# Seeing the End of the Lord

 **The Only Way to be Happy When Having to Endure**

**James 5:7-12**

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1. **Introduction (1Peter 3:17; 5:10)**
	1. A child was playing rounders, and was cheering his team on, in spite of the fact the score was twenty to nothing. An parent on the side-lines asked how he could be so positive when his team had such a bad score. The little boy replied, "Shucks, mister, we haven’t even been up to bat yet!"
	2. Don’t ever forget, being a Christian does not mean you are now protected from suffering. Jesus didn’t come to save our bodies, but He DID save our souls – which are far more important.
	3. All throughout history, Christians have had to suffer great trials of their faith, with health problems, loss of children, loss of jobs, persecutions, abandonment, poverty, war, and on it goes.
	4. As Christians, it is important when going through *the trials of life* to keep your attention, not on the present affliction, but *on the end* that God has in mind.
		1. A lone piece of pottery in the furnace can feel abandoned at times. Left in the heat.
		2. But then comes the end, when the potter takes it from the fires and reveals it to be a vessel unto honour. Ready for the Master’s use!
	5. Job, like Abraham and so many others, had a strong faith (remember the words, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him"?) AND a weak flesh ("Why died I not from the womb?").
	6. So, when going through a variety of miseries, it is not uncommon for God's people to teeter-totter between their flesh and their faith. But you can be sure, a Christian’s faith will win out in the end.
	7. And the “end” for the Christian will be worth everything we may have to go through (Rom 8:18)! If we will but **patiently wait**, we'll see "*that the Lord is and always has been, very pitiful, and of tender mercy to us*."
	8. Let’s learn how to endure the suffering so common to the Christian life so that we don’t miss the best part - the end that the Lord has in mind.
2. **Message – How to Be Happy While Enduring**
	1. **Focus on the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus (James 5:7,8)**
		1. Remember that James is writing to poor believers in the First Century, who were being afflicted by rich, powerful people, and by the religious!
		2. So, Become like a Farmer
			1. A farmer takes a very long time tirelessly preparing his field
			2. He then plants a lot of seed
			3. And then he waits – long time for many crops
			4. He knows the seed WILL grow
			5. But he has to be patient. Can you imagine an impatient farmer? Hah!
			6. The rains WILL come – and the seeds WILL produce a harvest!
		3. Knowing the Lord Jesus is coming again will help you become patient
		4. It will force you to WAIT through whatever you are having to go through
		5. Because
			1. You know He IS coming
			2. He is coming for you (John 14:1-3)
			3. And He will judge all your enemies, oppressors, and persecutors (2Pet 2:9) – perfectly! There will be NO arguments by everyone on THAT day (like people argue constantly today)! Only absolute silence - gobsmacked!
		6. So, be patient
			1. Because no matter what you are going through, It is only for a season (1Peter 1:6,7)
			2. Because IMPATIENCE hurts your heart, and an unanchored heart self-destructs like a blender that is not attached to its base!
			3. And because Patiently waiting and looking for the Blessed Hope will stabilise your heart!

* 1. **Grudge NOT! (James 5:9; 1:26)**
		1. Ugh! So pointed!
		2. You are usually NOT responsible for all the oppressions against you, and troubles
		3. But you ARE responsible for how you THINK and react to them!
		4. Meaning
			1. To grudge is to be discontented at another's enjoyments or advantages; to envy the possession or happiness of others. To murmur, complain, find fault with, constantly criticize, and demean someone else because you think you deserve better than they!
			2. The constant attitude of blaming and judging everything against as wrong
			3. This is the natural reaction to suffering!
			4. And not one of us is exempt from feeling this way
		5. This must be focused on – our tongue!
			1. “Lest YE be condemned?” Wow!
			2. Such a serious, fundamental sin that is present in every heart of every Christian!
			3. God had to chastise Israel when THEY spent all their time complaining
			4. Jesus is coming back to judge this world for so many sins – make sure He doesn’t have to judge your sin of grudging too!
		6. The very fact that you are battling a complaining attitude means your heart is blocked from ever being happy!
		7. So start replacing grudges and complaints with a river of praise, and thanking God for absolutely everything you are going through, and the feelings of happiness WILL return and fill your heart from the Spirit of God!
	2. **Learn from the Suffering of the Prophets (James 5:10)**
		1. Name an Old Testament prophet:
			1. Samuel – messed up sons, the carnality of the kingdom
			2. Ezekiel – lost his wife, had to endure great humiliation
			3. Jonah – suffered doing what he did not want to do
			4. Isaiah
			5. Jeremiah
			6. Daniel
			7. Gad
			8. Nathan
			9. Elijah
			10. Now name any of them that lived lives of ease and comfort, and had no troubles or persecutions? (Matt 23:34-37)
		2. These men spoke the perfect words of God
		3. They should have been SO honoured by everyone
		4. But they weren’t. They were hated, rejected, hunted, killed. They dwelt in caves, and had nothing to their names – remember John the Baptist?
		5. Even at home, the prophets were treated like dirt
			1. By their wives, parents, siblings – remember Jesus’ own half-brothers?
			2. Being PROPHETS, they mainly had hardships
		6. God didn’t rush to their aid and make everything better for them
		7. Yet, THEY endured such affliction, with one key response - great patience.
	3. **Remember Job – the greatest example (James 5:11)**
		1. The example of Job is the most extreme
			1. He sowed so much good seed throughout his life
			2. Then complete loss
			3. Then came such indescribable sorrow
			4. And then abandoned endurance
			5. Which turned into patience
			6. And then God brought conclusion to the whole event
			7. All of it was the work of the Lord
			8. But the END was the best part don’t you agree?
		2. His experience with suffering shows us just how good “the end of the Lord” is:
			1. Prov 23:18; Ps 34:19; 37:37; Jer 29:11; Mark 10:28-30
			2. The Lord is Very pitiful – not hurtful, vengeful, but compassionate
			3. Has Tender mercy towards us – very tender in how He helps us
			4. God made everything better in the end than at the first (Eccl 7:8)
			5. That’s what James wants us to remember
	4. **Lastly, Refuse to Quit (James 5:12)**
		1. The whole context of swearing here is in relation to the believer’s desire to swear off God
		2. It is very common that people who suffer, swear/promise God that they won’t continue
		3. They hope to hurt God by swearing such a thing – as much as they are hurting
		4. It really is VERY common, even amongst strong believers
		5. So, Don’t rashly vow that you are going to quit – that you are going to just roll over and die
		6. It will only make things worse
		7. Stay the course and finish the will of God
		8. In spite of all the afflictions, the long waiting, the losses, and the enduring…
		9. Be patient through it
		10. And you will discover that the end will be better than you can ever imagine!
1. **Conclusion**
	1. Review
		1. **Focus on WHAT? The Second Coming of the Lord Jesus**
		2. **The Bible says to Grudge NOT!**
		3. **Learn from the lives and suffering of all the Prophets**
		4. **Remember Job – the greatest example**
		5. **And Refuse to Quit when it gets really hard!**
	2. Biblical faith will win out in the end. No matter how long the wait may be!
	3. The end for the Christian will be worth everything! If we will but patiently wait, we'll see "that the Lord is and always has been, very pitiful, and of tender mercy."