

James: Faith That Works – Part 11

Wait Patiently – James 5:7-12

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – March 22, 2026

Introduction

- Over the past ten weeks, we have had the privilege of learning from the Word of God from the book of James. James loves the church, and he loves you deeply and sincerely, as does Jesus. He loves us so much that he tells us the truth, plain and straightforward. We like that about James, and we love him for it, even when the truth hurts, we know it is what we need.
- James deals with all types of topics in his book, all of them with the single aim of shaping us into the image of Jesus Christ, the One he knew up close and personal.
- James was there during all of Jesus's life, growing up together in the same household, seeing His ministry years, what He taught, what He did, and what He claimed. James saw Jesus die, and he saw Him resurrected.
- James was there when Jesus ascended, and he saw it with his own eyes. He heard the voice of the angels that said that Jesus would return in the same way (Acts 1:8-11). And James lived with the hope of that promise in his heart. He gave his life for Jesus because he believed what Jesus said. James helps us live the same way, in light of the truth about who Jesus is and what He said He would do.
- Throughout his book, James helps us to live our lives in light of the return of Christ. He gives us wisdom that is from heaven and helps us deal with our sinful nature, especially our pride, that hides in all sorts of places, including in our actions and words, how we treat each other, from our certainty of the future, to how we handle our wealth.
- In chapter 5, James warns the wealthy of this world that we all will stand in judgment for how we used what we had, and he pleads with us to use our wealth to be rich towards God, not just in this world. The way we spend our money and how we treat others with it will give evidence of who we truly are.
- There are people in this world who oppress others because of their power, or position, or prosperity, and the cries of those who have been hurt, or abandoned, or neglected have reached the ears of God, and He will bring justice.
- Now, in the next part of chapter 5, James instructs those who are waiting for the return of the King on how to wait until He comes again and settles the score in truth, justice, and righteousness and rewards both the living and the dead.
- So, let's listen to what James says to us as we turn to James 5:7-12 (page 1045).

James 5:7-12 NIV

Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. 8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. 9 Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

10 Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

12 Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple “Yes” or “No.” Otherwise you will be condemned.

Wait Patiently Like a Farmer

James 5:7-12 NIV

Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. 8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near.

- When I was in high school, I lived on a farm, five acres of property where our house and buildings sat, with fields as far as the eye could see in every direction. We had to drive three miles on gravel roads to get to the nearest blacktop road.
- I knew my share of farmers, and I worked for my cousin, who still farms there to this day. It takes faith to be a farmer. You have to have faith in the soil and in the seed, faith that the seed you put in the ground will grow. So you work hard in faith, plowing the ground, picking out the rocks, planning the irrigation, and applying fertilizer. Then you put your faith in the seed and put it in the ground, trusting that it will grow.
- You act out of faith, doing your best to ensure the right environment for the seed to grow. You now have to wait in faith, knowing that you are not ultimately in control, that you have to wait on forces that are above and beyond you, namely the weather and the forces of nature, which are both directed by God.
- The farmer cannot force the harvest to come; he has to wait for it patiently, because it will come in due time and in its time. So he has to work, but be patient, trusting by faith in the hope and promise of the harvest to come.
- The Christian life is a lot like that. God promises us a harvest if we do not give up (Gal 6:9). He promises to come back, and His reward is with Him. He will repay each one for what they have done (Rev 22:12).
- Our patience is an act of faith. We trust that the Lord will return, just as He said He would. He will make all things new and set all things right. So we are to stand firm until then.
- Stand firm in what you believe; build your life upon the truth of Jesus Christ and His word. Remind yourselves of these things, and spur each other on toward love and good deeds. Lock arms with your fellow believers, plant your feet upon the rock. Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God (Mic 6:8). Love the Lord, *your God*, with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself (Matt 22:37-40).

Wait Patiently Like a Farmer and Do Not Grumble

James 5:9 NIV

Don’t grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

- Another thing that I know about farmers is that they are typically not an overly content or optimistic group of people. It is either too cold or too hot. It is too wet or too dry. There is always a chance of hail, wind, or pestilence. And something always seems to be breaking down or in need of fixing. Or the bushel price is too low, or the seed price is too high, etc.

- It is hard not to grumble while you're waiting. I am prone to doing it all the time, regardless of which line I am in . . . or when there's something I want to happen or get done. . . . This has become especially bad because we live in an ultra-fast and instant society.
- Grumbling is spiritually dangerous for us, and it can be downright destructive when we start grumbling against one another, with our family, with our friends, and with our church. And the more stressed we are and the more suffering we are enduring, the greater the pressure we feel, the greater the chance we will grumble.
- Grumbling is like germs that get into the air, which can make everyone and everything miserable and destroy any group of people it infects. The truth is that grumbling is not just a mood, but ultimately it is a verdict. Grumbling declares that someone has done us wrong, that someone should be blamed, that someone has failed. Grumbling puts us in the judge's seat, looking to pass judgment on anyone and everyone, as long as it is not me.
- Instead of looking to God as the judge, we become the judge. Instead of being hopeful, we become critical. And James reminds us that it is not the rightful place for us to sit, because the real judge, the rightful judge, is standing at the door. You don't have the authority, nor the right, nor the wisdom, nor the truth, nor the perspective, nor the right heart to be sitting in His seat. The final judge will give His authoritative verdict.
- The right way for us to wait is to do so like a grateful, hopeful, faithful farmer waiting for the harvest to come at its proper time. Another way we are to wait, is to wait patiently like a prophet.

Wait Patiently Like a Prophet

James 5:10-11 NIV

Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

- Being patient in suffering has a long history with the people of God. This is not a new phenomenon. From Abraham, who had to wait for the promised son, to Moses, who had to wait to see the Promised Land. To David, who had to wait to be delivered from Saul, to Daniel, who had to wait to be delivered from lions. From Jeremiah, who had to wait to be lifted from a well, to Elijah, who had to wait to be delivered from Jezebel. From Jonah, who had to wait to be delivered from the belly of a whale, to Habakkuk, who had to wait to be delivered from Babylon. They all had to wait patiently for the deliverance of the Lord.
- We count them blessed who have persevered. Because there is a work in it and a reward from it. This is how we show we have faith, and through this, we become mature. Now many in our world think that the word "blessed" means comfortable. Blessed means prosperous. Blessed means easy. Blessed means pain-free. This is not how Jesus defined blessed. Here is what He said:

Luke 6:20-24 ESV

And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. 21 "Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. "Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

22 “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! 23 Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

- You are blessed when you persevere through trials, for great will be your reward.
- James then goes on to highlight one prophet in particular, whose name is Job. Job is a fascinating story found in the Old Testament. His suffering was legendary. Everything he had was wiped out in a matter of moments, including all his children and then his health.
- In his waiting, Job did struggle. Job questioned. Job lamented. Job was honest. But Job did not let go of God. Job endured. Even in all his suffering, he said, “The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:20-21). Job held on to faith all the way through, saying from his heart, “I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. 26 And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; 27 I myself will see him with my own eyes — I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!” (Job 19:25-27).
- James reminds us that in Job’s story we have seen what the Lord finally brought about. We see that suffering is not random. We see that God is not cruel. We see that even when you cannot see what God is doing, He is still compassionate and merciful.
- Darkness is required in order for stars to shine! Not every story of faith and faithfulness has a happy ending in this life, just read Hebrews 11. Many of the prophets died without seeing earthly relief, and some faithful believers died in prison. Some suffering lasts until glory.
- But in the end, God is forming in us the character of God, and our inheritance is the presence of the Lord and the glories of His kingdom. Not every story has a happy ending in this life, but every story of faith and faithfulness has a happy ending in the next life.
- The Lord is compassionate and merciful. And that means the suffering believer can wait without concluding that God has stopped being good. That’s why waiting for the Lord’s coming is not apathy. It is longing. It is the steady ache that says, “How long, O Lord?” and refuses to let go of the One who will never let go of us.
- We can trust God’s heart and God’s Word, and He always keeps His promises. So we are also to wait patiently like the prophets, and we are to keep our word as well.

Wait Patiently Like a Prophet and Keep Your Word

James 5:12 NIV

Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple “Yes” or “No.” Otherwise you will be condemned.

- God keeps His word, as people of God we are to do the same. If we say we are going to do something, then do it. If we say we are going to be somewhere, then be there. If you have to say something like “I promise” or “I swear to God” then you are already on slippery ground because you have failed to keep your word in the past. If you have, own it. Make amends and do whatever it takes to keep your word and be careful what you promise.
- Christians should be known as people of integrity, people who keep their word, people who can be trusted. Without trust, it is hard to have a close relationship, because closeness requires it. And without the bond of trust people don’t believe what we say, and it erodes and destroys relationships.

- Jesus said the same thing recorded in Matthew 5:33-37. He said that we should not swear by anything at all, but “Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one” (v. 37).
- The first person to spin a tale and tell a lie is the evil one, “who is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44). If we are people who choose not to acknowledge or tell the truth we are following in the footsteps of the father of lies, and we are not following the footsteps of the Father of truth. If we follow in that way we prove whose children we are, and in so doing we are condemned along with the devil.
- Let us wait well and patiently for God to deliver us because He is a person of His Word. And let us also ask God to give us His heart so that we can be people of our word as well. In so doing, we prove that we are children of the light and choose to walk in the truth.

Conclusion

- In this passage, James continues to hold up to us the mirror of the word so that we can see who we really are. Let’s take a good look at ourselves. Let’s examine our behavior with the help of the Holy Spirit. Let us be encouraged and strengthened to continue to trust and wait patiently, like a farmer and like the prophets. Let us be a people who don’t grumble in our waiting and keep our word with integrity until the Lord returns, like He said He would.
- Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the One who never grumbled, who never lied, who is the author and perfecter of our faith, who, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross. Let us consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that we will not grow weary and lose heart (Heb 12:2-3).
- Take comfort that He has given His Spirit to live in you, to help you, guide you, convict you, and conform you into the image of His Son, for His glory and our good.

Our prayer team is available to pray with you after the service, near the “prayer” sign at the front of the sanctuary, and in the prayer room next to the offices. Also, you can send your prayer request to prayer@crosspointrockford.com

Questions for Growth Groups

1. James calls believers to “be patient . . . until the Lord’s coming.” What makes this kind of long-term patience difficult in your current season of life?
2. The farmer illustration reminds us that growth takes time and is out of our control. Where do you feel tempted to rush what God is developing slowly?
3. Verse 8 says to “stand firm.” What does it practically look like for you to stand firm in faith when life is hard or unclear?
4. James warns against grumbling against one another. Why do you think suffering often leads to frustration with others instead of trust in God?
5. Think about the examples of the prophets and Job. How does remembering God’s past faithfulness help you endure present difficulty?
6. James connects endurance with the character of God, “the Lord is full of compassion and mercy.” How does this truth shape the way you view your trials?
7. Verse 12 shifts to integrity in speech, “let your yes be yes.” How does patient endurance connect to being a person of honesty and consistency?