

7a Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. James 5:7a Looking back on the preceding passages we can surmise that the churches were enduring slander from outside and within. The rich were taking advantage of them and boasting about their ability to gain wealth. At the same time, they were abusing their laborers and not helping those in need. The verse just prior to our passage for today ends with an allusion to Jesus. I believe it was a reminder to them of Jesus words from John 15ⁱ, *“If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also.”* To use Jesus’ prediction from one of His parables, it seems that there were a lot of weeds sown among the wheat. Jesus meant the church will always have those within church gatherings who are still in the world and trying to take what they can for their personal gain.

What should we do when facing those situations? Listen to the parable from which James may have been inspired for today’s passage. It is found in Matthew 13:24-30. *24 He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, 25 but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. 26 So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. 27 And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ 28 He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ 29 But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”*

This is one of the few parables that Jesus explained. I believe the reason He did so is that He knew the church would need it for generations. Here is His explanation found in Matthew 13:36-43: *36 Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” 37 He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. 40 Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, 42 and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.*

The weeds in this parable are called darnel. It looks very much like wheat. You cannot tell the difference until the grain begins to form. Being an agrarian society, the people understood this. The darnel is going to rob the wheat of nutrients. But if you try to pull it out, it will damage the wheat. This goes along with Jesus’ expression, *“You will know them by their fruits”* (Matthew 7:20ⁱⁱ). The results of what we place our faith in will be the evidence of whether we are wheat or weeds. Apostle Paul describes the difference in the fruit we bear in Galatians 5 as fruits of flesh or of spirit (Galatians 5:19-23ⁱⁱⁱ).

We are not called to be fruit inspectors, but the elders within a congregation are to discipline those who blatantly sin causing harm to others and damaging the testimony of the church (1 Peter 5:2^{iv}). In extreme cases, Paul instructs that they be put out of the

church so they will experience the difference and hopefully be restored with a humble heart, as was the case in the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 5:4^v).

It seems contradictory to Jesus' statement; however, Jesus said the field is the world. Paul on the other hand was addressing the church. Nevertheless, Jesus' warning does imply the church as a part of the field will experience those who are not genuine believers and are there for personal gain. Putting these Scriptures together then we can conclude that the church will have unbelievers among us who cause damage, and in obvious cases of sin that affects the congregation and becomes known to all, there must be discipline and even putting them out of the church if there is no repentance.

In most cases, however, we must do what James and Jesus were teaching, "*Be patient, therefore brothers, until the coming of the Lord.*" Patience is one of the fruits of the Spirit, the grain on the stalk that identifies us as wheat. Impatience is the fruit of the weeds, those in the flesh. Remember that it is only the maturing of the grain that exposes which type it is. **What stage we are at in our spiritual maturity can be measured by the formation of the fruit of patience.** How are you doing? If we are very honest, most of us will admit we need to mature in the fruit of patience. Remember it is patience with those previously described: slanderers, the rich who would oppress and take advantage of us, and who withhold wages that are due.

We are to be patient until the coming of the Lord. We know that then the weeds will be gathered and thrown into the fire, while the wheat is gathered and put into our Lord's barn. Our patience may reveal in time that what we thought were weeds are revealed by their fruit to be wheat. As a previous passage stated, *There is only one lawgiver and judge who is able to save and to destroy* (4:12). We patiently wait for His righteous judgment. Are you struggling under injustice or dealing with slander or just tired of this fallen world and the evil that seems so prevalent? Be patient. The Judge is coming. Is the daily news depressing? Does evil seem to prevail? Be patient. The Judge is coming.

We often consider the troubles in life and in the church in a negative light, as if somehow an unavoidable evil was prevailing. Kent Hughes gives us a biblical perspective in his sermon on this passage: "...life without struggle and difficulty is bland and tasteless. Malcolm Muggeridge wrote in his book *Jesus Rediscovered*: Suppose you eliminated suffering, what a dreadful place the world would be. I would almost rather eliminate happiness. The world would be the most ghastly place because everything that corrects the tendency of this unspeakable little creature, man, to feel over-important and over-pleased with himself would disappear. He's bad enough now, but he would be absolutely intolerable if he never suffered.

In other words, our moral development—our character—is largely dependent upon the experience of suffering. Without trials we would be morally dwarfed. In fact, the study of the lives of great people reveals there is a consistent link between the crucible and true greatness. No wise person would seek to be exempt from the healthy discipline of trouble.

For one thing, **trouble promotes trust.** We children of God seldom trust God as we do when we are in big trouble. Troubles knock secondary things away. They sharpen our focus and increase our grip on God. When all our attempts at self-deliverance fail, we are forced to trust in the only One who can truly help us.

Troubles bring us near to God. When our regular comforts do not suffice, we draw near to him. It is hard to learn to swim on dry land, but when we are in the water you *have* to swim. Our troubles are waters in which we are obliged to swim toward God.

Troubles strengthen our communion with God. Without troubles we would not learn prayer. James says in effect, “we consider blessed those who have persevered” because they learn *trust*, because they *draw near* to God, and because their *communion* with God becomes what it ought to be.”^{vi}

^{7b}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. ^{8a}You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, James 5:7b,8a James gives us the example of the farmer who patiently waits for the fruit to form. The previous passage addressed the oppression of the poor by those who were rich. James is encouraging them to endure patiently knowing that they will reap the justice they deserve, but also that believers will reap the reward for faithful endurance.

Guzik points out the many ways of the manner in which we should wait compares to that of the farmer waiting for his crop to ripen. *He waits with a reasonable hope and expectation of reward. He waits a long time. He waits working all the while. He waits depending on things out of his own power; with his eye on the heavens. He waits despite changing circumstances and many uncertainties. He waits encouraged by the value of the harvest. He waits encouraged by the work and harvest of others. He waits because he really has no other option. He waits because it does no good to give up. He waits aware of how the seasons work. He waits because as time goes on, it becomes more important and not less to do so.*^{vii}

He trusts God to bring the rain in its season. Israel has two seasons of rain. The early rain is in the fall, as the religious year begins in the fall. The latter rain is in the winter and early spring. The rest of the year is dry in Israel. Those rains coming in their season determine the harvest yield.

It is like our weather, as we are at the same latitude. This year we had great spring rains and decent summer rains, and everyone had plentiful crops. That is not only from the moisture, but from the nitrogen that lightning attaches to the rain.

Is someone a pain in your side? Does their personality irritate you? Be patient. Wait for the Lord to water their soul. It may be early, or it may come late, but wait for the fruit to form in their life. Like the farmer, “You also, be patient.” James repeats it because it is such an important fruit of the Spirit that we need for the unity and love we should be expressing so that the world might see the difference in the church.

^{8b}for the coming of the Lord is at hand. James 5:8b Since the Lord is soon to return, we should establish our hearts. The Greek word translated here as “establish” is translated in other places as strengthen, confirm, or fix. It was used to describe Jesus last trip into Jerusalem (Luke 9:51^{viii}). Jesus knew the crucifixion lay ahead but He went forward resolutely with determination to do His Father’s will.

Our motivation for being resolute in doing the will of God is the soon return of the Lord. You might ask why they thought it was soon two thousand years ago. Throughout church history, the church has expected the Lord’s return. That is a healthy attitude, for as James taught in the previous passage, our life is like a mist that appears for a little while and vanishes away (4:14^{ix}). He may come for any of us at any moment. Living with the expectation of His return keeps us aware that at any time we might be called to give an account of our life to God (Romans 14:10^x). That helps us to shun temptation.

Jesus said that no one knows the day or hour of His return (Matthew 24:36^{xi}). Peter taught that a day with the Lord is like a thousand years (2 Peter 3:8^{xii}). Certainly, we are closer than at any time in history. The development of AI which will in my understanding be the image of the beast that the second beast sets in the temple of God (Revelation 13:15^{xiii}; 2 Thessalonians 2:4^{xiv}). Preparations have been made for the new temple. Israel has been restored as a nation. Russia and Iran have become allies as predicted in Scripture (Ezekiel 38:3-5^{xv}). China's massive army seems also ready to fulfill the predictions (Revelation 16:12^{xvi}). But whether it is tomorrow or hundreds of years from now, we too can say the coming of the Lord is at hand. Will we stand before Him without shame? That is why we need to strengthen our hearts to persevere to the end with patience (Matthew 24:13^{xvii}).

⁹ Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. James 5:9 Be patient. Establish your hearts. Do not grumble. Our passage now moves to this negative command, "do not!" If from your perception you start to pick out flaws, you are inviting others to do the same to you. Do you really want to go there? James has told us of the blessing of grace that God gives to the humble (James 4:6^{xviii}). **Humility recognizes how flawed we are and passes on the grace we receive from God** to overlook the things that annoy us in others. This is especially needed for married couples. We should always focus on the blessing of our spouse and never dwell on the issues that annoy us. Marriage is a training ground for how to deal with others, learning to out give, honor, and bless by dying to ourselves and serving. We should remember the Judge will recall our words (Matthew 12:37^{xix}).

James touched on this earlier in the letter (2:13^{xx}). The way we judge others is the way God will judge us (Matthew 7:2^{xxi}). That alone should cause us to be abundantly gracious to all our brothers and sisters in Christ. The final phrase in this verse is meant to put the fear of God in us. The Judge is standing at the door. Are you ready? "All rise! The Judgment Seat of Christ with the honorable Judge, King of kings, and Lord of lords, Creator of all things visible and invisible, Jesus the Christ presiding is now in session. Be prepared to give an account." He approaches the bench, and as He does you will notice His eyes are flames of fire (Revelation 1:14^{xxii}). When He looks at you those eyes see right through every wall into your innermost thoughts. Are you sure you are ready?

If the royal law is to love our neighbor as ourselves, we violate it when we are grumbling against one another. We should instead be building one another up, helping them overcome weaknesses as we let them help us overcome our own (Romans 14:19^{xxiii}). We need to help one another prepare for the coming of the Judge.

¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. James 5:10 James has been asking the churches to be patient with the oppression by the rich, knowing that the righteous judge will come to judge them and to assess the Christian's faithfulness (Romans 14:10^{xxiv}). He has told them to be patient like a farmer waiting for his crop to mature. Now he points them to the example of the prophets. We tend to think they were special men endowed with a power we do not possess. But if anything, the opposite is true. They were humans with weaknesses like our own. It is true that the Holy Spirit would come upon them and enable them in special ways, but we have the Holy Spirit continually living in us! If they could endure suffering, surely, we can too by the same power that enabled them. But we have the added benefit of His abiding presence in us (John 14:16^{xxv}).

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. James 5:11 We read about the prophets and how they remained steadfast in the face of persecution and consider them blessed. Certainly, the same is true for us. We read about the steadfastness of Job. He did nothing wrong, but he lost his children, his wealth, and his health. His friends insisted he must have done something to incur God's wrath. His wife in pity for his condition told him to curse God and die (Job 2:8,9^{xxvi}).

At the right time God revealed himself to Job. That was the greatest blessing (Job 42:5^{xxvii}). God also restored all that he had allowed Satan to take from Job. He even doubled it. We see he was blessed physically and spiritually for enduring.

The example that comes to my mind is Jeremiah. He preached to the nation of Judah though they mocked, imprisoned, and threw him in a pit where he sunk in mud. Jeremiah was taken by the remnant into Egypt and some people believe he was stoned there. His end in this life was not as pleasant as Job's, but his reward in heaven for a life of faithfulness must be more glorious than we can imagine (Matthew 5:11,12^{xxviii}).

The best example is that of our Savior. He was born in a manger, persecuted as a toddler, and fled to Egypt. He was surely considered a bastard by some in His hometown of Nazareth. The town eventually turned against him and tried to stone Him. He said He had nowhere to lay His head (Matthew 8:20^{xxix}). The Pharisees and Sadducees tried to trap Him. The crowds turned against Him, His disciple betrayed Him, the other disciples deserted Him, the people called for His crucifixion, He was scourged almost to death and then crucified in humility hanging for all to see His torn and battered body. The thieves and religious leaders mocked Him as He hung there. In darkness He bore the wrath of God for the sins of the world. He was buried in someone else's tomb. The disciples hid in fear and forgot His promise.

But He rose victorious! Death could not hold Him. For forty days He encouraged and instructed His disciples, promised the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and ascended into heaven (Acts 1:2^{xxx},8,9^{xxxi})! He was given a name above every name that at His name every knee should bow in heaven and on the earth (Philippians 2:9,10^{xxxii}). *“You have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.”*

³ Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. ⁴ In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. Hebrews 12:3,4 Be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against your brother. Consider the outcome of those who endured. Live for the glory of our King! Amen?

Questions:

- 1 Why were those to whom James wrote in need of patience?
- 2 What parable of Jesus may have inspired James?
- 3 When is discipline required rather than patience?
- 4 How can trouble be a blessing?
- 5 How is the farmer's patience like our own?
- 6 Why do we need to establish our hearts?
- 7 What is the negative command? Warning?
- 8 What feelings are evoked by “the Judge is standing at the door”?

9 What is the example of the prophets? Job?

10 What is the ultimate example?

ⁱ **John 15:20 (ESV)**

²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.

ⁱⁱ **Matthew 7:20 (ESV)**

²⁰ Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Galatians 5:19-23 (ESV)**

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

^{iv} **1 Peter 5:2 (ESV)**

² shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly;

^v **1 Corinthians 5:4-5 (ESV)**

⁴ When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, ⁵ you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

^{vi} R. Kent Hughes, *James: Faith That Works*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 235–236

^{vii} David Guzik, *James*, David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible (Santa Barbara, CA: David Guzik, 2013), Jas 5:7–8.

^{viii} **Luke 9:51 (ESV)**

⁵¹ When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.

^{ix} **James 4:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴ yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.

^x **Romans 14:10 (ESV)**

¹⁰ Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God;

^{xi} **Matthew 24:36 (ESV)**

³⁶ "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.

^{xii} **2 Peter 3:8 (ESV)**

⁸ But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

^{xiii} **Revelation 13:15 (ESV)**

¹⁵ And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.

^{xiv} **2 Thessalonians 2:4 (ESV)**

⁴ who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.

^{xv} **Ezekiel 38:3-5 (ESV)**

³ and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. ⁴ And I will turn you about and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed in full armor, a great host, all of them with buckler and shield, wielding swords. ⁵ Persia, Cush, and Put are with them, all of them with shield and helmet;

^{xvi} **Revelation 16:12 (ESV)**

¹² The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east.

^{xvii} **Matthew 24:13 (ESV)**

¹³ But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

^{xviii} **James 4:6 (ESV)**

⁶ But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

^{xix} **Matthew 12:37 (ESV)**

³⁷ for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

^{xx} **James 2:13 (ESV)**

¹³ For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

^{xxi} **Matthew 7:2 (ESV)**

² For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.

^{xxii} **Revelation 1:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴ The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire,

^{xxiii} **Romans 14:19 (ESV)**

¹⁹ So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

^{xxiv} **Romans 14:10 (ESV)**

¹⁰ Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God;

^{xxv} **John 14:16 (ESV)**

¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,

^{xxvi} **Job 2:8-9 (ESV)**

⁸ And he took a piece of broken pottery with which to scrape himself while he sat in the ashes. ⁹ Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.”

^{xxvii} **Job 42:5-6 (ESV)**

⁵ I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; ⁶ therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

^{xxviii} **Matthew 5:11-12 (ESV)**

¹¹ “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

^{xxix} **Matthew 8:20 (ESV)**

²⁰ And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”

^{xxx} **Acts 1:2 (ESV)**

² until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

^{xxxi} **Acts 1:8-9 (ESV)**

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” ⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

^{xxxii} **Philippians 2:9-10 (ESV)**

⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,