Title: **Be Patient Until the Lord’s coming**

Key Verse: 5:7-8 Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. 8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.

Chapter 1 briefly describes all the topics: trials, perseverance, wisdom, the rich/humble, temptation from desire, anger, accepting & obeying the word, tongue, and pure and faultless religion. In Chapters 2 to 5, James builds up each topic to practical lessons.

In chapter 2, do not show favoritism, but love and mercy; faith and action work together,

In chapter 3, tame the tongue; wisdom from heaven and from the devil,

In chapter 4, evil desire and friendship with the world, submit yourself to God/come near to God,

In chapters 4 and 5, business/money, warnings of rich people, be patient until the Lord’s coming, and finally prayer and praise, turning a sinner to God.

With all these practical lessons, James teaches us that our faith and life have to become perfect and complete until the Lord's coming. Let us overview the lessons in eight parts.

The book starts: **James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.** The author James is known as the half-brother of Jesus. In the time the church was severely persecuted by the Jews. He was the spiritual leader of Jerusalem church. The recipients were diaspora Christian who were scattered among the nations. They were marginalized by the ungodly mainstream society. The hot topic at the time was Rome. Under the powerful influence of the Roman Empire, those in power and wealth boasted and exercised their power and wealth. Diaspora Christians were also in danger of being secularized and losing their identity amid all kinds of trials and temptations. Therefore, through this letter James encourages and admonishes them to hold onto their identity, their life of faith, and their hope and to practically live according to the teachings of Our Lord Jesus Christ without any compromises.

1. **Be patient and stand firm**

Look at verses 1:2-4. **2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.** Here trials, testing, perseverance, and mature/ complete are important keywords to understand the book of James. One of the most frequently mentioned words is persevere (or patient). Then and now Christians, the scattered diaspora, face many trials. When we follow Jesus' footsteps and live according to his teachings, we are/will be rejected, disadvantaged, and persecuted by the ungodly world. What we need to know in times of trial is that God refines our faith through all kinds of trials which are the testing of our faith, and God enables us to have maturity that resembles Christ Jesus and complete pure gold-like faith. James emphasizes again in verse 1:12. Look at verse 12. **Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.** What we should know when we persevere under trials is that God will give the crown of life to those who have stood the test.

Not only facing trials, but we also encounter temptations. Look at 1:13-14 **When tempted, no one should say, God is tempting me. For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.** All the temptation comes from Satan. In enduring trials, we obtain maturity and completion of our faith. On the other hand, when our evil desires tolerate the temptations, sin conceives in it and grows and leads us to spiritual death. While on earth, Our Lord Jesus met many temptations and trials ahead of us. He did not avoid the trials and hardships. He bore it as Christ. Besides he resisted the temptations of wealth, power, and glory of the world. Rather, by persevering under the trials, he entered into the glory of God. So he promised the crown of life to those who imitate Him and stand the tests like him

Therefore, we should not be deceived by Satan who tempts us with worldly values ​​and pleasures, and we should wait for the completion of our faith and the crown of life through patience during the time of testing of our faith.

James repeats the patience once more in chapter 5. Look at 5:7-8 **Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. 8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.** Look at 5:10-11. **10 Brothers, 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 consider 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.** Here is the reason why we can perservere under all hardship and trials. It is because the Lord's coming is near. Therefore, I pray that we may persevere day by day until we obtain a valuable crop of faith and a crown of life on the day of the Lord.

1. **Heavenly Wisdom and Earthly Wisdom**

Look at verse 1:5. **5 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.** In our perseverance until the Lord's coming, we desperately need wisdom. Our Father God gives us his wisdom generously without finding fault. Look at verses 1:17-18 **Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. 18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.** God is our Father of the heavenly lights. He doesn't change like shifting shadows because He is the light. Our Father gave us birth through the word of truth. We are His firstfruits through His sacrifice and resurrection. Therefore, God does not leave us like orphans in the world. Whenever we ask God for heavenly wisdom whether we are in the test of faith or temptations, our merciful Father generously gives us all the wisdom we need. (1:6-8)

In this book, James tells us about two wisdom: wisdom from heaven and wisdom from the world, that is, the devil. Look at verse 3:13 **Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.** In 3:13, His way of discerning wisdom is by life and deeds. If the wisdom comes out from bitter envy and selfish ambition, then such wisdom is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. Such wisdom produces disorder and every evil practice and it is shown by boasting and bragging. But the wisdom from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere, and it always comes out itself in good fruits, that is, good life and deeds done in humility. James told us to ask God for this heavenly wisdom, but not seek for worldly wisdom and we should not doubt when we ask God. (6) As we began 2022, we have chosen New Year's key verse and prayer topics. We need wisdom every day and every moment, when we work, when we study, or when we have conversations. When we serve others. Let us pray that God may give us his wisdom.

1. **Accept the Word and Do it**

Look at verse 1:19. 19 **My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry**. Look at verses 21-22. **21Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. 22Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.** God's children are born with the word of truth, therefore, do not live by bread, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. To live by the Word means to accept the Word and to obey it. In order to accept the Word humbly, we must first get rid of all moral filth and the evil thoughts within us(21) and absolutely obey the word of God that we have received. (22) Those who not only listens to but obey the word is just like the person who does not forget the word and grows continually into a perfect person resembling our Heavenly Father. Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount said in Mt7:24-25, **Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.**

1. **No Favoritism, but Love and Mercy**

Look at verse 2:1 **My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism.** When a rich man entered the meeting, the host showed special attention to him and treated him with high respect. However, when a poor man in shabby clothes came in, he treated him inhospitably. This should not happen in God's congregation. Christians should neither show these things such as favoritism, discrimination, insult, and showing special attention, nor give any such hints to brothers and sisters. It is a great sin to break the royal law, the greatest commandment, love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus said in Mt 18:6, **If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.**

We should practice showing the love Jesus showed to us. We should practice the mercy that God showed to us. Look at verses 12-13. **12 Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, 13because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment**! James says, speak and act as we do before God, our Judge. When we love our brothers and sisters and show mercy for others, we can be freed from sin and judgment.

1. **Faith and Action**

Look at **2:14 What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?** At that time, some believers claimed to have faith but had no deeds of faith. The faith which is not accompanied by action is not living faith. Living faith always produces actions of faith. Living faith comes out in doing something for those in need.

In Gen15, God credited Abraham's faith to him as righteousness. His faith in fearing God was proved as his amazing act of not sparing his one and only son Isaac. The faith of Rahab was also shown to be an act of saving God's people even at the cost of her life.

Today's Christians seem to remain in the abstract concept of faith, not accompanied by action. They learn and discuss faith in the Bible and others' stories. But faith can hardly be personalized and practiced. The wisdom of James speaks clearly. Look at verse 2:22. **You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.** Faith must be accompanied by action, and faith becomes more evident through our deeds. And faith is perfected and completed through our actions. In the Bible, the ancestors of faith in the Old Testament and the people in the New Testament who personally experienced Jesus all in common had some kinds of acts of faith. Sometimes it was acted out as absolute obedience to the Word, at other times it was shown as sincere devotion to the Lord, or as a sacrifice, or as courage to come to the Lord, and also as an earnest petition to the Lord. None of them seems to have easily gained faith.

I pray that our faith may be accompanied by our acts of faith so that it can grow complete. I pray that we may obey even one word of God with faith and we may make our small decision of faith to God and our small devotion of faith to God with faith and we may offer a small amount of time to pray in faith. I pray that our faith may be mature and complete as we hold onto our key verse and obey it with faith this year.

1. **Tame the tongue**

In chapter 3, James teaches how important it is to tame the tongue. In 1:26 he said, **If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.** Anyone who does not make mistakes in speech is a perfect person. Those who control the tongue will be able to keep the whole body in check. But in reality, no one can tame the tongue. Even Christians praise God, but with the same mouth slander and curse people made in God's image. Then how can our tongue be tamed? We have no power to turn water into wine or salty water well into spring water well. It is only possible when the Lord rules over us, filling our hearts with His Word and Holy Spirit. Then the Word like living water comes out from the well of our hearts, and the Word and our life become one. We humbly ask God to fill our hearts with the Word.

1. **Friendship with God, not with the world**

James states that most of the fights and quarrels are due to the evil desire within us, and the reason we do not receive an answer even when we pray to God is that we pray with the wrong motives to satisfy our pleasure. Furthermore, he warns against friendship with the world in order to gain the pleasures of the world because anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. It is spiritually adulterous for God's people to love the world more than God, and God is envious of it.

Here James urges God's children to make a firm decision. Look at verses 4:7-10. **Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9Grieve, mourn, and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.** We are the precious children of God, and at the same time, we are diasporas scattered around the world. We must endure hardship and trials until the Lord comes, and we must fight against temptations of the world and the desires within us. When the darkness deepens, how easy is it for us to fall asleep and away from God? James admonishes us to submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands and purify your hearts. We pray that we may strive to come near to God in these difficult times. We pray that we may submit to God as we obey the Word with a clear attitude.

1. **Rich people and humble people**

Look at verse 1:9-10 At that time, as today, people pursued wealth. Even among Christians, wealth became the subject of talking and boasting. So James clearly states the end of wealth. 1: **11 For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business.**

In chapter 5 he warns of a judgment against the rich people who have earned their wealth through evil ways. **5:1-3 Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. 2Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. 3Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days.**

Jesus taught us do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

In a parable of Jesus, A man at work in a field found a hidden treasure, he hid it, and then in his joy sold all he had and bought that field. What is your greatest value in life? What would you like to get by selling everything? In this epistle, James speaks of the perfection of our faith in the sight of God and the crown of life that will be finally attained through perseverance. I pray we may not fall into the pits of the world's splendor, comfort, and wealth but we may receive the crown of life as we stand firm all the tests until your coming.

In conclusion, in the eyes of the world, Christians are like scattered beings oppressed by the power of the world. But the spiritual truth is that God has sent us into the world. As his heirs, He wants us to participate in His work of salvation. Look at verses 19-20. **My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.** We may participate in this precious work of God. On the day of the Lord, God will bring the scattered back to His kingdom and share with us His eternal glory with the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, Be patient and stand firm because the Lord’s coming is near. Amen.