

## HOW TO RESPOND WHEN LIFE IS NOT FAIR, Part 2

James 5:7-12

James 5:1-6 - Those to whom James wrote were being:

- defrauded by having their wages withheld (v. 4)
- unjustly dragged into court (v. 6)

How should they respond?

James 5:7-12 - *<sup>7</sup>Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. <sup>8</sup>You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. <sup>9</sup>Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. <sup>10</sup>As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. <sup>11</sup>We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful. <sup>12</sup>But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.*

### ① BE \_\_\_\_\_ UNTIL THE LORD'S COMING (vv. 7-8a)

vv. 7-8a - *<sup>7</sup>Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. <sup>8</sup>You too be patient...*

### ② BE STRONG IN OUR \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 8b)

v. 8b - *strengthen (stērizō) your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.*

- Luke 9:51 - *When the days were approaching for His ascension ("taking up"), He was determined (stērizō) to go to Jerusalem*
  - NKJ: *He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem*
  - NIV: *Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem*
  - ESV: *He set his face to go Jerusalem*
  - Isaiah 50:7 - *I have set my face like flint*
    - *set my face like flint*: A figure of speech used to describe Christ's unwavering determination to persevere in the task set before Him despite suffering, opposition, and unjust treatment.
- John Blanchard - *Jesus knew what was going to happen in Jerusalem. He knew that the pressures were mounting and that his enemies were growing in number and ferocity. He knew that ahead lay desertion, trials, blood, sweat, tears, torture, and agonizing death. But He knew something else. He knew that beyond all these lay the resurrection, the ascension and eternal glory at the right hand of his Father, so he resolutely set out, refusing to yield to the pressure around Him.*

## Only God can produce that kind of spiritual strength and determination in us

- Romans 16:25 - Now to Him who is able to establish (stērizō) you according to my gospel.
- 1 Peter 5:10 - After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace...will Himself perfect, confirm (stērizō), strengthen and establish you.

## But God also uses other people to strengthen us

- Luke 22:31 - Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again (i.e. repented), strengthen (stērizō) your brothers.
- Acts 18:23 - And having spent some time there he left and passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening (epistērizō) all the disciples.

## But here in v. 8, James tells us to strengthen our own hearts: You...strengthen your hearts How can we strengthen our own hearts?

- 2 Peter 1:12 - Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established (stērizō) in the truth which is present with you.
- God strengthens us Himself, and by using others, and we strengthen our own hearts ultimately by means of the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

## The motivation to strengthen our hearts:

v. 7 - Be patient until the coming of the Lord

v. 8 - Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near (the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ)

**Q:** How could James say that the return of the Lord is near in the mid-40s AD?

**A:** 2 Peter 3:3-9 - <sup>3</sup>Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, <sup>4</sup>and saying,

“Where is the promise of His coming?

For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues }  
just as it was from the beginning of creation.”

<sup>5</sup>For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water (God intervened human history with \_\_\_\_\_), <sup>6</sup>through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water (God intervened with a world-wide \_\_\_\_\_). <sup>7</sup>But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. <sup>8</sup>But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

Kent Hughes - *“What Christians, as well as mockers, must realize is that “near” is a relative term. Nature provides an illustration. The life of a mayfly is exactly one day. Suppose one morning a mayfly was hovering over a pond and observed a tadpole in the water below. In the afternoon, near the end of his life, having seen no change in the tadpole, the mayfly cannot conceive how the tadpole’s becoming a frog was very near. So it is with us in our mayfly existence in Christ’s calendar. Our short life does not negate the nearness of his coming. Thus when James says Christ’s coming is “near,” he is writing as one who has been taught to see the years of his life according the eternal “lifetime” of the Most High.”*

### **The return of Christ is the next event on God’s prophetic calendar, so don’t give up now!**

- Romans 13:12 - *The night is almost gone, and the day is near...*
- Hebrews 10:25 - *Do not forsake our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.*
- 1 Peter 4:7 - *The end of all things is near...*
- 1 John 2:18 - *Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.*

### **③ BE \_\_\_\_\_ TOWARD ONE ANOTHER (v. 9)**

#### **v. 9a - *Do not complain, brethren, against one another.***

- *complain* = “to groan” or “to sigh”
- Douglass Moo - *“Grumbling against those who are close to us is particularly likely to occur when we are under pressure, or facing difficult circumstances. We vent the pressure from a stressful work environment, or from ill health, on our close friends and family. So, it would be quite natural if James’ readers, under the pressure of poverty and persecution (5:1-6), would, in their frustrations and pain, turn against one another.”*

#### **Why are we not to complain against each other?**

##### **1. *so that you yourselves may not be judged* (v. 9b)**

- In vv. 1-6, James tells the wicked wealthy that they will be judged because of their unfair treatment of others. But God’s judgment is \_\_\_\_\_. He will also judge us if we complain in the midst of mistreatment.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ judgment or \_\_\_\_\_ (Heb. 12:4-11)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ judgment (2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 3:10b-15; Rom. 14:10-12)

##### **2. *behold, the Judge is standing right at the door* (v. 9c)**

- Peter Davids - *“The nearness of the eschatological day is not just an impetus to look forward to the judgment of ‘sinners’..., but it is also a warning to examine one’s behavior so that when the one whose footsteps are nearing the final knocks on the door, one may be prepared to open...The coming Lord is also the judge of Christians.”*
- So put off any bitter, resentful spirit \_\_\_\_\_

## ④ BE \_\_\_\_\_ THROUGH THE EXAMPLES OF OTHERS (vv. 10-11)

Theme of 5:7-12:

- patient/patience (vv. 7a, 7c, 8, 10)
- endured/endurance (v. 11a, 11b)
  - *hypomonē* = "to remain under"
    - 1:2-4 - *Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance (hypomonē). And let endurance (hypomonē) have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*
      - “Remain under” the trial
      - Example: Olympic weightlifters “remain under” the weight

There are those whom we should consider as examples who suffered and “remained under” those hardships.

**v. 10a - *As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience...***

- Example 1
  - **v. 10b - *take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.***
    - Most of the Old Testament prophets faced unjust suffering
    - By New Testament times the persecution of the prophets was proverbial, being referenced in at least eleven passages (Mat. 5:12; 21:35, 36; 22:6; 23:29-37; Luke 13:33; Acts 7:51, 21; Rom. 11:3; 1 The. 2:15; Heb. 11:32-38; Rev. 6:16; 18:24)
    - In Stephen’s sermon, which led to his own martyrdom, he said, “*Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?*” (Acts 7:52).
    - Hebrews 11 - <sup>32</sup>*For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets...<sup>35</sup>[Some] were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; <sup>36</sup>and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. <sup>37</sup>They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated <sup>38</sup>(men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. (See also 12:1-3)*
  - **v. 11a - *We count those blessed who endured***
    - Matthew 5:10-12 - *Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

- Example 2

- v. 11b - ***You have heard of the endurance of Job.***

- William Barclay - *“Job's faith is no groveling, passive, unquestioning submission. Job struggled and questioned and sometimes even defied, but the flame of faith was never extinguished in his heart.”*
- Job 1:20-22 - *Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD. Through all this, Job did not sin, nor did he blame God.*
- Job 13:15 - *Though He slay me, I will hope in Him. Nevertheless I will argue my ways before Him.*

- v. 11c - ***and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings***

- God prospered Job materially
  - Job 42 - <sup>10</sup>*The LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the LORD increased all that Job had twofold. <sup>11</sup>Then all his brothers and all his sisters and all who had known him before came to him...And each one gave him one piece of money, and each a ring of gold. <sup>12</sup>The Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; and he had 14,000 sheep and 6,000 camels and 1,000 yoke of oxen and a 1,000 female donkeys. <sup>13</sup>He had seven sons and three daughters...<sup>16</sup>After this, Job lived 140 years, and saw his sons and his grandsons, four generations. <sup>17</sup>And he died, an old man and full of days.*

- Job's new perspective of God

- v. 11d - ***that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful***

- Job 42 - <sup>1</sup>*Then Job answered the LORD and said, <sup>2</sup>"I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted." <sup>3</sup>Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. <sup>4</sup>Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me. <sup>5</sup>I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eyes see You.*

**James' point:** God's compassion and mercy to others infuses us with fresh courage and endurance as we follow their example of suffering and endurance.

## 5 BEWARE OF RASH \_\_\_\_\_ TO GOD

v. 12 - *But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.*

How does this relate to 5:1-11?

**Option 1:** It is a \_\_\_\_\_ verse (it has no relationship to vv. 1-11 or to vv. 13-20)

- A warning identical to Matthew 5:33-37

*Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, “YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FALSE VOWS, BUT SHALL FULFILL YOUR VOWS TO THE LORD.” But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING. Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your statement be “Yes, yes” or “No, no”; anything beyond these is of evil.*

- If you swore by God’s name, then you were obligated to keep your word, because if you if you didn’t, you would be dragging His name through the mud
- If you swore by something else, then there was a loophole, and you would not have to keep your word
- **The warning:** Do not use oaths designed to give loopholes. Instead speak the truth. Let your “yes” be “yes” and your “no” be “no”

**Option 2:** It connects to vv. 1-11.

- A warning about a common sinful response to life’s injustices
  - **Option 1:** How we respond to \_\_\_\_\_
  - **Option 2:** How we respond to \_\_\_\_\_
    - When we find ourself in the midst of difficulty (unjust/unfair situations) we are tempted to respond by \_\_\_\_\_ with God
    - George Stulac - “Above all, don't fall into swearing, as if you could manipulate God by your oaths. Instead, speak honestly and directly.”
    - Ecclesiastes 5:1-12 - <sup>1</sup>Guard your steps as you go to the house of God and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil. <sup>2</sup>Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore let your words be few...<sup>4</sup>When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it; for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow! <sup>5</sup>It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. <sup>6</sup>Do not let your speech cause you to sin and do not say in the presence of the messenger of God that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry on account of your voice and destroy the work of your hands? <sup>7</sup>For in many words there is emptiness. Rather, fear God.