

are happy what are we to do?

b. God's answer

- 1) James wrote, "*Let him sing psalms.*" The word used here literally means to play on a stringed instrument, or to sing to the music of the harp.
- 2) The same word is translated "*making melody*" in (Ephesians 5:19) "*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;*"
- 3) When we are happy, God commands us to sing praises to Him. The apostle Paul practiced this during hardships. (Acts 16:25) "*And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.*"
- 4) It does not matter how well you sing. Every creature God created is to praise Him. (Psalm 148:7-13) "*Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons [dinosaurs], and all deeps: Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word: Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars: Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl: Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth: Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children: Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven.*"
- 5) God loves it when we praise Him in song. If you are like me, you may remember to pray during hardships, but you often forget to sing praise to God when you are happy. Singing praise to God is not an option. It is a command. (Psalms 47:6) "*Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.*"

Conclusion: Our verse today has two simple take-home messages for us. 1) During hardships we must pray! 2) During happiness we must sing praise to God! If you have not been doing both of these, you have work to do this week. Remember, these are not God's suggestions but God's commands.

Song: To God be the Glory, **449**

Hardships and Happiness

29 January 2017 AM – James 5:13 – Jas16 – Scott Childs

Introduction: Someone once said, "*All sunshine makes a desert.*" The same principle applies to life. We cannot expect to have only happiness and no hardships in life. Life is full of both. If you are a Christian, God has a special way for you to respond to hardships and happiness.

Transition: In our verse today, God commands us to respond to hardships and happiness in His way. Let's examine what He commands.

1. During Hardships we must Pray!

a. God's question

- 1) Here is God's question to us: "*Is any among you afflicted?*"
- 2) When James said "*anyone*" he is talking to Christians. The words "*among you*" further clarify this fact. Only true Christians have direct access to God in prayer.
 - a) The Psalmist wrote, (Psalms 66:18) "*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:*" If there is sin in one's heart, God will not hear him. Only a true Christian can have a clean heart before God.
 - b) Paul wrote, (Ephesians 2:18) "*For through him [Jesus] we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*" A few verses later he added, (Ephesians 3:12) "*In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.*" Knowing Christ as Saviour gives us access to God in prayer.
 - c) I fear that the sincere prayers of many religious people never reach the heart of God because they have never experienced the sin-cleansing power of salvation.
- 3) The word "*afflicted*" means to suffer. The type of suffering may differ. It can refer to hardships, troubles or afflictions of any sort.
- 4) Life has plenty of hardships and troubles. Life's troubles come in many shapes and sizes. We have ...
 - a) Physical troubles like sickness and pain

- b) Emotional troubles like burdens and worries
 - c) Spiritual troubles like guilt from sinful choices
 - d) Persecution troubles when we stand up for God's Word
 - e) Financial troubles from poor choices or unexpected loss
 - f) Marital troubles caused by selfishness or sin
 - g) Parenting troubles over children who are rebellious
 - h) And social troubles from unreasonable people
- 5) A read through Hebrews 11 will quickly make it clear that Christians are not exempt from hardships and troubles. At the end of that great chapter we read, "*And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.*" (Hebrews 11:36-38)
- 6) Yes, God does sometimes allow His dearest children to be afflicted. What then?

b. James gives us God's answer

- 1) God's answer is a three word command – "*Let him pray!*"
- 2) When things are not going well, God wants us to pray! Prayer was Peter's immediate response when he was walking on the water toward Jesus and suddenly began to sink. (Matthew 14:30) "*But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.*" This ought to be our immediate response.
 - a) In Psalm 91:15 we read a promise given to those who dwell in the secret place of the most high. (Psalms 91:15) "*He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.*"
 - b) (Philippians 4:6-7) "*Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace*

of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

- 3) What should be pray?
 - a) Our first thought may be to pray for deliverance and that is good. (Psalms 40:13) "*Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me.*" However, that must not be our only prayer.
 - b) We ought to pray that God's will may be done. Jesus did this. (Matthew 26:39) "*And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*"
 - c) We should pray for strength through the trial. (Psalms 119:28) "*My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word.*"
 - d) We are to ask for wisdom to rightly respond to trials. (James 1:5) "*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*"
 - e) Though it will be difficult, we are to thank God for our affliction. (1 Thessalonians 5:18) "*In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*"
- 4) God wants our hardships to bring us closer to Him.

2. During Happiness we must Sing Psalms!

a. God's question

- 1) Next, God asks "Is any merry?"
- 2) The word "*merry*" simply means to be in good spirits, to be glad, or to be cheerful.
- 3) In context, this is the opposite of being afflicted. Life is certainly not all afflictions. God brings many things across our paths that make us happy. (Nahum 1:7) "*The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.*"
- 4) When we are in hardships we are to pray. For those who know the Lord, that seems normal. We ought to naturally cry out to God for help when things go wrong. When we