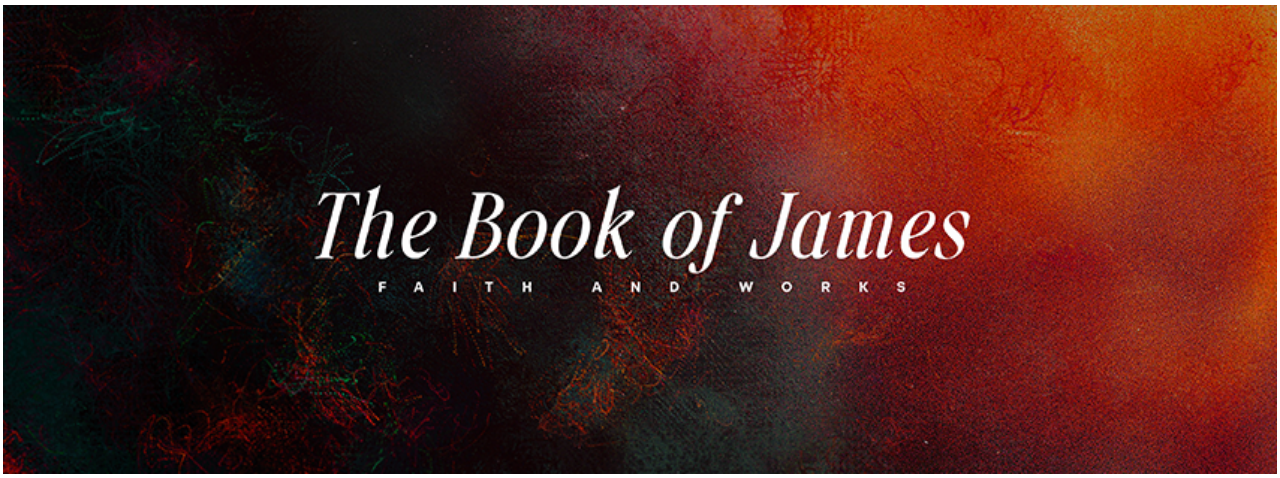

Date: 08-31-2025
Sermon Title: In Pursuit of Patience and Prayer
Text: James 5:7-20

James 5:7–12 NLT
Dear brothers and sisters, be patient as you wait for the Lord's return. Consider the farmers who patiently wait for the rains in the fall and in the spring. They eagerly look for the valuable harvest to ripen. You, too, must be patient. Take courage, for the coming of the Lord is near. Don't grumble about each other, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. For look—the Judge is standing at the door! For examples of patience in suffering, dear brothers and sisters, look at the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. We give great honor to those who endure under suffering. For instance, you know about Job, a man of great endurance. You can see how the Lord was kind to him at the end, for the Lord is full of tenderness and mercy. But most of all, my brothers and sisters, never take an oath, by heaven or earth or anything else. Just say a simple yes or no, so that you will not sin and be condemned.

Notes:

1 John 4:18 NLT
Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love.

Notes:

Matthew 26:73–74 NLT
A little later some of the other bystanders came over to Peter and said, "You must be one of them; we can tell by your Galilean accent." Peter swore, "A curse on me if I'm lying—I don't know the man!" And immediately the rooster crowed.

Notes:

_____ — Plant, Don't Panic

Practice Challenge: Choose one area of life where you feel restless or impatient. Each day this week, instead of trying to control the outcome, "plant" by doing one small act of faithfulness (prayer, encouragement, obedience) and then leave the results to God.

Application: Patience is not passive—it's active trust. Plant obedience today and trust God for the harvest tomorrow. Don't panic about what you can't control; wait on the Lord with courage and hope.

Notes:

James 5:13–20 NLT
Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray. Are any of you happy? You should sing praises. Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven. Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for three and a half years! Then, when he prayed again, the sky sent down rain and the earth began to yield its crops. My dear brothers and sisters, if someone among you wanders away from the truth and is brought back, you can be sure that whoever brings the sinner back from wandering will save that person from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins.

Notes:

John 9:31 NLT
We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but he is ready to hear those who worship him and do his will.

Notes:

_____ — Power in Your Prayers

Practice Challenge: Set aside intentional prayer time each day this week, not just in crisis. Pray through your highs (praise), lows (petitions), and sins (confession). Ask God to show you one person to pray with or for.

Application: Prayer is not a last resort; it's the believer's first weapon. When you feel weak, pray. When you feel joyful, pray. When you feel guilty, pray. Prayer unlocks God's power in everyday life and keeps you connected to His will.

Conclusion

"Plant with patience. Pray with power. Live with hope."

PATIENCE. Biblical patience is a God-exercised, or God-given, restraint in face of opposition or oppression. It is not passivity. The initiative lies with God's love, or the Christian's, in meeting wrong in this way. In the OT, the concept is denoted by Heb. *'ārēḵ*, meaning 'long'. God is said to be 'long' or 'slow' to anger *'erek 'appayim*- (see Ex. 34:6; Nu. 14:18; Ne. 9:17; Pss. 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2). This idea is exactly represented in the Gk. *makrothymia*, often translated in AV as 'longsuffering', and defined by Trench as 'a long holding out of the mind' before it gives room to anger.

Such patience is characteristic of God's dealings with sinful men, who are fully deserving of his wrath (Is. 48:9; Ho. 11:8). His protecting mark on the murderer Cain (Gn. 4:15), his providential rainbow sign to a world that had forfeited its existence (Gn. 9:11–17; *cf*. 1 Pet. 3:20), his many restorations of disobedient Israel (Ho. 11:8–9), his sparing of Nineveh (Jonah), his repeated pleadings with Jerusalem (Mk. 12:1–11; Lk. 13:1–9, 34; Rom. 9:22), his deferment of Christ's second coming (2 Pet. 3:9)—these are all expressions of his patience. Christians are to show a like character (Mt. 18:26, 29; 1 Cor. 13:4; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 4:2; 1 Thes. 5:14). In Proverbs the practical value of

patience is stressed; it avoids strife, and promotes the wise ordering of human affairs especially where provocation is involved.

The patience of God is a 'purposeful concession of space and time' (Barth). It is opportunity given for repentance (Rom. 2:4; 9:22; 2 Pet. 3:9). God's forbearance has been a 'truce with the sinner' (Trench, on *anochē*, Rom. 2:4; 3:25), awaiting the final revelation and redemption in Christ (Acts 17:30). Prayer may prolong the opportunity for repentance (Gn. 18:22ff.; Ex. 32:30; 1 Jn. 5:16).

The Christian's patience in respect of persons (*makrothymia*) must be matched by an equal patience in respect of things (*hypomons*, that is, in face of the afflictions and trials of the present age (Rom. 5:3; 1 Cor. 13:7; Jas. 1:3; 5:7–11; Rev. 13:10). God is the God who gives such Christlike patience (Rom. 15:5; 2 Thes. 3:5), and Jesus is the great Exemplar of it (Heb. 3). He who thus endures to the end, by his patience will gain his soul (Mk. 13:13; Lk. 21:19; Rev. 3:10).

BIBLIOGRAPHY. R. C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*[9], 1880, pp. 195ff.; Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 2. 1, 1957, sect. 30, pp. 406ff.: 'The Patience and Wisdom of God'; U. Falkenroth, C. Brown, W. Mundle, in *NIDNTT* 2, pp. 764–776.[1]

PRAYER

A primary means of communication that binds together God and humankind in intimate and reciprocal relationship. Its foundational assumption is the belief that the Creator of the world is both available for human address and committed to a divine-human partnership that sustains, and when necessary restores, the world in accordance with God's creational design.

In its broadest sense prayer is communication with God that comprises both word and deed, both verbal discourse and nonverbal, performative acts. As word, prayer consists of the special speech directed from people to God that is preserved in the recorded prayers of the Bible. As act, prayer establishes connection with God through a variety of nonverbal means such as sacrifice, dance, and bodily gestures and postures. Thus, one may verbalize praise and thanksgiving and also enact it, through ritual acts of eating, anointing with oil, robing in festal attire (Ps. 66:13–17; 116:12–14; cf. 30:11–12 [MT 12–13]). One may speak lamentation and mourning and also dramatize it, through symbolic acts of fasting, putting dust on the head, and

[1] J. W. L. Hoad, "Patience," in *New Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. R. W. Wood et al. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 873.

rending the garments (Josh. 7:6; Ezra 9:3, 5; Neh. 1:4; Dan. 9:3–4; Joel 2:12–13). In short, prayer is both a linguistic and a gestural construal of the fundamental realities that define relationship with God.

The development of prayer is difficult to trace precisely, although historical and sociological data support a general understanding. In the pre-state period the family and the village community provide the social context for a personal piety in which prayer is expressed primarily through brief addresses to God that arise directly and naturally from situations in daily life. Such prayers typically require no formal cultic setting and no cultic specialist. With the emergence of the monarchy and the establishment of the cult in Jerusalem, an official context for religion is institutionalized and ritualized. Prayer assumes more formulaic and prescribed forms as patterned rituals orient individuals toward corporate concerns that reinforce national solidarity. With the dissolution of the monarchy in the exilic and postexilic periods, the cult loses its institutional base and prayer assumes a variety of different forms and expressions that embody the legacies of both personal piety and official religion. This trend continues in early Judaism and through the first centuries of the early Church (ca. 250 B.C.E.–200 C.E.) as both statutory and spontaneous prayers are offered in the temple, synagogue, and home. Although these shifting historical and social contexts suggest something of a linear development in the stages of prayer, from the spontaneous to the prescribed and formal, there is a genetic connection between conventional and extemporized modes of praying that indicates both existed coevally during the biblical period.

The vocabulary of prayer in the Hebrew Bible is varied in keeping with different forms, settings, and degrees of formality or informality. A number of key technical expressions may be prefaced to or included within a verbal address that clearly distinguish it as prayer: Heb. *pll*, “pray”; *ʿtr*, “entreat”; *ḥnn* hithpael, “plea,” “make supplication”; *qrʾ bšm YHWH*, “call on the name of the Lord.” In other cases, however, prayer is conveyed not with special terminology but with the language of ordinary everyday discourse. A large number of recorded prayers, particularly in prose narratives, begin with the simple statement “and X said *(ʾmr)* to God,” an introduction that depicts prayer in theologically significant ways as analogous to the conversational dialogue routinely exchanged between persons of equal stature. What distinguishes such divine-human conversations from ordinary intra-human dialogue is the weighty nature of what is discussed. These “conversational prayers” typically emerge out of some crisis, which if left unaddressed threatens to destabilize or subvert trust in God.

A distinction may be made between prose prayers and those that are poetic in style. Prose prayers function as integral parts of narrative contexts and derive their meaning directly from what precedes and follows in a specifically defined situation. Approximately 100 recorded prose prayers occur throughout the OT, especially in Genesis-Kings where narrative is the primary literary style. Some are quite brief, containing little more than a simple petition for something concrete and practical (e.g., information, a child, healing), the granting of which may be verified (cf. Gen. 15:2, 3, 8; Judg. 13:8; 2 Sam. 15:31; 2 Kgs. 6:17, 18, 20). Other prose prayers contain petitions of a more abstract nature, e.g., for blessing, remembrance, hearing. Such prayers are often accompanied by lengthy elaborations that offer added incentive for God to hear and respond favorably (cf. 2 Sam. 7:18–29; 1 Kgs. 8:22–61; 2 Kgs. 19:15–19).

Prose prayers serve a variety of literary and theological functions within narrative contexts. They function as a literary means for portraying the character of actors, both human and divine, in a narrative drama. The prayers of Elijah (1 Kgs. 17:17–24), Solomon (3:4–15), and Hezekiah (2 Kgs. 20:2–3 [= Isa. 38:2–3) serve to confirm these persons as exemplary models of piety. The prayers of Jacob (Gen. 32:9–12 [10–13]) and Jonah (Jonah 4:2–3; cf. 2:2–9 [3–10] [poetic]), by contrast, function subtly to caricature or parody the piety professed by these persons. A number of postexilic prayers of penitence (Ezra 9:6–15; Neh. 1:5–11; 9:6–37; Dan. 9:4–19) are governed rhetorically by the repeating affirmation that God's character, especially as manifest in divine forgiveness, is defined primarily by the qualities of sovereignty, mercy, and justice. Further, a number of prose prayers contain a petition for divine justice that is located at the critical narrative juncture between some crisis in the relationship with God and its subsequent resolution (Gen. 18:22–33; Exod. 32:11–14; Num. 11:11–15; 14:13–19; Josh. 7:7–9; 1 Kgs. 17:17–19). The aggregate narrative sequence—crisis, prayer, resolution—portrays prayer theologically as an important resource for addressing theodicean issues.

The Psalms represent the largest collection of poetic prayers in the OT, although poetic addresses also occur within narrative contexts (1 Sam. 2:1–10; 2 Sam. 22:2–51; Jonah 2:1–9 [2–10]). The distinguishing feature of these prayers is the formulaic language that renders them appropriate for repetition by a variety of persons in different contexts. The Psalter's mixture of individual and collective prayers, along with the regular and spontaneous ritual ceremonies that accompany them, reflect the convergence of personal piety and official religion that appears to characterize Israel's worship in the postexilic period.

Prayers occur in a variety of forms in the Psalter—hymns, dirges, blessings, imprecations—but two basic types dominate: lament and praise. Lament prayers (individual and collective) are more numerous than any other single type, comprising approximately one third of the collection (Pss. 3, 12, 22, 42–43, 44, 69, 79, 88, 130). Along with the "confessions" of Jeremiah (Jer. 11:18–23; 12:1–6; 15:10–21; 17:14–18; 18:18–23; 20:7–13, 14–18), the laments of Habakkuk (Hab. 1:2–17) and Job (Job 3:3–26; 6:1–30; 10:18–22; 13:20–14:22; 19:7–22; 30:16–31), and prophetic liturgies of lamentation (Jer. 14:7–9, 19–22; Isa. 63:7–64:12 [11]; Joel 1–2), these prayers offer a profound witness to a lament tradition that authorized and promoted the practice of bringing before God a wide range of difficult and threatening circumstances. The typical pattern of these prayers—invocation, lament, petition, affirmation/hope of divine response—provides a rhetorical and substantive vehicle for articulating and coping with pain and suffering.

Prayers of praise and thanksgiving (individual and collective) are also well attested in the Psalter (Pss. 8, 30, 33, 66, 100, 113, 138, 146–150). They too follow a general pattern: invocation and summons to praise; reasons and motivations for praise (God's saving deeds and God's abiding nature and character); and concluding exhortation to praise. Both in form and in content praise prayers are connected to lament and thus to a central affirmation of biblical faith: when people who are in distress call to God, God hears and responds, thereby evoking in return heartfelt gratitude and adoration.

The NT uses a variety of terms with reference to prayer (*proseúchomai*, "pray"; *déomai*, "ask/seek"; *eucharistéō*, "give thanks"; *krázō*, "cry"). But in contrast with the OT, which preserves more than 250 prose and psalmic prayers, the NT contains relatively few recorded prayers: the prayers of Jesus (Matt. 11:25–27 = Luke 10:21–22; Matt. 26:39 = Mark 14:36 = Luke 22:42; Matt. 27:46 = Mark 15:34; Luke 23:34, 46; John 11:41–42; 12:27–28; 17:1–26); the prayers of Peter and the assembly (Acts 1:24–25) and of Peter and John (4:24–30); the prayer of Stephen (7:59–60). Prayer is prominent in Paul, particularly in the introductory thanksgivings (Rom. 1:8; 1 Cor. 1:4) and the benedictory blessings (Rom. 16:25–27; 2 Cor. 13:14) that conclude the letters, but otherwise the actual words of Paul's prayers are not recorded. Also in contrast with the OT, which offers very little instruction in prayer (cf. Job 8:5–6; 11:13–15; 22:23–27), is the significant attention in the NT to teaching about prayer.

The NT offers both a continuation of the forms and traditions of Israelite and Jewish prayer and a distinctive Christian perspective on them. Jesus continues the practice of lament (Matt. 27:46 = Mark 15:34 [Ps. 22:1(2)]; Luke 23:46 [Ps. 31:5(6)] and praise/thanksgiving (Matt. 11:25–27 = Luke

10:21–22; John 11:41–42) and is thus revered by his followers as one who modeled the essence of Hebraic prayer (cf. Heb. 5:7). The Gospel of Luke portrays Jesus as having prayed at critical junctures in his life—at baptism (Luke 3:21), the choosing of the disciples (6:12), transfiguration (9:28–29), in Gethsemane (22:32, 41–42), and at his crucifixion (23:46)—thus modeling the legacy preserved especially in Hebrew narratives of the importance of prayer in life's decisive situations.

The NT's distinctive perspective is especially evident in its instructions concerning how to pray. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus cautions against impious and pretentious prayer (Matt. 6:5–8) and offers the Lord's Prayer as a pattern for his disciples (Matt. 6:9–13 = Luke 11:2–4). This model prayer, which combines praise and petition in a simple, personal, and spontaneous form, is itself rooted in Jewish antecedents (cf. the Amidah or Prayer of Eighteen Benedictions). A further emphasis in Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount is the exhortation to be persistent in prayer (Matt. 7:7–11 = Luke 11:9–13), a theme also prominent in Paul, who calls believers to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17; cf. Rom. 12:12; Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:2). Luke's Gospel elaborates further on this theme in two parables, Luke 11:5–8; 18:1–8, the latter of which connects persistent prayer with the promise of justice for the disadvantaged and the oppressed.

A further distinctive of prayer in the NT is the importance of intercession. In the high priestly prayer of John 17, Jesus embodies the role of intercessor as he entrusts the faith community and the efficaciousness of its witness in the world to God. Paul frequently exhorts congregations to become communities of intercession for him and for the success of his mission (Rom. 15:30–32; Col. 4:3; 2 Thess. 3:1). Peter and Paul pray for the healing of the sick (Acts 9:40; 28:8), a practice that the Letter of James commends to the elders of the church (Jas. 5:13–16). Elsewhere intercessions are offered for spiritual growth (Eph. 1:16–17; Phil. 1:9), sustenance in times of peril (Acts 12:5; Phil 1:19; Heb. 13:18), and for the civil authorities (1 Tim. 2:1–2). Especially noteworthy is Jesus' admonition to his followers to pray for the forgiveness of their persecutors (Matt. 5:44 = Luke 6:28). Jesus himself models such intercession in his last words from the cross (Luke 23:34). Stephen reflects Jesus' example in his own last words (Acts 7:60). The theology of the Cross in turn shapes Christian prayer definitively, and the principle of blessing, not cursing, one's enemies becomes a foundational imperative for Christian piety and practice (Matt. 5:39–48; Luke 6:27–36; Rom. 12:14).

In sum, both the OT and the NT portray prayer as a principal means by which Creator and creature are bound together in an ongoing, vital, and

mutually important partnership. The ultimate goal of this partnership, as articulated in Jesus' model prayer, is that God's will be done "on earth as in heaven."

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[2] Samuel E. Balentine, "Prayer," in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1077–1079.