

James: Lesson #78 – Be Patient
Notes for Parents to Study With Their Children
For Sunday, Mar. 1st

Read James 5:1-20 (a simplified explanation of the text will be supplied at the end of these notes).

Memory Verse: James 5:7a “Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord.”

Rich, But Not Righteous

- It is not a sin to have money. It’s not even a sin to have a lot of money. But James and other writers of Scripture remind us that money can be a problem in our life. If you love money it will lead you into all kinds of evil.
- If someone is rich, what if they don’t have God and don’t obey His Word? Then riches can really lead them to do bad things. Sometimes rich people can make life hard on poorer people by mistreating them. In James 2:6-7, James had already said that the rich were often the ones who had made it hard on Christians: “Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?”
- Jesus had come to show people that they needed to live for God and for heaven, and not just to please themselves. Yet, in spite of the fact, some people went on living just for themselves. Once we die, what good is our money going to do for us then. And when the Lord comes back He will want to know what we used our money for – did we use it for His kingdom? Did we use it to help others?
- Many rich people use their money just for sinful things. Some never think about helping poor people, and even worse sometimes they made life hard for the poor. Some cheat people out of money. They don’t properly pay those who work for them. James says that the people that the rich had cheated were crying out for the Lord to help them.
- James is warning these people:
 - Trouble would come upon them.
 - Their riches wouldn’t last.
 - God was going to judge them.

When Times Get Hard, Don’t Give Up

- Sometimes it gets hard to obey God. We have to choose to do right when others choose to do wrong. That might make us unpopular with the people who want to do bad things. All this can make some people wonder if they really want to keep being Christians.
- What we may not realize is that is the Devil trying to make us quit serving God. The worst thing we can do is give up being Christians.
- When a farmer grows his crop, he has to plant the seed. But seed doesn’t come up over night, and it won’t grow a crop for many months. That farmer has to work for many weeks, before he can see that the vegetables have grown and all his work was worthwhile.

- Christians have to be like that farmer. We have to work and be faithful to God now, knowing that some day we will reap our reward. Jesus will return someday. And when He comes, He will know that we have been faithful, and will bless us if we didn't quit.

Do You Really Mean What You Say?

- James reminds us of what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount. Our "yes" should mean "yes" and our "no" should mean "no".
- In James' time, people thought you could make a promise swearing by something. If they swore by the Temple, that was an important promise, but if they swore by some small thing, they didn't think they had to keep their promise. If we aren't going to keep our promise, what difference would it make what we swore on. That's why it doesn't do any good to swear by something. We should just be honest and do what we've promised to do.

Remember God in Every Situation

- James says we go through a lot of different things in life, some good and some bad. No matter what happens we should remember our relationship with God.
 - If we are having problems, it is an especially good time to pray even more.
 - If we are happy, it's a wonderful time to sing praise to God.
 - If we are sick, we can ask others in the church, like the elders, to pray for us.
 - If we did something wrong, we can confess what we did that was wrong in prayer and be forgiven.
- Prayer is an especially powerful thing. In the Old Testament, Elijah prayed that it would stop raining, and it did for 3 ½ years. Then he prayed for rain to come, and it did right away. Elijah was just a human being like us, but his prayers were answered.
- If we pray righteously and fervently, our prayers will be answered too.

If Some Are Wandering Away From God

- We talked about how we shouldn't give up being Christians. We shouldn't quit. If we see other people tempted to quit, we need to encourage them to be faithful. If someone doesn't come to church or class like they should, we could tell them how much we wish they would come worship God with us.
- If you help someone to do right, instead of doing wrong, you have kept them back from doing things that don't please God, you have helped them be saved.

Simplified Explanation of the Text

A Condemnation of the Unrighteous Rich

5:1 Come on, rich people, weep and cry out loud about the troubles that will come upon you.

2-3 Your riches are rotting and your clothing is moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are corroded and their corrosion will be a witness pointing at you. It will consume your flesh as if it were fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days.

4 Take a careful look because those laborers you hired to reap your land have not been paid. You have robbed and defrauded them of their pay. Those laborers are crying out, and those cries have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts, the Commander of the armies of Heaven.

5 You have lived a luxurious life on earth and have lived for pleasure. You've fattened yourself up, like an animal for the day of slaughter.

6 You have judged and condemned those who are righteous, and they did not fight back.

Wait For the Lord to Come

7 So brethren, don't let the trials of life anger you and make you want to give up. Patiently wait for the Lord to come. Consider the farmer who waits for the precious crops. He has to wait patiently for that produce, going through the autumn rains and the spring rains (see Deut. 11:14) until he receives it.

8 So like that farmer, you be patient, too. Be firm and committed in your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is drawing near.

9 But make sure that you stop groaning your complaints against each other, brethren. You don't want to end up being condemned. Be aware that the Judge is standing right at the door.

10 My brethren, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord as an example of those who have suffered, but patiently waited through suffering.

11 Look, we have always said those who endured persecution and suffering are "blessed" (Matt. 5:10-12). You've heard the story of Job and how he endured through it all. You can also read the ending and know that God was very kind and merciful.

Swear Not at All

12 But above all else, my brethren, remember what the Lord taught, "Do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but let your yes be yes and your no be no" so that you may not fall under condemnation (Matt. 5:34-37)

No Matter What Situation We Are in, We Should Include God

13 Those who are being afflicted should pray.

Those who are cheerful should sing.

14-16 Those who have sick among them should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. That prayer of faith will save the sick and the Lord will raise them up.

And if sins have been committed, they can be forgiven. Any time you go astray from the right way or fall, confess this to one another. Then pray for each other so that you can be healed spiritually.

Prayer is Powerful

When a righteous person really works fervently at praying, a lot can be accomplished.

17-18 Elijah was just a man with the same kind of emotions and feelings that we have. He prayed fervently for it not to rain, and it quit raining on that land for three and a half years. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the land could produce crops again.

Turn Wayward Christians Around

19-20 Brethren, if some among you do stray from the truth, and someone turns them back around, know that the person who turned that sinner around from going astray has saved a soul from death and shall cover a large number of sins.