

Patience James 5:7-11

I have a little quiz for you today that I would like you to participate in. How would you fill in the blanks for the following statements?

Statement 1: “I want it .” What did you put there? It’s probably the word “now.”

Next one. **“I said, Do it .”** The answer? Now.

Third one. **“Not next week, not next month, not next year, not tomorrow, but !”**

Four, a common prayer we might say, **“Dear God, give me patience and give it to me right .”** Or maybe “Serenity .” We live in a world of now! **We live in a world of instant gratification and instant satisfaction. Don’t believe me?**

We have things like instant mashed potatoes, Tv-dinners, Ramen cups, and Hot-N-Ready pizzas. We have entertainment services that offer instant streaming and instant access to thousands of shows. We hold phones in our hands that can access information, bank accounts, and emails instantly. And when it doesn’t load fast enough, we hit the button at the top to hope it speeds up. Companies like Amazon offers free two day shipping even one day in some places. When our package is not here by the end of day two, we might wonder if it will ever come. **We live in a world of now.**

As a result of these things, patience in the basic spheres of everyday life can be a challenge. It can be difficult to wait, and to be patient. It can be an even bigger challenge in the light of adversity and suffering. James’ audience is facing persecution. They are being wrong and mistreated, and those who are doing it them are prospering.

And what does James preach to them? Patience? James preaches patience. He teaches and encourages patience in adversity and suffering by pointing them to Christ’s Second Coming. He teaches us patience in trials and hardships by pointing us to the same event.

James teaches patience in problems, with people, in persecution, and suffering. James says to be like the farmer: **“Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient.”**

Put yourself in the farmer’s shoes for just a moment. It really takes a lot of patience to be a farmer. There are many things out of a farmer’s control that he has to just wait out.

He has no control over the sunshine or amount of rain that will fall.

He cannot control the temperature.

He cannot heavily affect the growth.

He cannot prevent an enemy invasion.

He cannot prevent theft or vandals, or fully stop animals from grazing on his crops.

He cannot even guarantee that the seeds of what he had planted will sprout!

And when things are planted, he has to wait for months. T

here is so much out of his control! You have to wait, hope, and pray and see how things turn out! Can you imagine being a farmer without patience?

There are many times in life when we are put in the position of the farmer. There are many things out of our control. There are problems we have to be patient in and sometimes can’t do anything about.

We have no control over a market crash or housing drop. Friendships for some reason can fizzle.

The car can go caput on 36. We have no control over politics and the policies that are produced.

Insurance and other rates can go up. As a Pastor can tell you there are any number of ways that we unknowingly or unintentionally get people annoyed or mad at us.

Life can throw those random problems and more. What we do? In these situations, we wait. We patiently endure. We wait on the Lord, look to Him, and to His Coming. James urges and teaches patience in problems. He also urges it with others.

In our Christian lives, we wrestle with the reality that our Lord has not returned yet. In our problems, this delay can give way to impatience in our dealings with others. James says, **“Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door.”** Our Lord is on His way, and we keep that in mind with our interactions with others. But unfortunately, when we are stressed, scared, or uncertain of our future and circumstances, when we are in the middle of a trial, problem, or hardship, we can mistreat others. Our patience can be severely diminished in these things.

Sometimes, we might be tempted to think that since we are Christians that we are immune to, or should be immune, to persecution and suffering. But this is not the case. We should expect and anticipate it. The prophets faced these things. The prophets knew what it was like to face persecution and suffering. But, James reminds us that if God was with the prophets of old, strengthening and preserving them, then He will be with us, doing the same. We can have patience in these kinds of things, and he mentions the example par excellence, Job.

You remember Job, right? Job lost it all, all on the same day, and didn't see it coming! He lost his property, his possessions, and people, including his ten children. He was afflicted with sores. He was left with an unsupportive wife who said, **"Just curse God and die!"** His friends? Well they weren't much help either. On top of it all, God was silent in his suffering for 37 chapters! But Job persevered. He said, **"The Lord gives and the Lord takes, blessed be the Name of the Lord!"** God had his purpose accomplished for Job, and restored him completely. Job saw the Lord's mercy and compassion. James urges patience in problems, with people, in persecution and suffering. But why does he say such things?

It is because our Lord is coming back, In our text, he mentions it three times! James lifts our eyes from our current problems, our current sufferings, and from just in front of us to Jesus. He focuses on our eyes on Him, our Coming Lord. And what do we see? We see a Lord Who is in control. We might look around at the world around us and see chaos, brokenness, and the absence of God. However, God is in control. He is coming. He controls my life and my circumstances. He orchestrates all things for our good in Him, and will get us through it!

As the God Who is in control, He accomplishes His purposes. This means that any and every suffering has a purpose. Remember James 1? **"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."** He brings things to the end that He has in mind, like with Job. And what is that end for us? Our Salvation, which He has won through His Son! We have a God Who is truly merciful and compassionate towards us.

The word that James uses for "compassionate" in our text is a special one. It is only used here in the entire New Testament. The word is *splanchnizomai*, which means compassionate, but carries with it the image of the internal churning of the organs at the sight of suffering. **Our God cares about us and what we are going through. He cared so much that He gave His One and Only Son to save and forgive us, and to show us God's mercy. He cares so much that He is with us in our sufferings and problems, just like how He was with Job and the prophets. We are blessed, because in Him, we will persevere. James focuses our eyes on a God Who cares, and Who is merciful and compassionate.**

He also focuses our eyes on His Coming. Jesus' return is a good thing for Christians. It means our salvation and vindication. It means the end of suffering, stress, pain, persecution, heartache, and loss. It means a new heaven, a new earth, a new body, and the reunion with our departed loved ones in the Lord. Jesus' return gives us hope, comfort, and encouragement to face the day. It means that something better is coming ahead! **So, "be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand."**