

Series – Part 19: How to Live as a Christian:

Suffer Patiently!

James 5:7-11 ESV

Sunday, September 1 at 8:00 & 10:45

15th Sunday After Pentecost / 14th After Trinity – 2013

Monday, 9/2 is Labor Day – NO SERVICE!

Mondays resume on 9/9 at 7 PM

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ, as the ultimate example of suffering patiently, let's think about Jesus' suffering for us:

- He knew exactly what was coming (*not knowing is better for us; knowing could overwhelm us*).
- He asked the Father three times if there was some other way to save us – *apart from Him being crucified*.
- He, *being God*, permitted His betrayal, arrest, illegal trials, severe beatings, and crucifixion nails.
- He suffered patiently as He received our sins; then God's punishment for those sins – *until He finally declared His victory and breathed His last*.

Now as we live in this sin-filled world, *as ones who believe in Jesus as our Savior*, we can also expect to be mistreated by others – *for a while*. This sermon will encourage us to ♦suffer patiently and ♦help us to ever-focus on Jesus' return.

1. **Living with the Awareness of Jesus' Return:** ^{7a} **Be patient, therefore, brothers** [ἀδελφοί, *fellow believers in Jesus; my brothers and sister in Christ*], **until the coming of the Lord.** // The word “therefore” takes us back to last

week's sermon where the rich were ♦oppressing the poor and ♦fattening themselves for the coming slaughter. NOW, *in light of such things*, James is calling all believers to be patient *as we await the coming of the LORD*. We all experience the sad realities of sin – ☹sometimes from our own sins, ☹sometimes from the sins of others, and ☹sometimes simply because we live in a sin-filled world – *but we can be patient because the LORD is coming to rescue us!*

- a. ^{7b} **See** [ἰδοὺ, *behold; look; lo*] **how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains.** // Think about the process of a farmer: tilling, planting, fertilizing, weeding, waiting, harvesting; all such things take time, effort, and patience – *but they are worth it!* Why? Because the fruit is a “precious,” life-sustaining, gift from God!
- b. ^{8a} **You also, be patient.** // As the “precious fruit” encourages a farmer to be patient, *so we – as ones who trust in Jesus as our Savior – have a far greater reason to be patient!*
 - i. ^{8b} **Establish** [*strengthen, confirm*] **your hearts, for [because] the coming of the Lord is at hand.** // So what does it mean to establish our hearts? Our time of waiting is NOT a time to watch the grass grow or the paint peel; instead, our time of waiting is to be used in a productive manner: *to increase our confidence in the LORD's promises!* That blessing will come to those who walk

in faith, according to God's Word (see Psalm 111:5-8). Furthermore, we are encouraged to do so because "the coming of the Lord is at hand."

- ii. **9 Do not grumble** [complain] **against one another, brothers** [ἀδελφοί], **so that you may not be judged** ["Oppression done to us does not justify oppression done to each other." (LTJ, 323) 1 Pet 2:23; Rom 12:17-19]; **behold** [ἰδοὺ, see; look; lo], **the Judge is standing at the door[s]**. // Do you know the phrase: When the cat is away, the mice will...? So people are more emboldened to sin under certain circumstances: ♦when no one is watching, ♦when it is dark, ♦when the others around us are also sinning. But what should sober us up and cause us to be different? "...the judge is standing at the doors." He's right there, close by – listening, watching, and soon returning!

2. **Living with the Remembrance of Patient Suffering:**

10 As an example of suffering and patience, brothers [ἀδελφοί], **take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord**. // We read about some of them in today's OT reading (Hebrews 11:32-40): ³⁶ "Some faced jeers [mocking] and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. ³⁷ They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword." Their earthly lives were super-difficult, *but the LORD kept them faithful all the way to the end!*

- a. **11a Behold** [ἰδοὺ, see; look; lo], **we consider those blessed who remained steadfast** [stood their ground; held out; endured]. // Think about victory (νίκος) from two perspectives: **We try to win people for Christ**, while **they try to win us for the world**. Therefore, those are blessed who stand their ground, who – *no matter what* – continue in Jesus and God's Holy Word!
- b. **11b You have heard of the steadfastness** [endurance; perseverance] **of Job, and you have seen the purpose** [end; goal; outcome] **of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate** [sympathetic] **and merciful**. // The account of Job's difficulties are overwhelming (1:13-2:10), *yet he did not shrink back* (Heb. 10:39)! Furthermore, the LORD showed his compassion and mercy to Job by giving him "twice as much as he had before." (42:10 ESV)

Conclusion: We now live in between Jesus' first and second comings; He has won our salvation and will eventually return to ♦condemn those who *continue* to reject Him and ♦take home those who *continue* to trust Him (Matt. 10:22). May this verse encourage us to suffer patiently: "For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God." (1 Pet. 2:20 NAS) Let us also remember that the Almighty God will show us, *who trust in Him*, His compassion and mercy. **Amen!**