

Enduring Afflictions

15 January 2017 AM – James 5:7-11 – Jas16 – Scott Childs

Introduction: It has been a while since we were in the book of James. In our last sermon we studied The Dangers of Riches (Jas 5:1-6). We saw The Calamity of Riches (riches do not bring happiness); The Corrosion of Riches (riches do not last); and The Corruption of Riches (riches can corrupt good character). Today's text about enduring afflictions builds on that section.

Transition: In order for us to endure afflictions in a Christ-like manner, there are three things we will need.

The 1st thing we need to endure afflictions in a Christ-like manner is a ...

1. Right Focus (v.7-8)

a. We must get our eyes off of others

- 1) In verses 1-6, James addressed the rich. Satan wants us to think that being rich will make us happy. That is usually not the case.
- 2) James rebuked the rich for their mistreatment of others (v.6). Earlier James wrote, "*But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?*" (James 2:6)
- 3) Afflictions are part of life. It could be that the rich were mistreating the poor. It could also be that the poor were tempted to be jealous of the rich. Either way, we are not to focus on how others are treating us or on the lack of afflictions which others have. That can lead us astray. Psalm 73 describes Asaph's struggle with the prosperity of the ungodly. He said, (Psalms 73:16-17) "*When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.*" It was only then that he remembered that God will settle the score.

b. We must focus being patient till the Lord returns

- 1) We are to *be patient until the coming of the Lord*.
 - a) The words "*be patient*" speak of persevering patiently. It is not losing heart. It is patiently bearing

them happy who endured. You will remember that the word "*happy*" in the Bible usually means blessed.

- 2) The prophets were blessed by God because they endured affliction patiently. Let me show you a few examples of prophets who endured afflictions.
 - a) Moses was often mistreated as he guided the children of Israel in the wilderness.
 - b) Elijah had to live in hiding from King Ahab for three years and then his life was threatened by Jezebel.
 - c) Jeremiah was thrown into the dungeon and put in stocks for preaching.
 - d) Daniel spent a full night in the lion's den because of his praying.
 - e) Steven was stoned to death for preaching.
 - 3) The names of these and countless other servants of God are blessed of the Lord because they patiently endured afflictions. That is the right outlook for us to have.
- b. We must know that the Lord is compassionate**
- 1) James illustrates this in the life of Job. Job, who was a wealthy yet godly man, lost all his possessions, his ten children and his health, yet he remained faithful to God. He endured afflictions. Though his patients were wearing thin, he never cursed God as Satan said he would.
 - 2) Then we see the end of the Lord (i.e., the end of how the Lord treated Job). The Lord is full of pity and tender mercy. The Lord is always far better to us than we deserve.

Conclusion: To endure afflictions with a Christ-like attitude, we must 1) Have a right focus – eyes off of others and looking for the Lord's return. 2) Have a right attitude – right toward others and right toward the Lord. 3) Have a right outlook – enduring brings blessings and the Lord is always compassionate. If your focus, attitude or outlook has not been right, now is the time to ask God to forgive you and make the changes needed.

If you do you know the Lord as your Saviour, you will not be able to endure afflictions with a Christ-like attitude. You need His help.

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the offenses and injuries of others.

- b) He illustrates this with a husbandman. A *husbandman* is one who tills the land or cares for a vineyard. He waits for the precious fruit of the earth. He perseveres patiently until he receives the early and late rain. Early rain is needed for the seeds to grow and later rain is needed for the fruit to mature. A farmer who gets impatient and picks his crop early will be greatly disappointed.
- c) Like a farmer, we too must patiently endure afflictions in life. In fact, we must patiently endure *until the coming of the Lord* to take us to heaven. John W. Peterson penned these words to "**Jesus Is Coming Again.**" Coming again, Coming again, May be morning, may be noon, May be evening and may be soon! Coming again, Coming again; O what a wonderful day it will be - Jesus is coming again!
- 2) In addition to persevering patiently, we must *stablish our hearts* (v.8). This means that we must make our hearts firm, stable, confirmed, strengthened or constant. God does not want us to be changeable. We find the same word in (1 Thessalonians 3:13) "*To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.*" And again in (2 Thessalonians 3:3) "*But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.*"
- 3) If we have a right focus, we will remember that the Lord's coming *draweth nigh* and therefore we must press on. If Christians anticipated the Lord's return in the 1st Century, how much more we should anticipate in the 21st Century! Until He comes, we must patiently endure afflictions in a Christ-like manner.

The 2nd thing we need to endure afflictions in a Christ-like manner is a ...

2. Right Attitude (v.9)

a. We must have a right attitude toward others

- 1) James commands, "*Grudge not one against another*". The word "*grudge*" simply means to sigh or groan. In the

context of this passage it describes a grumbling or complaining against another Christian.

- 2) In times of trial and affliction the temptation to get grumpy with others increases. James is simply reminding us that we need to keep a right attitude toward each other even when things are not going well. Such grumbling is akin to murmuring. This was the chief sin of God's people during their 40 years in the wilderness.
 - 3) Paul writes, (1 Corinthians 10:10) "*Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.*" In Philippians 2:14 we are commanded to, "*Do all things without murmurings and disputings:*" We are not to grudge, grumble, complain, or murmur against others. Instead, we must have a right attitude toward them.
- b. **We must also have a right attitude toward God**
- 1) When we have a bad attitude toward others, we also are showing a bad attitude toward God. God is the one who told us to be kind, to love one another, to love our enemies, and to not murmur.
 - 2) James' warning that the *judge is standing at the door*, it a reminder to us that God (the Judge of all the earth, Heb. 12:23) is standing ready to judge our bad attitudes.
 - 3) **Simon Kistemaker** reminds us that, "*The sinner is only one heartbeat away from the Judge. For when death strikes, the grumbler enters the presence of God, who will judge him for every idle word he had spoken. Everyone who passes through the portals of death meets the Judge on the other side.*"
 - 4) If we keep a right attitude, we will not be condemned by Christ. So, to endure afflictions in a Christ-like manner, we must keep a right attitude toward others.

The 3rd thing we need to endure afflictions in a Christ-like manner is a ...

3. Right Outlook (v.10-11)

a. We must see that enduring brings blessing

- 1) In verse 10, James reminds us of the prophets who while speaking for the Lord they suffered afflictions and yet were patient. Then in verse 11, James says that we count