe that.**

**Verse 5:** Here we see the sheer and absolute life of Americans. We are the most **“ungratefully blessed”** people in the world. James uses some pretty specific words to describe what the rich were doing.

**Greek:**

- ~ **Truphano**- To live in luxury.
- ~ **Spatialao**- To be wanton or live in pleasure. Voluptuous.
- ~ **Trepho**- To feed, bring up or nourish. To stiffen. To cherish or pamper.

The idea is that the land owners, or the oppressors, lived in luxury and self-indulgence, while the workers went without. The picture is of *sacrificial services* where many animals were offered as sacrifices and there was plenty of meat for the priests to eat. It was a time a feasting and plenty. The rich were stuffing themselves while the people that were gathering hay for the animals were left out. **Make your own analogy.**

**This reminds me of a story:**

**Luke 16:19-26**

19 "There was a **rich man** who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. 20 At his gate was laid a **beggar** named Lazarus, covered with sores 21 and longing to eat

what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. 24 So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'

**25 "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony.** 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'

NIV

**Verse 6:** James gives us the characteristics of those oppressed.

- They were innocent
- They were meek. They did not resist.

He also gives us the characteristics of the Rich.

- He condemns or judges. Only God can do this.
- He's a murderer. The Greek word means homicide.

When the workers rise up, or blow the whistle, they end up dead in many cases. In 4:2 he said, *you kill and covet and can't get what you want*. In 2:13 he says, *judgment without mercy is shown to those who show no mercy*. In 4:17 he says, *that to know to do good and do it not is sin*. James is speaking to the rich. They have been blessed with abundance, and instead of being a blessing, they became murderers.

### **Sirach 34:21-22 Apocrypha (Noncanonical work)**

A meagre diet is the very life of the poor, to deprive them of it is to commit murder.

<sup>22</sup> To take away a fellow-man's livelihood is to kill him, to deprive an employee of his wages is to shed blood.

**Closing:** We have a choice in all these matters. We can always stand up and fight when we are mistreated. We can also just trust God and not oppose the oppressor. We can do a little of both.

*The one spiritual application I want you to take from this is that we must make sure we are not the oppressor.* God will judge the oppressors, and I want to make sure that in my dealings with men, I am safe. I want to treat others fairly. Here is a story that tells us why.

### **Matt 18:21-35**

**21** Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?"

**22** Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."

**23** "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. **24** As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. **25** Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. **26** "The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,'

he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' **27** The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

**28** "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.

29 "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'

30 "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. 31 When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.

32 "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. 33 Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' 34 In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

35 "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

NIV

**The one who has been forgiven much, loves much!!!**

### III. Learn This Discipline: Verses 7-12

James comes back now to the familiar phrase “**brothers.**” He has taught about the **declaration** or **prophetic word** concerning the oppressors, and then revealed the **destruction** that it causes to the weak and poor. You may be asking yourself a few questions right about now about *what we are supposed to do in this situation*. It may **not** be very pleasing to you, but it is required of us and really is the best action.

What is it? PATIENCE!!! That’s hard for most of us. Most of us are working on it and only a few have it. James actually is returning to the place where he started in this epistle. **“Consider it pure joy brothers when you are going through trials and tribulation because the trying of your faith works perseverance.”** That’s from chapter 1. We have already looked at the benefits of perseverance in chapter 1. James actually

applies that patience to this specific situation. **What are we to do when we are being oppressed?**

**Note: I am not speaking of sexual, immoral, physical abuse, or oppression.**

Notice with me how important this is to James as he mentions the word patience 4 times in these verses and perseverance 2 times. James also gives us three examples of patient people... **the farmer, the prophets, and Job.** James also recognizes the grand and glorious reason for patience... **“The Lord is coming.”**

### **James 5:7-12**

7 Be patient, then, brothers, until **the Lord's coming.** See how the **farmer** waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how **patient** he is for the autumn and spring rains. 8 You too, be **patient** and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. 9 Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged.

The Judge is standing at the door!

10 Brothers, as an example of **patience** in the face of suffering, take the **prophets** who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 As you know, we consider blessed those who have **persevered.** You have

heard of **Job's perseverance** and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

12 Above all, my brothers, do not swear — not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," no, or you will be condemned.

Patience is hard most of the time just for everyday normal living, but add a crisis or some hardship to it and you get double the difficulty. Especially if you are also being persecuted for your faith or being taken advantage of by way of oppression. I have to be honest, my first instinct is to fight back. Here are a few passages to help us.

**Prov 15:18**

18 A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension,  
but a **patient** man calms a quarrel.

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**Prov 16:32**

32 Better a **patient** man than a warrior,  
a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city.

NIV

**Quotes:**

The American philosopher, John Dewey said that “*patience is the most useful virtue.*”

Benjamin Franklin said that, “*He that can be patient can have what he wants.*”

**Greek:** In verses 7, 8, and 10 ,our word for patience is **makrothumeo. Makros** (Not micro) refers to what is long or far and **thumos** refers to temper or fierceness. In other words, a long temper instead of a short temper. It refers to longsuffering. You are the kind of person that can endure a lot of stress or oppression.

This is the person that can withstand a lot of crazy stuff before they blow their top. These words relate to the emotions that we have when we are disturbed. Different things make different people mad. Our emotions are all different and some of us are calm and cool until you hit the right button. Some of us were born with a temper and we are more easily boiled. **Nonetheless, we are all called to patience.**

### Three things that get me righteously angry:

- **Deception**- lack of loyalty, trickery, deceiving others, taking advantage of the weak.
- **Disrespect**- mistreating others, thinking you are better than others, not showing respect to authority figures or people of position. Bullying others.
- **Dishonesty**- lying or cheating.

James doesn't wait too long to give us the key to patience. We don't have to wait until the end of the movie, letter, or book, to find out the most important secret to patience. James says it right here in verse 7... He reminds them that **Jesus is coming**. It's the **Parousia**. "The coming of a King."

If you know that Jesus is coming for you there will be greater endurance in your soul. Sanford is always telling us that Jesus is coming. If you know that, it should be a comfort during trials.

### Phil 4:5-7

5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. **The Lord is near**. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

NIV

### D. L. Moody

- Pray about everything
- Worry about nothing
- Thank God for anything

### 1 Peter 4:7-8

7 The end of all things is **near**. Therefore be clear-minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.

NIV

**Rev 1:3**

3 Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and **take to heart** what is written in it, **because the time is near.**

NIV

**Rev 22:10-13**

10 Then he told me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because **the time is near**. 11 Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy."

12 "Behold, **I am coming soon!** My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

NIV

**1 Cor 15:50-52**

51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— 52 **in a flash**, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

NIV

**Illustration #1 – The Farmer-** James speaks of a day when the farmers had to trust God. There were no means of irrigation like we see today. Lest we think we are not blessed today by all the technology we have and the ability to grow food, let's look at these verses and see the faith of the farmers of ancient days. They had to rely upon God for germination rain and harvest rain. The farmers even have technology today that keeps up with how happy their cows are and which fields need water.

**Jer. 5:23-25**

23 But these people have stubborn and rebellious hearts;  
they have turned aside and gone away.

24 They do not say to themselves,  
**'Let us fear the Lord our God,  
who gives autumn and spring rains in season,  
who assures us of the regular weeks of harvest.'**  
**25 Your wrongdoings have kept these away;  
your sins have deprived you of good.**

NIV

**Deut. 11:13-15**

13 So **if** you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today — to love the Lord your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul — 14 **then** I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil. 15 I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied.

NIV

**Hos 6:3**

Let us acknowledge the Lord;  
let us press on to acknowledge him.  
As surely as the sun rises,  
he will appear;  
he will come to us like the winter rains,  
like the spring rains that water the earth."

NIV

**Joel 2:23-24**

23 Be glad, O people of Zion,  
rejoice in the Lord your God,  
for he has given you  
the autumn rains in righteousness.  
He sends you abundant showers,

both autumn and spring rains, as before.  
 24 The threshing floors will be filled with grain;  
 the vats will overflow with new wine and oil.  
 NIV

James says we are to have the patience of the farmer. The farmer knows that unexpected days will come. No rain forces us to pray. Hard work forces us to pray. We have no choice but to learn to be as patient as a farmer.

No hay means that your cows die. No corn means your family dies. The farmers of the ancient world were at the mercy of the weather. We are still that way today but we have the ability to grow year-round with irrigation, and wells, and green houses. We are blessed.

***When you are oppressed and taken advantage of, be patient like the farmer, because the Lord is near. Notice that for which we are to wait.***

Be patient like the husbandman (Verse 7) for the “**precious crop or valuable crop,” (NIV).** The original is **timios**. The valuable or precious crop. The **karpos. The fruit.** Here in lies the importance of the text. Many times God makes us wait and even sends us through the trials of life before we get the precious fruit.

~ It is my desire that we work hard for the precious crop. The land has to yield it too; we cannot make it happen. We are to plow, plant, weed out, fertilize, and water, but the yield comes from the Lord. The precious souls that we seek are the work of the Holy Spirit. And by the way, if we are working the soil, there will be oppression.

Remember the context here. James just gave a word of rebuke to the oppressor. He now gives this word to the oppressed. If we are

to get the precious fruit, we will need to be patient as we wait for the Lord.

**Verse 8:** The farmer waits in the Spring and in the Fall. He's a year-round worker. The text literally says “**early**” and “**late**.” We are to work early and late. James says for us to be patient and **“stand firm.” Farmers don’t just work six months of the year. We can’t either.**

~ You may not like this, but I want to remind you, that if you are saved, you are a defender of the faith. That means that the responsibility to defend the faith rest with you.

**Quote:** Speaking to his student, Spurgeon had this to say about defending the gospel message and dealing with problems.

*“We must cultivate the highest degree of godliness because our work imperatively requires it. The labor of the Christian ministry is well performed in exact proportion to the vigour (vigor) of our renewed nature. Our work is only well done when it is well with ourselves. **As is the workman, such will the work be.** To face the enemies of truth, to defend the bulwarks of the faith, to rule well in the house of God, to comfort all that mourn, to edify the Saints, to guide the perplexed, to bear with the forward, to win and nurse souls- all these and a thousand other works beside are not for the feeble-mind or a Ready-to-halt, but are reserved for the Great-heart whom the Lord has made strong for Himself. Seek then the strength from the Strong One, wisdom from the Wise One, in fact, all from the God of all.” CHS Lectures To My Students, p. 17.*

**Greek:** **To stand firm, to strengthen your heart v.8...**  
**sterizo**, To establish or be established. To go in one direction without turning. To lay hold of. To set fast or strengthen, Strong and sure. Ordain.

These words are convicting. We can't defend the faith if we are so weak that we do not even take care of our posts we signed up for. We don't show up or sign up or witness. We don't pray or study or give. Spurgeon said, **“As is the workman, such is the work.”**

~ Why Stand Firm? BECAUSE THE LORD IS NEAR!!!

**Verse 9:** Here is the language of the unhappy Christian. The word is **stenazo**. It's translated in several ways. To grudge, to grumble, to groan, to sigh or grief. To murmur. To speak under the breath. **The word comes from the sound you make when you have to squeeze through a tight spot. To be in straits. It's the little whiney sounds that the crybaby Christians make when they are told no or don't get their way.** When we judge others we actually get judged too, v. 9.

~ Now notice with me in the text something we can all benefit from because it's a mistake we all make. What does James say next? Don't grumble against each other when the oppression comes. Instead, be patient because the Lord is near. **Here's the deal... don't take your problems out on each other when it's difficult. If you are being tried, or tested by God, or simply being persecuted, don't take it out on your brothers.**

~ I have had to take the blame for so many people's immaturity that it's not even funny. If you are walking with Christ you will get called "goodie two shoes" and "holy roller" and "Mr. Perfect." That preacher is just mean. Don't take out your frustrations on others. Grow up!!!

~ If you do, guess what? You get judged. **Most of our problems come from the way we treat others.** God judges us because we act poorly towards others.

~ And by the way, He is standing at the door. It's one thing to be an aggravating soul, but it's quite another to be that way with Jesus standing at the door. If the time was close then, what must it be today? Very close.

**Verse 10: Illustration # 2: The Prophets-** We were given here the example of the prophets and their great patients. The word “**example**” is from **hupo** which means **under** and **deiknuo**, which means **to show**. To show under the eyes. To exhibit under the eye. To use as an example or pattern. An exhibit for imitation, warning, or pattern.

We are told by James to use the prophets as a pattern of patience. How were they patient?

- ~ They spoke of God's will and had to wait for it to come to pass.
- ~ They spoke of the coming Messiah and had to wait for it to come to pass.
- ~ Many times their words did not even come to pass until they were dead.
- ~ The prophets suffered much at the hands of evil kings and leaders, not to mention God's own people. They suffered but never wavered in their faith. They pushed ahead without results at times.
- ~ The prophets even lost their lives waiting on the words of God to be made true in the eyes of men.

Think of all that Ahab and Jezebel did to Elijah or what the Kings of Judah did to Jeremiah. Think of Daniel in the lion's den.

We have not even faced suffering and we have no patience in the Lord's work.

**Verse 11: Illustration # 3-** You can't really have a conversation about patience without mentioning Job. James uses several great words here. First he calls those who endured **blessed**. Same word as the one that is used in the Beatitudes. *“Happy or blessed are those who...”* It is quite unique that those who run after happiness never find it. *“They run after happiness and away from patience and suffering never to be blessed. God’s blessings are found in discipline, patience ,and long-suffering.* Christian virtues are found in Christian activity.

The other word of note here is the word **hypomeno**. It refers to remaining under an affliction or trial until the lesson is learned. God put the prophets in situations that completed His will or delivered His message no matter the outcome. Many times the prophets life was given so that the judgment of God would fall even at the cost of the prophets life. Now that's remaining faithful. Even in their day, they lived as if the Lord was near.

Job was another that persevered. He remained under the weight of heavy affliction from the evil one. Satan went to God and asked Him to consider His servant Job. He will only serve you because you bless him, said Satan. If you let me harm him, he will curse you to your face. In all that was taken from Job, he never cursed God. He questioned and begged for help, but never cursed God.

And let me say that many, including James, mentions Job's restoration, but let me say his dead never came back to him. Job lost much until he could get to heaven. James actually says about Job, “you have seen the end of the matter.” Job was not restored all he lost. Job was allowed to be an eternal example of patience under extreme suffering. We must remember life is not all that happens here. You will lose things you will not get back in this life.

~We are reminded here also that God is full of pity (compassion) and tender mercy.

**Verse 12:** The question is asked if verse 12 really fits with this last section or stands alone. Is James referring to how Job never took oaths in the name of God or kept his oaths? Probably not. It reflects more the words of Christ in Matt 5:34,35 and 37.

### **Matt 5:33-37**

"Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.' 34 But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. 36 And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black.

37 Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

NIV

In the end James is coming back to the discussion on the tongue; it seems right before he wraps up the book. Nonetheless, the truth is still the same. "A person is known for their words and how they keep them. Don't speak idol words that you intend not to keep. Simply do what you say you are going to do or don't speak. Let your yes be yes." **One thing that may relate to Job is that we are not to make promises during trials we have no intention of keeping.** That would be my take on verse 12.

### **Matt 12:36-37**

36 But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. 37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

NIV

**Closing:** Emerson said, *that we need to adopt the pace of Nature- her secret is patience.* A Dutch Proverb says, ***A handful of patience is worth more than a bushel of brains.*** B. Franklin said that, **He that can have patience can have what he wants.”**

A Naturalists found out a valuable lesson one day by studying a little cocoon. Within the little prison of the cocoon was a little butterfly. He could be heard beating his little wings inside the cocoon frantically trying to get out. The naturalist felt pity in his heart for the little creature. He took a small lancet and began to cut away at the fragile walls that held the little fellow captive. But to his amazement this little butterfly was not the creature he supposed he would be. He just lay helplessly there without the ability to walk or fly. An unlovely object without any beauty. What could be wrong with this little fellow. He was released from his struggle too soon. One had interfered with the plan of God. You see, the struggle to get free was exactly what would build the wings and legs to the place that they were made ready to fly and walk. The struggle was his life. The struggle was supposed to be there to ready him for the beauty he was to possess. Patience in affliction and oppression is key to a beautiful life. Be patient my friend, The Lord is near.