

Trials

[00:00:03] Well once again. Good morning church. Always good to stand before you and be able to bring a message. Today I want to read from the Book of James the Book of James in the in the New Testament kind of towards the back kind of tucked in there or some other epistles or we have your phone James Chapter 1 James Chapter One can read from verses one through twelve James Chapter 1 versus 1 through 12 and it reads as the James A Servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations greetings.

[00:01:04] Consider it pure joy. My brothers and sisters whenever you face trials of many kinds because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete not lacking anything.

[00:01:25] If any of you lacks wisdom you should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault and it will be given to you. But when you ask. You must believe and not doubt because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord such a person is double minded and unstable and all they do believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position.

[00:02:07] But the rich should take pride in their humiliation since they will pass away like a wild flower. The sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant, its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way the rich will fade away even while they go about their business. Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because having stood the test that person will receive the crown of life. That the Lord has promised to those who love him first 12. Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial. Because having stood the test that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him father God, we come to you today.

[00:03:04] Humbled hearts open minds looking and expecting to receive a word from you we ask that you use this message. To reflect yourself in our lives do we maybe have a deeper understanding. Of your purpose for us your workings in us and your redemption Laura I ask that you consecrate me now. By the power of your grace so divine let my soul look up with the steadfast hope and let my will be lost in dying. And the wonderful and matchless name of Jesus we pray amen amen. Well, it is spring time kind of snuck up on us but it's here. Everyone's probably getting outside a little more notice just how dirty your car really is. Gotta go and cut the grass. Look at the weeds.

[00:04:15] Dust off some things spring cleaning springtime. Maybe you haven't gotten there yet but you know it's coming. And it's a good time is the time we kind of re-evaluate things. Looking back over the winter making it through now we feel like we can come outside again do the things outdoor that we've been waiting to do these

past.

[00:04:39] Three or four months. Fishing, hunting, camping, eventually the beach. So it's an exciting time. A good time but we remember what we came through.

[00:04:57] Those winter months, long nights some of them seem like trials, challenges.

[00:05:08] And so it is with life. We have different seasons in our lives. Times where things aren't going so well. Times are harder. Crisis tumultuous thing. And it's in those moments and we look to the Scripture where James is saying those are actually the good times kind of a strange scripture today. Interpreted kind of various ways. But I want to focus in on just how we can take things that seemingly are bad. Things that seemingly are trying, negative, but use them for good. A better situation and three ways we can do that we need to learn how to count. I know we learned in grade school, but we learn how to count. We need to learn real confidence where our confidence really comes from. And finally, we need to accept and receive our crown. Learn how to count our confidence and receive our crown. Another thing that comes along with this time of season is this tax time. Time to take an accounting of what we spent last year where all that money went who we spent it on and how much we have to give back to good old Uncle Sam. So we do a bit of accounting we have to look at the positives. Look at the negatives. Balance out the numbers and so we find James in here pleading two Christians to take an account to do a little accounting but do it in a different way. He says Consider it pure joy. In that word consider. In the Greek it's a guess and what it actually means is to take an account. It's an accounting term. It means to organize your numbers put them in order. We haven't assets we have a debit. Anything taken account in the debit column those things that maybe we don't necessarily see as always bad. But in your assets column I want you to put in some joy. Well that seems easy enough. I can put joy in the income column because that was the good stuff. What came in. Those are good things. But then James twist it's here and he says whenever you face trials of many kinds not just one, but many, consider those Joy. The strange thing to say he's writing this letter to Christians who are scattered throughout the Roman Empire and they're being persecuted. They're having a hard time trying to even live. Telling people that they're Christians that they're in this the way as they called it following. Christ and the teachings of Jesus they're being persecuted looked at as crazy and James is saying all these things, you're going through count them as a good thing. Well how can you say this James and he says because it's then this testing of your faith that produces a perseverance. I get toughened us up in a spiritual way. He sings that we go through in life these bad things these hard things these tests that we have he's saying they're good because it shows us how to persevere. It's preparing us, for something. Well that's kind of easy to understand. We can go through things in life. We get a scar and next time we know not to do that I make a mistake, and something mess up. I can learn from that mistake. Next time I know I'm not going to do that. But they still leave things behind. Those scars that we have. Physical and emotional scars. They dwell there. I see James

goes a little deeper in trying to help us understand. How to deal with these scars that we have. And he ultimately wants us to trust what God is doing. That the things that we go through the things that we've received are not just in vain. But God has a purpose for these things. God is trying to show us how to trust him. When we through things that we don't know how to handle. Seems tough. It leaves us with a bad feeling. He says give it to me and I'll turn it into joy. I'll show you how this bad thing, when you leave it with me when you said it to me when you submit it to me that what I'll replace it with Is a joy. A joy that comes from a faith of trusting what I'm doing. We may not understand it in the moment. It hurts but he says give it over to me. Give it all to me. Not just the situation not just the circumstance but ultimately what he's after is our being. He wants all of us. He wants us to turn it all over to him. He says let the perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete not lacking anything and that's where it gets hard for us allowing it to complete. We really don't want to go through the pain. We tend to shy away from those things. We all want life to be easy. We all want to feel good. But when life presents situations that we just can't avoid. There's no running from it. We have to persevere through it. And that's where he says I'm there for you I'm always there for you and it's true that I'm maturing you. And what does that maturing mean. What does that look like? It means he's drawing us closer to him. Because he's preparing us to be with him. To live fully in him and the only way we can get there is by denying the things that we lean on the things that we feel we need to have. We learn how to recount count the seemingly bad as good so that he can fill those places that are void and give us a confidence of knowing that he's working. You see that confidence is what we're all lacking we're all born with a hole in us right. Is that sin and we spend our whole lives trying to fill it. We do it with different things. First, maybe it's our parents or loved ones. We look to them to fill this hole this need that we have as we get older, we look for others. We get in relationships with people and they're probably not really good relationships, but we get in there because we're just trying to fill the hole. Some of us turn to various things, drugs or eating or sports or video games or whatever it might be.

[00:13:59] We turn in these things to try and fill us to make us feel whole but ultimately what happens is for a moment, but it doesn't sustain us. We need more of it. We need it again and again and again and God saying I'm here to fill that need. For that you need nothing else. There'll be nothing else that you need to fill it.

[00:14:31] But me. I know it's an abstract idea seems strange something that's not physical that we can't put our hands on we can't hold could actually provide something for us something as intangible but that's where the trust comes in.

[00:14:54] That's this idea of faith.

[00:14:57] Then we have faith and so we believe that what we can't see what we don't know is real. And it's so real that I can call upon it and it's going to move in my life. James writes He says when you ask

[00:15:15] You must believe and not doubt. It's a confidence that this god this Jesus this thing that we're serving it's not just lip service it's not something that I'm just want to believe in because I want to be saved but it's something that's so real that if I call upon it in my life it moves.

[00:15:37] If I call upon it in my wife's life it moves. If I pray for it over my children and their future when I'm not here that it moves. But that's a real thing. That's the confidence that he wants us to have. But that begins inside of us. A trust that we learn over life that matures. Overlooking to him again and again as life challenges come upon us we have that old person. You know that old self. Doubted everything analyzed everything tried to reason everything figure it out. I can do this. I'll get through this. I don't know why this is happening we get angry we lash out we hide away guard ourselves old person. When we accept Christ and we believe in the cross and the victory that was won do we know that we are redeemed and when we believe that Christ was resurrected on the third day and that he ascended into heaven then we know there are old self is laid bare on that cross and our spirit is resurrected as a new self that becomes a new creation in Christ and we begin this journey of feeling different acting different thinking different an awareness of our spiritual selves and what that means. And this is where the confidence builds. It's not in just what we do in life awards we get accomplishments we have. Promotions not those kinds of things it's a confidence within a conviction a knowing that what I believe is true. And what I pray has merit than what I'm surrendering to is actually going to fulfill a promise in my life. That is not in vain. No matter what the world is doing or saying that within me I'm being drawn closer to my Creator to a higher power, but we have to believe that. You know the scripture. If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain move from here to there and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you. This is what he's trying to engender from us to truly believe in these things. That's the kind of power that he has inside to move those mountains in our lives.

[00:18:48] Those things that seem insurmountable that I just can't get rid of that I'll never get past. He says believe in me and I'll move it. Have faith in me. Trust in me and I'll move it.

[00:19:07] Count it all as Joy. Look at that mountain and laugh. See that trial, that tribulation. And laugh. Feel the joy of it.

[00:19:21] Because God is gonna move in this situation. He's going to do something inside of me that I don't even know yet but I know it's gonna fulfill me. It's gonna mature me. He's gonna draw me closer to him and the closer I get to him.

[00:19:37] The stronger I am in my life the more I can impact those in my life. The more he can use me in this world to make a difference. Confidence believe he says the believer in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. Oh I

love this. He's saying if we believe from our place of our humility when we deny ourselves it's not about me. It's this humble place. It's not about how much I have all these things are great. Maybe we have nothing. Many of us can remember growing up and we didn't know whether we had a lot or we didn't. We were concerned about what was right there. Our community the family the relationships we wanted to play. We wanted to engage. But then that changed. That old point where we needed to have things, we needed to prove things, we needed status to identify who we were and God's bringing us back to that place of childhood that innocence they just says I really just want to be loved and I want to love back.

[00:21:02] A humble place is in that place he says. In that circumstance of humility then we have the high position. Simplicity. Its when we get over ourselves over all those ideas and simply live for him. That's where we have positioned our confidence we learn to appreciate more when we have less. If we can just see that today. Take account of the joys.

[00:21:46] Through those tribulations through those trials draw closer to him. Find the confidence away from all the chatter of ourselves. The old self. Having a conversation with my teenager this week. She's in math class and having a hard time with it and she's at a point you getting ready go into high school and I told her I said you know everything else was like the pre-game everything was practice but now high school is game time.

[00:22:21] Why. Because this is when it really counts. Because the grades in high school determine the next step. You don't do well here. You're not gonna have as many options there. So now it's time to really focus in and she's sharing with me how it's hard for her to focus in class and she notices there's a different picture on the wall and she starts thinking about the pitcher tuning out the teacher. She sees something happen on the floor. Somebody does something she starts doodling and she wants to draw it. She's a little artist. So, she starts drawing things on her paper and tuning out the teacher.

[00:22:58] Teacher becomes like the Charlie rallied around wah wah wah wah.

[00:23:02] He doesn't hear anything. And so that has ramifications. He doesn't get all the lessons she gets home tries to do homework. She doesn't understand at all. He's like Dad I just don't know. And I'm like well when you're there. You don't realize your mind's wandering do you. She's like No I don't realize until you know I'm talking to you about it. I'm like right. I was like This is why people go to therapists when they get older. I'm gonna let you in on a little secret. They go and they talk to a guy for an hour and the guy and say anything to him he does listens and at the end he says. So how you feel and the person's like. I feel great. Thank you. Why. Because all they did was just talk it out. But it's because our mind is always racing our mind is always running.

[00:23:46] Looking at this.

[00:23:47] Looking at that analyzing worrying but if we just focus we can just tune it out. Focus in. Then we get the lesson and that's what God's saying here. He's saying I know all this stuff is going on in life. All these things are coming against you. The enemy wants to divide you from me. Divide you from each other. But if you just focus in, trust me. Have faith. Understand that life is going to be change. That's the one guarantee. But here I am. I'm always there for you I'll never change so lean on me rely on me. And it's in that moment when we can finally begin to receive this crown of life. James says having stood the test that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised.

[00:24:57] To those who love him. Do you love him today? Do you love him. You know we're asked to do so many things in life.

[00:25:08] We've pushed ourselves. Life pushes us. Always demanding always asking things of us to do. And here God saying Do you love me the one who came that you believe died for you.

[00:25:28] But do you love me. How do you show him your love? We talk to him. Have we given our lives over we given our minds over our hearts over? Have we even asked? Because it's in that moment when we begin to really open up is when we can really receive this crown, he has for us. And oh what a glorious crown it is. Last week I talked about the suffering, about

[00:26:07] Taking up our cross right. Now people think of that as this horrible thing but in actuality it's a beautiful thing.

[00:26:18] Because when we take up that cross, we're not taking up a burden. We're taking up the victory that he claimed. The redemption of our soul that no matter how sin soaked we are, and we all are.

[00:26:32] No matter what we've done no matter what we're going to do we don't have to carry that. He's taken that from us.

[00:26:41] We don't have to feel guilty. We don't have to be ashamed. We can live in an honesty of who we are. We don't have to judge others he's the only judge. And that judge says I don't care what you've done. Come to me. Look to me. Lean on me.

[00:27:06] Accept my crown take it upon us now. I've been doing a spiritual cleansing in preparation for installation in the church and as part of that you know you asked Lord to do something you better be ready for it.

[00:27:27] right. So, he's been waking me up every morning about 330 middle of the night and I wake up. I mean wake up like I try to go back to sleep. Can't go back to

sleep. And what happens when you wake a.m. Night. Mind just starts going. All right. Million Miles. You are thinking about everything and I'm saying there the first time and my mind is race and race and race and going through all this stuff and my days. I'm tired of thinking but I can't go back to sleep.

[00:27:53] And finally he put something on my heart. When I started doing a little research and I found. A prayer. An affirmation of faith. And he said I want you to read this.

[00:28:07] when I wake you up. I want you to read this every morning when I wake you up in the middle of the night.

[00:28:13] And when you read it and you pray it take it in and then I'll let you go back to sleep.

[00:28:21] And I want to read to you a piece of it. Because this idea of receiving this crown it's a very hard thing for us to process. Because we beat ourselves up we're so critical of ourselves. But he says this. He says I recognize by faith that only you Lord only you can deal with my sin. Only you can produce the holiness of my life. I confess that in my salvation that my part was only to receive you and that you were the one who dealt with my sin and that you were the one who saved me. So now I confess that in order to live a holy life I can only surrender to your will and receive you as my sanctification. Trusting you to do whatever it is you deem necessary in my life. On the outside. And on the inside. So that I am enabled to live each and every day in purity.

[00:29:44] In freedom, in rest, and in power. For your glory. In Jesus name Amen. As Carolyn comes, we ask ourselves how do we get through our crisis, our moments are we trusting. Do we have confidence that he's moving? And are we receiving what he has for us through our surrender.

[00:30:21] And our acknowledgement that he's the one that makes the difference.