

Grace When Things are Hard James 1:2-18

December 18, 2022: Grace Covenant Church, VA Beach

I. Introduction.

II. You will face trials.

- A. Trials are the ordinary experience of believers living in a fallen world. Jo. 16:33
I Pe. 4:12-13 Job 5:7 Phil. 3:10 Col. 1:24 II Co. 4:8 Ps. 34:19a
- B. Believers in the Bible suffered great trials. Gen. 3:12 4:8ff 12:11ff 25:28ff 27:1ff
25:22 37:2ff I Sa. 2:12ff 8:3 II Sa. 12:10ff 13:1ff 15:1ff Eze 18:1ff Job 1:18-19 2:9
- C. We continue to endure significant trials.
- D. James does not say that we can, through faith and prayer, eliminate trials. v. 5-7
Job 5:7 Heb. 11:1ff Ezek. 18:1ff Luke 12:52-53
- E. Trials typically fall upon you unexpectedly (*encounter*). Luke 10:30

III. God is at work in your trials. 1:2-4

- A. *Consider it all joy* – It is vital for you to think correctly about your trials. I Pe. 1:6
 - 1. You can rejoice because God is in the picture. Think beyond your pain to the good our sovereign God is doing. Heb. 12:11 Ro. 8:28 Gen. 50:20
 - 2. What are some positive examples of those who had joy in their trials?
Acts 5:40-41 16:25 Co. 1:24 Heb. 12:1ff 11:26 II Co. 6:10 7:4 12:9ff Mt. 5:10-12
- B. God uses trials to help you to grow. v. 3 Ro. 5:2-4 I Pe. 1:6-7 Ps. 40:1-2 II Th. 1:3-4
 - 1. *Knowing* – You need to understand God’s purpose in your trials. Pr. 27:6 3:11-12
 - 2. *The testing of your faith* – Your trials prove and refine your faith. I Pe. 1:7 Ps. 12:6
 - 3. *Produces endurance* – Your trials produce needed steadfastness. Ro. 5:3 He. 12:11
Luke 8:15 II Thess. 1:4 Rev. 2:2 13:10 II Pe. 1:6 He. 11:37-39 II Co. 12:9f
- C. The end result of your trials is that you will be mature. v. 4 Mt. 5:48
 - 1. *Let endurance have its perfect result* -- Trials do not always and automatically produce endurance.
 - 2. In what sense can you become *perfect and complete*? v. 4,12 3:2 Mt. 5:48 19:21
Co. 1:28 4:12 I Th. 5:23 Phil. 3:15

IV. Ask God for wisdom in your trials. v. 5-8

- A. We especially need wisdom when facing trials. v. 5a 3:17 Prov. 1:2ff
- B. Ask God to give you the wisdom you need. v. 5a
 - 1. Admit that you lack wisdom. Mt. 5:3,6
 - 2. Seek wisdom as God’s great gift. Pr. 2:6 Rom. 11:33
 - 3. The wisdom we seek is embodied in the Person of Jesus Christ. I Co. 1:30 Co. 2:3
- C. God gladly gives His wisdom to all those who seek Him. Pr. 1:21ff 9:1ff 2:1ff
 - 1. James echos Jesus’ teaching. Mt. 7:7-11 John 14:13-14
 - 2. God gives generously. II Co. 8:2 9:11 Ro. 8:31ff Eph. 3:20-21 I Ki. 3:9ff
 - 3. He gives without reproach. Pr. 23:6-7 Ps. 103:13 Is. 55:6-9
 - 4. This is an absolute promise of God. Pr. 1:20ff John 7:37 Ps. 81:10

- D. How does God impart His wisdom? 1:18 Rom. 10:17 Ps. 1:2 Prov. 1:5**
1. Do not expect God to impart the skill of wisdom to you by zapping you.
 2. God uses His Word to make you wise. 1:18,21 Ro. 10:17 Ps. 1:1ff
- E. You must ask in faith. v. 6b-8**
1. What does it mean to ask in faith? Heb. 11:6 Mt. 21:22 Mark 11:24 Rom. 4:21
 2. What kind of doubt is James condemning? v. 6 Mt. 26:39 Mark 9:24
 3. God hates double mindedness. v. 8 4:8,4 Ps. 119:113 Pr. 3:5-6 28:26 Ps. 1:1 Jer. 17:5 Rev. 3:15-16 Mt. 6:24 I Ki. 18:21 II Ki. 17:33 Rev. 3:15
 4. God blesses those who have undivided loyalty and commitment to Him with wisdom and stability. Ps. 1:3 Jer. 17:7-8 Dt. 6:5 Pr. 3:5-6 He. 6:10 Mt. 7:24-25

V. Never lose sight of God's goodness in your trials. v. v. 13-18,5

- A. Satan will tempt you to doubt God's goodness when you are enduring trials. Gen. 3:5**
- B. Don't blame God when you are tempted. v. 13**
- C. God is good. 1:17 Ps. 145:15-16,19 Mt. 5:45 Jo. 3:16 Acts 17:25**
1. He is the Father (Creator) of lights. Gen. 1:14ff Ps. 136:6-8 I Jo. 1:5 I Ti. 6:16
 2. He is immutably perfect in His goodness. v. 17d Mal. 3:6 I Jo. 1:5 Heb. 13:8 Ps. 18:30a 100:5 102:26-27 Is. 40:8
- D. God generously gives good gifts. v. 17, 5**
1. He is the source of every good gift. 4:4 3:15,17 1:5 Jo. 3:3,7,31,16 II Pe. 1:3-4
 2. God is good to everything and everyone, even His enemies. Mt. 5:45 6:26-30 Acts 14:17 Ps. 104:27-28 145:15-16
 3. His gifts are perfect (complete). 1:25 Deut. 32:4 Ps. 19:7
 4. God's best gifts are spiritual. 1:5 3:17 II Pe. 1:3-4 Col. 3:1-2 Mt. 7:11 Ro. 6:23 John 3:16 14:17 Ezek. 36:25-26 Ps. 19:7ff I Co. 10:13
- E. When you feel overwhelmed by trials and are tempted to doubt God's goodness, remember His good gifts. Rom. 8:31ff II Pe. 1:3-4 Pr. 18:22 19:14 I Thess. 5:18 I Tim. 4:4-5 Ps. 73:1,17ff 74:12ff 80:8ff**

VI. Conclusion. Ps. 119:67,71

Discussion questions

1. What is the most significant trial you are facing right now?
2. What good do you hope that God is working in your life through this trial?
3. In what ways are you tempted to respond sinfully to your trials?
4. How has God used your past trials for good?
5. How should you pray about your trials?
6. How could someone be tempted to blame God in the midst of a trial?
7. Why is it wrong to blame God?
8. How can you overcome your temptation to blame God?
9. How does James 1:2-18 point you to Christ?