

I. Introduction.

- A. Many miss the point about Bible prophecy (eschatology). Acts 1:6-7 Mt. 24:36
- B. The prospect of the return of the Lord motivates us to holiness and faithfulness. 1 Jo. 2:28-3:3 2 Pet. 3:10-14 Mt. 24:42-51 Titus 2:11-13 1 Pe. 4:7 Ro. 13:11ff
- C. The hope of His return brings comfort to those who are afflicted. Soon your suffering will end and your oppressors will be judged. 5:7-11 Ro. 8:18 2 Co. 4:17 2 Pet. 4:12-13 1 Thess. 4:13-17 2 Thess. 1:4-10 Ps. 37:1-2,5-7,10 73:1ff Pr. 20:22

II. Patiently endure in light of Jesus' return. v. 7-9

A. Be patient like the farmer. v. 7

- 1. We are in a time of hardship and waiting – “are we there yet?” 2 Ti. 1:8 3:12 Ro. 8:18 Acts 14:22
- 2. What does it mean to be patient? 1 Cor. 13:4 1 Th. 5:15
- 3. God is patient. Ex. 34:6 Ps. 86:15 2 Pet. 3:15 1 Pe. 3:20 Ro. 2:4 9:22
- 4. Patiently wait for the coming/presence (*parousia*) of the Lord Jesus. Mt. 24:3,37,39 1 Co. 15:23 1 Th. 2:19 3:13 4:15 5:22 2 Pe. 3:4,11 1 Jo. 2:28
- 5. Abraham patiently waited and finally received what was promised. Heb. 6:12-15
- 6. Imitate the patient farmer. Mark 4:26-29 2 Ti. 2:6 1 Co. 3:6 9:7,10 John 12:24
 - a. There is nothing the farmer can do to make the crop (or rain) come faster.
 - b. The farmer is willing to wait because the anticipated crop is very precious.
 - c. There is a purpose in the wait – God is working the whole time. 1:2ff 3:17
- 7. How can this be applied in practical terms? Celebrate the wait! Phil. 1:6,9-11

B. Strengthen your hearts because the coming of the Lord is near. v. 8

- 1. Our hearts need to be strengthened so that we can stand firm in the midst of spiritual warfare. 4:8 Eph 6:10ff
- 2. Jesus was steadfast in His determination to complete His work. Luke 9:51
- 3. Don't fall into double-mindedness or you will fall. 1:6-8 4:4
- 4. While it is the work of the Holy Spirit to strengthen you, He uses means. 1:5 Ro. 16:25 Eph. 3:14-19 6:13-18 1 Th. 3:12,2 2 Th. 2:16-17 1 Pe. 5:10
- 5. How could James say (2000 years ago) that the coming of the Lord is near? 5:3,8 Rev. 22:7,10,12 1:3 1 Pe. 4:7 Rom. 13:10-11 8:18 2 Co. 4:17 Acts 2:17 Heb. 1:2
 - a. The next event on God's timetable is Christ's return.
 - b. God does not reckon time the way that we do. 2 Pet. 3:3-8 Heb. 10:36-37
 - c. God has a good and merciful reason for the wait. 2 Pet. 3:9
 - d. The fact that He could come at any time encourages every generation to live expectantly. Mt. 24:36-51 Ro. 13:11 Phil. 3:20-21 1 Th. 1:9-10
- 6. How does the nearness of Jesus help you to stand firm in your suffering? Ro. 8:18

C. Do not grumble lest you be judged when the Lord returns. v. 9

- 1. What does complaining have to do with our need to be patient and stand firm?
- 2. Grumbling is a serious sin. 4:11-12 2:12 1 Co. 10:9-11 Phil. 2:14-16 Heb. 13:17 Jude 1:16 Ex. 15:24 16:2ff Num. 14:2,27ff 16:13-14,31-35,41-45 Ps. 106:25
- 3. When you are tempted to complain remember that the Judge is at the door. Mt. 12:34,36 2 Co. 5:10 Mark 13:29
- 4. Is your life characterized by griping or by praise, love and encouragement?

III. Follow godly examples of patient endurance. v. 10-11

- A. The prophets patiently endured suffering. v. 10-11a
1. God teaches us through examples. Jo. 13:15 1 Cor. 11:1 10:11 1 Pet. 5:3
 2. While it is a great privilege to speak in the name of the Lord, this privilege typically comes at a high personal price. Acts 7:51-52 Mt. 23:29-36 22:33-41 2 Chr. 36:15-16 Isa. 6:9-10 30:10 Jer. 11:21 38:4ff 20:2 32:2 Ezek. 24:15ff 1 Th. 2:15 1 Kings 18:10,17 19:10 22:24-27 Daniel 6 Heb. 11:32-38,13,29
 3. Because they endured, we consider them blessed. Mt. 5:10-12
 4. If you are on the Lord's side in this age, you can expect the same treatment and will need to exercise the same patient endurance. 2 Tim. 3:12
 5. You too will be blessed when you patiently endure. Heb. 12:1-3 10:34 Mt. 10:22
- B. Job is a remarkable example of endurance. v. 11b 1:3-4
1. Job was not always perfectly patient. 3:1ff 7:11ff 10:18 13:3ff 23:1ff 30:20-23
 2. Job endured, never turning away from God. Job 1:20-21 2:9-10 13:15 19:25-27 James 1:3-4 Heb. 10:36 12:1 Rev. 2:2-3,19 3:10 13:10 14:12
 3. The outcome of the Lord's dealings with him made Job's suffering worthwhile. Job 42:1-6,10-17
 4. Consider God's good purpose in your suffering so that you can endure. 1:2ff
- C. Endure because the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful. v. 11c Mt. 9:36 Ps. 86:15 103:8
1. The Lord does not afflict His children lightly. He has a good purpose, which is an expression of His compassion and mercy. 1:2ff Ro. 8:28-29 Ps. 30:5
 2. Job and the prophets were enabled to patiently endure because of God's faithfulness to them. Phil. 2:12-13 1 Co. 10:13
 3. If God helped them, He can and will help you to stand firm. Heb. 11:1
 4. He will not and can not leave or forsake you. Isa. 49:14-16 Jer. 29:11

IV. Conclusion.

- A. Jesus entered our world of suffering and patiently endured the greatest possible affliction so that we might be delivered. 2 Co. 5:21 1 Pe. 1:3 2:21ff He. 2:14-17 12:2
- B. He is able to help you in the midst of your suffering. Heb. 2:18 4:14-16

Discussion questions

1. What is the primary purpose of biblical teaching concerning the return of Christ?
2. What about the circumstances of James' readers required them to exercise patience?
What circumstances are you facing which tempt you to impatience?
3. How does the anticipation of the coming of the Lord help you to be patient?
4. How can you strengthen your heart?
5. Why is grumbling such a serious sin?
About what are you tempted to gripe and how does James help you to stop?
6. How do the prophets teach us patience?
7. How can Job's example help you to endure?
8. What does Job's experience teach you about God's purposes in your suffering?
9. Where do you see Christ in this passage?
10. How could you use this passage to help someone who:
 - a. Is unemployed and in debt?
 - b. Is overwhelmed with taking care of children, including one with special needs?
 - c. Is suffering from chronic pain or illness?
 - d. Has been deeply hurt in a relationship?
 - e. Has been rejected by family members because of his or her faith?