



WEDNESDAY EVENING

AT BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH

Title: Bad Things Happen to Everybody

Passage: James 1:1-12

Speaker: Pastor Dan Preston

Introduction: In the book of James, we find a bold call to believers: live out your faith with conviction. His pressing question still hits home today—“If you claim to believe, why do you live as if you don’t?” James demands a faith that transforms daily life, not just beliefs. Writing to Jewish Christians facing fierce persecution—hated by Gentiles for being Jews and by Jews for following Christ—he doesn’t offer comfort; he offers challenge. Reframe your suffering. Trust God in the trial. The idea that faith guarantees an easy life would be laughable to James. We face the same question today—not “How can I dodge trials?” but, “How can I glorify God in them?” We can’t avoid hardship, but we can be transformed in how we face it. Tonight, we’ll explore five principles from James 1:1–12 that reshape how we respond when life gets hard.

I. Difficulties Come into Everyone’s Life (Verse 2)

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:” (1 Peter 4:12)

Suffering isn’t an anomaly; it’s part of the Christian journey.

“To choose suffering makes no sense at all; to choose God’s will in the midst of our suffering makes all the sense in the world.” — Oswald Chambers

If your faith only works when life is smooth, it isn’t faith. Genuine faith sustains you when everything crumbles.



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II. Attitude Determines Outcome (Verse 2)

To “count it joy” doesn’t mean faking a smile or denying pain—it means deliberately choosing to view trials through the lens of God’s purpose.

“‘Rejoicing in suffering’ does not mean Christians should act happy about tragedy and pain when they feel like crying. Christianity is not phony. The Bible’s spotlight is on the end result, the use God can make of suffering in our lives.” — Philip Yancey

Our attitude shapes the outcome. Instead of despair, choose trust. Instead of bitterness, choose hope. Instead of seeing trials as pointless, see them as purposeful.

III. God Has a Purpose (Verses 3-4)

Knowing God has a purpose changes everything. Trials aren’t random—they’re refining.

“The trial of your faith... though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 1:7)

Sometimes trials strip away every support so we finally lean on Him.

Trials aren’t punishment—they’re preparation. God is working something in you.

IV. We Were Not Intended to Face Trials Alone (Verses 5-8)

Trials aren’t meant to be endured in isolation. God offers wisdom—His insight applied to our circumstances—when we ask in faith.

James assures us that God gives “liberally” and “without reproach.” He won’t scold you for asking. But He does expect trust—not the double-minded, unstable life of someone blown by the wind.



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V. God Intends Trials as a Blessing (Verse 12)

"Everything I have learned in my seventy-five years... has been through affliction and not through happiness." — Malcolm Muggeridge

True blessing comes not from escaping trials, but enduring them with faith.

Perseverance proves what's genuine. Some fall away when suffering strikes, but those who endure reveal authentic faith.

Conclusion:

"I have always looked back to times of trial with a kind of longing—not to have them return, but to feel the strength of God as I felt it then, to see His power as I saw it then." — Charles Spurgeon

James writes to remind us that real faith doesn't just claim belief—it lives it out. And nowhere is that more evident than in how we handle trials. Trials become the testing ground where our Christianity is either exposed as empty words or demonstrated as living proof. So let this be your anthem: Count it all joy. When trials come—and they will—trust God's purpose, lean on His wisdom, embrace His blessing. Let your endurance, your patience, and your faith shine brightest in the darkest hours, because when they do, your life becomes living proof that you belong to Him.



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