

"Trials and Temptations" | Rev Jordan Griesbeck | July 05, 2020

Old Testament Reading [Job 13:1, 15-16, 19:24-27, 27:1-6](#)

13 ¹ "Behold, my eye has seen all this,
my ear has heard and understood it. ...
15 Though He slay me, I will hope in Him;
yet I will argue my ways to His face.
16 This will be my salvation,
that the goddess shall not come before Him. ...
19 ²⁴ Oh that with an iron pen and lead
they were engraved in the rock forever!
25 For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and at the last He will stand upon the earth.
26 And after my skin has been thus destroyed,
yet in my flesh I shall see God,
27 whom I shall see for myself,
and my eyes shall behold, and not another.
My heart faints within me! ...
27 ¹ And Job again took up his discourse, and said:
² "As God lives, who has taken away my right,
and the Almighty, who has made my soul bitter,
³ as long as my breath is in me,
and the spirit of God is in my nostrils,
⁴ my lips will not speak falsehood,
and my tongue will not utter deceit.
⁵ Far be it from me to say that you are right;
till I die I will not put away my integrity from me.
⁶ I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go;
my heart does not reproach me for any of my
days.

Epistle Reading [James 1:1-18, 5:10-11](#)

¹ James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.
² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.
⁹ Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, ¹⁰ and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. ¹¹ For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.
¹² Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. ¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempts no one. ¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.
¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. ¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ¹⁸ Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. ...
⁵ ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹ Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

Gospel Reading [Matt 4:1-11](#)

⁴ ¹ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And after fasting forty days and forty nights, He was

Introduction

James wants us to live as the people of God. So, two things from James as we begin to explore The Life of Godliness: (1) What to expect and (2) How to endure.

Background

1. **What to expect.**

- a. Trials [James 1:2](#): Count it all joy ... when you meet trials.
 - 1) A trial is a test that God brought into our lives which tests our faith in Him.
 - 2) James is writing to Jewish Christians dispersed throughout the world who are being tested: they are isolated, lonely and homesick; also, poor and oppressed.
 - 3) We are also beset by trials:
 - a) [Five epic crises](#) (article by NYT [David Brooks](#)): Covid-19, racial inequality, political realignment, social justice, economic depression.
 - b) Jobs, school closures, cancelled activities, marriage, children, death, anxiety.
 - 4) [Tim Keller](#): In other times and cultures, trials were seen as necessary, every day parts of life because people believed in two worlds, this one and the next; this one is full of trials but the second has none. In the secular age, there is no second world for hope; therefore, trials in this world can seem unendurable.
 - 5) Religious people can also have difficulty with trials: most are [Moralistic, Therapeutic Deists](#); they believe if they are good God will reward them with happiness; they hope God will eliminate their problems to make their lives easier. But, the Bible says if we come to God and try to live like Him our lives will become harder.
 - a) Because we're following God in a world that worships thousands of other gods.
 - b) Because, as Christians, we don't belong to ourselves, we belong to God. He doesn't exist to make us happy, He exists to love us and us to love Him.

b. Temptations [James 1:14](#): occur when we are lured/enticed by our own desires.

- 1) Trials often lead to temptations. There were two main temptations in James time:
 - a) The intellectual temptation of believing that God is not good.
 - The Dispersed Jewish Christians were blaming God for their temptations: "If God had not made our lives so difficult, it would be easier for us to obey Him." In [V13](#), James dispels this belief by explaining that God cannot tempt us to evil.
 - The first temptation in any trial is to think that God doesn't care about us. But in trials, James tells us not to be deceived ([V16](#)) into thinking God is not good.
 - b) The moral temptation to start running after something better.
 - Tim Frickenschmidt: "Don't cut and run." is James' main message in Chp1. When trials lead to temptation, don't cut and run; stay, remain.
 - The phrase James uses ([5:10-11](#)) is: be steadfast (stand strong [hupomone](#)); to stand and remain under the weight of trials. It's fortitude, It's to endure.

2. **How to endure** trials and temptation. James says we need three things to endure:

- a. A new power. The good news of the gospel is that Jesus, who took on Satan, sin, the wilderness, the cross, endured every trial and temptation, now lives inside us. We have been animated with a new power to endure all trials and temptations.
- b. A new foundation.
 - 1) In vv6-8, James calls unstable men double-minded, looking at God and looking at the world, serving two masters. Enduring trials and temptations is not just a matter of the mind, it's also a matter of our hearts and our foundations.
 - 2) Tim Keller compares it to Jesus' parable of the man who builds his house on the rock ([Matt 7:24-27](#)). We tend to build our houses on sand, but trials shift our houses, little by little, toward the rock. Trials reveal our foundation and, by God's Grace, shift our foundation away from things of this world.
- c. A new perspective.
 - 1) The world tells us to avoid suffering but in v1:2, James provides a new perspective, telling us to count trials as joy (v1:2). Because (1) trials are beneficial: by strengthening our faith, they shift us toward the rock and produce steadfastness; and (2) trials are temporary and lead us to Glory (v1:12).
 - 2) The good news is that, having endured trials in this life, in our new lives we will stand before God, He will place flowers in our hair and tell us "**Well done, good and faithful servant.**" ([Matt 25:23](#))

Discuss

1. (¶1a1) A trial is a test that God brought into our lives which tests our faith in Him.
2. (¶1a5) Why will our lives become harder if we come to God and try to live like Him.
3. (¶1b) Temptations occur when we are lured/enticed by our own desires (v1:14).
4. (¶2b2) Trials shift us away from the sand toward the rock and produce steadfastness.
5. (¶2c1) Some trials will not end in this life; but one day we **will** be perfect (v1:12).

Conclusion/Application

- To follow God in this world, we can expect trials, but we must remain steadfast.
- In seasons of trial, searching for our next steps, we must pray for wisdom (v1:5) and

hungry. ³ And the tempter came and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." ⁴ But He answered, "It is written,
"Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from
the mouth of God."
⁵ Then the devil took Him to the holy city and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple ⁶ and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down, for it is written,
"He will command his angels concerning You,'
and
"On their hands they will bear You up,
lest You strike Your foot against a stone."
⁷ Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ⁸ Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to Him, "All these I will give You, if You will fall down and worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written,
"You shall worship the Lord your God
and Him only shall you serve."
¹¹ Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to Him.

take things "bird by bird." (an expression created by author [Anne Lamott](#))