



“Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (James 5:8).

Faith Waits Patiently

Central Truth: Christ’s return motivates you to endure trials.

L376. Date: August 1994. **Text:** James 5:7-12; Romans 8:18, 24-28.

Topic: Faith: Trials of; Patience.

You may have laughed at the statement, “Lord, give me patience right now.” That statement is amusing because patience is not an immediate gift from God.

You need patience to bear your trials. You must undergo trials to receive the grace of patience. The Bible says, “*We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience*” (Romans 5:3). As an athlete develops stamina by enduring the pressures of the game, so the Christian develops patience by enduring the pressures of life's trials.

There are two elements to patience. (1) Patience means to bear suffering, provocation, delay, etc., with calmness and self-control. It is to bear up under the load without complaining or rebelling. It is a calm tolerance of whatever life brings. (2) Patience also means to carry forward the burden one has to bear. The former is the passive aspect of patience; the latter is its active aspect. You show patience when you stay under the load without rebellion and when you carry your load in your proper responsibilities. Faith waits patiently.

A Call to Patience (James 5:7)

One part of a Christian testimony is the grace of patience. It is a virtue highly valued in Holy Scripture. Why do you suppose God calls you to “*be patient...unto the coming of the Lord*”?

Patience is greater than pride. *“The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit”* (Ecclesiastes 7:8). Why? Pride is based on self-sufficiency and self-assertion, while patience is based on humble trust in God. It is always better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in any person, including yourself.

Patience leads to a fuller life. It is in patience that you *“possess your soul”* (Luke 21:19). That means it is by endurance that you will control your life. Otherwise, you will be continually plummeted by circumstances and never enjoy stability. A full life, therefore, depends on the grace of patience.

Patience leads to praise. Hebrews 10:36 points out the end of patience: *“After ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.”* A life of patience experiences the faithfulness of God. The faithfulness of God leads to praise. So cultivate the grace of patience if you would experience praise.

Patience builds spiritual maturity. James counseled, *“Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing”* (James 1:4). When the work of patience is completed, the Christian is fully developed and perfectly equipped for life. Therefore, do not rebel against your circumstances; grow through them instead.

Patience is blessed of God. Consider this testimony: *“It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation”* (Isaiah 25:9). Do you see the reward of patience in that statement? Do you see how God blesses His people with salvation and rejoicing when they endure patiently? Cultivate the grace of patience.

An Example of patience (James 5:7)

Consider the patience of the farmer. Months pass between the first preparation of the seed bed and the gathering of the harvest. Much labor is invested in the crop before any profit is received. God calls that to your attention to encourage you to exercise patience in your experiences as a Christian. Note these principles which apply both to the farmer and to your spiritual life.

You must work before you are rewarded. The farmer begins in late winter to prepare for the harvest which is reaped in the fall. Occasionally adverse weather conditions will destroy the crop, and he will receive no reward for all his labor. But he plants in faith of a coming harvest, doing the best he can and leaving the rest to God. That is the way patience works in

your life. It may be very difficult to endure the trials which demand patience, but remember that the reward comes after the work. Be patient.

Your wait is rewarded at the harvest. Waiting with long patience until the rains come, the seed sprout, the plants grow, and the fruit matures, the farmer is at last rewarded with a good harvest. James says he gathers “*precious fruit*” as the return for his labor.

Much more precious than the physical harvest is the “*fruit*” which you gather from living patiently under life's circumstances. You grow in spirit. You know God more intimately. You bear witness to His grace. Be patient, therefore, until the Lord returns and rewards you fully. Your wait will be rewarded.

You must trust before you receive. The farmer waits for the rain. He needs “*the early and latter rain*” which comes at different seasons of the year. That requires his waiting longer and at a greater risk. But he waits in expectation of harvest. And at last the harvest comes. Will you trust and obey while you wait for your Lord?

The Encouragement to Patience (James 5:8)

“*Be patient and stouthearted, keeping up your courage, for the coming of the Lord is near.*” That is the Lord's challenge to you through James 5:8. Here is encouragement that He offers while we wait.

God hears your prayers while you wait. Fill your days of waiting with petition. Soon you can testify, “*I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry*” (Psalm 40:1). You are not alone in your trials, trying to bear them with patience. God is present and responding to your prayers.

God rewards your labor. Take courage in the words of I Corinthians 15:58: “*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*” You may not be rewarded immediately, but you will be rewarded. Remember the farmer waiting for the harvest.

God strengthens you while you wait. There are two great promises of strength from God while you practice the grace of patience, Isaiah 40:31 reads, “*They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*” Job 17:9 adds, “*The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.*” Take courage and grow in grace as you live in patience.

Jesus returns to reward you after your wait. “*The coming of the*

Lord draweth nigh.” Believe it and rejoice. When He returns, He brings rewards with Him to give to everyone according to his works (Revelation 22:12). Paul assures us, *“Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour”* (I Corinthians 3:8). Believe it and be encouraged to wait with patience.

The Enemy of Patience (James 5:9)

Impatience is the enemy of patience. James points out these evils which arise from an impatient spirit.

Impatience creates discord between brethren. It makes us grumble, complain, murmur, and blame our troubles on one another. It makes us want to take matters into our own hands and try to correct what we think is wrong (Proverbs 20:22). But it must not be. Patience enables us to “put up” with one another, even a brother who tries our patience. Guard against discord.

Impatience leads to complaint. The judge is standing even at the door, ready to enter, but we do not realize it. So we complain at God's time schedule. God's counsel is, *“Do all things without murmurings and disputings”* (Philippians 2:14). God will perform His work in His own time. Meanwhile, we must remember the farmer and remain patient until God's time arrives.

The Persons of Patience (James 5:10)

“Consider the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord,” James writes. *“They are an example of the patient endurance of suffering.”*

Jeremiah patiently endured the suffering of imprisonment. He was imprisoned in a dungeon on one occasion. Then he was put in a water cistern where he sank up to his knees in the mire. He had to hide from the king to keep from being arrested, while the king read the prophet's message and burned the manuscript God had commissioned Jeremiah to write. What patient endurance!

Ezekiel was a very popular prophet. The people invited one another to hear his sermons, saying, *“Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word cometh forth from the LORD”* (Ezekiel 13:30). Ezekiel's burden was that the people listened with great interest but would not do what God said through him. He suffered because of unconcern.

Jonah suffered the burden of preaching to save the very nation which would eventually invade and destroy his country. Elijah suffered oppression

by those with political power. But each was faithful to his calling just as you must be in your times or trials.

The Reward of Patience (James 5:11)

Patience is rewarded by personal fulfillment. *“We count them happy which endure.”* We honor Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Jonah, Elijah, and other faithful men and women of God. We consider them as blessed of God. But the same is true of you and me. We are blessed when we endure. Read the list of the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11 and consider the respect in which you hold them. That is one of the rewards of patience.

Patience will bring deliverance from trials. Job endured severe trials. He lost his wealth, his health, the lives of his children, the support of his wife, and the understanding of his friends. He was not always consistent in submission to God in the trials. But God delivered him and rewarded him with far more than what he had before. God will reward you for patient endurance too. Be patient until the Lord returns.

Patience will bring the tender mercy of God. His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting toward His children (Psalm 103:17). His mercies protect His children and are new every morning. He is always faithful (Lamentations 3:22, 23). You will find that true in your experience as you practice the grace of patience.

Veracity of Patience (James 5:12)

It is not necessary to take oaths that you will hold firm. It is enough that you speak the truth and act truthfully. Show your faith by your faithfulness under trials. Our Lord comes soon.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is patience?
2. Why is patience so essential in the Christian life?
3. How does the farmer demonstrate patience?
4. How does the return of the Lord encourage our patience?
5. How does patience stop complaints among us?
6. What is the greatest enemy of patience in your life?
7. How do the prophets teach us to be patient?

