

Gathering Guide

for Communities and Friends
Hope's Journey: "Wait and Endure" 12/08/19

The Big Idea

"Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming." Godly endurance is different than endurance of human will. While there are incredible stories of feats of strength and survival in the most difficult conditions throughout human history, everyone has a breaking point and no person can completely control life. Godly endurance is supernatural patience, not for circumstances to change but for God to act.

Where we are in the Bible

James 5:7-11. The book of James is a very practical and pastoral letter that was likely distributed to the wide array of (mainly) Jewish Christians scattered throughout the Greco-Roman world. There is some dispute among scholars as to whether the direct author was James, the brother of Jesus and leader in the Jerusalem church, or if a later pupil compiled a set of writings. If the letter was written by James' own hand, then the approximate date would be in the late 40's AD. Two central themes of the letter are godly wisdom and endurance in suffering as believers wait upon the Second Coming of the Lord.

Finding a bit of ourselves

- In the message it was said that we live in an "instant gratification" culture. What are some examples of that culture in your own life?
- If something becomes routine enough we can't help but to expect it. What are some things that we have come to expect in life and what does it do to us when suddenly those expected things fail us?
- How well do you deal with change and disappointments? Is there a change or disappointment you're going through right now that is difficult to manage?
- James 5:7-8 encourages us to be patient like a farmer is patient. What does that mean for your life and perspective?

Where do we go from here?

- In the message it was said that there is a difference between godly endurance and endurance of human will. What are the differences between the two?
- If God were to act in the midst of your difficulty, He would either change your circumstance and provide relief or change your perspective and provide you with strength. Sometimes He would even do both. Discuss or reflect on these two acts of God. Which do you often wish for? Which does God tend to do in your life? If you can think or share examples of both.
- With patience/endurance, James encourages the church to "strengthen your hearts" (or "stand firm"). How does one do that in practical ways?
- With patience/endurance, James also orders the church not to grumble. Do you find yourself grumbling at times? What particular things cause you to grumble the most? Has the Christmas season caused some extra grumbling these days?

Prayer focus

James 5:11 says, "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."

Divide your prayers into three parts...

- First, reflect on the phrase "The Lord is full of compassion and mercy" and thank God for how He shows that.
- Second, reflect on times when the Lord helped you persevere through difficult times.
- Third, pray over individuals by name who are in the midst of trial and difficulty that God would help them endure.

Other scriptures to consider

Job 1:21

The perspective of Job

Job 42:10

Job's restoration

Matthew 5:10

Blessed are the persecuted

Galatians 6:9

Do not grow weary

