



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

BE RESOLVED...THE LORD'S COMING IS AT HAND!- JAMES 5:8

COLORADO

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As believers we are to exercise patience and long suffering with one another as we wait for, as we look for and as we eagerly anticipate the coming of Jesus Christ. The attitude James calls on us to adopt here includes resignation in the face of suffering along with confident expectation of a day when the fortunes of this life will be reversed! Such self-restraint that does not retaliate against a wrong will be necessary until our Lord Jesus Christ returns!

BE RESOLVED,THE LORD'S COMING IS AT HAND-JAMES 5:8

James 5:7-8-"Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. (8)You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand."

From James 5:7, we learned *first* that faith meets life's tests, and through patience (and not without it) grows into full maturity of settled character. James' doctrine of the Christian life is a doctrine of process and growth. Patience is the central requirement. We neither drift into holiness nor are we wafted there by some heavenly visitation- we grow into holiness and like every harvest, it is a process.²

And *second*, James reminds us with this illustration of the farmer that just as he has to be patient for his harvest, you be patient as well for the Lord's return. In spite of the opposition, oppression and injustices, you must maintain and strengthen an attitude of long suffering forbearance in this life as you wait on God to fulfill His purpose through them. Nothing can hurry on the early and late rains and nothing can speed up the imminent coming of the Lord – but all will be well- for when the harvest time comes, then the harvest is ready!³

I. BE RESOLVED UNTIL CHRIST RETURNS -JAMES 5:8

James 5:8-"You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand."

A. "BE PATIENT, ALSO YOU" – JAMES 5:8A

James calls for patience by repeating the verb from the previous verse. The original order in the Greek would be *"Be patient, also you"*. By adding *"also you"*, James underlines the fact that they like the farmer need to be patient! Here James applies the illustration of the farmer from James 5:7 to all believers in Jesus Christ.

You will remember from James 5:7 that this word *"patient"* means long tempered, long suffering, verses *"short tempered"*. This does

not refer to a passive resignation to one's situation, but rather an attitude of self-restraint that enables one to refrain from hasty retaliation in the face of provocation.⁴ It is the opposite of a temper or anger that easily brews and lashes out. In the Greek this verb is in the aorist imperative which would refer to a strong call for patience; a constant demand of long suffering (meaning not to suffer a while, rather to tolerate someone for a long time). This must be our unwavering attitude until Christ returns. We are called to be long suffering, long tempered, patient in these hard and difficult days.

B. "STRENGTHEN YOUR HEARTS" – JAMES 5:8B

James 5:8b-" You too be patient; strengthen your hearts..."

After repeating his call for patience, James then strongly urges believers to *"strengthen your hearts."*

"strengthen+Greek %sterizo" literally means to make firm, to confirm, to establish to make fast and fixed, stand firm and immovable, resolved, to cause to stand, to prop up.

James uses the verb *"strengthen"* to exhort the believers in Jesus Christ to strengthen and make firm their inner life. This verb carries the idea of strengthening and supporting something so that it will stand firm and immovable. Instead of being shaken by the experience of affliction and oppression, believers must develop an inner sense of stability. It has been paraphrased as this, *"You must put iron in your hearts."*⁵ This inner strengthening is the work of God in our lives as 1 Thessalonians 3:13, 2 Thessalonians 2:16-7 and 1 Peter 5:10 reveal. But here, James is calling on the reader themselves to take this matter in hand, *"strengthen your hearts"*. Here we see God's Divine provision and the believers' personal responsibility, personal duty if you will to develop an attitude of courage and firmness in the face of difficult circumstances, only done by raising their gaze heavenward.

In Luke 9:51 the same Greek word is used where Jesus *"resolutely set His face"* to go to Jerusalem. *"And it came about, when the days were approaching for His ascension that He resolutely set His face to go to Jerusalem."* Do you remember what all awaited our Lord at this time? It was His betrayal, beating, crucifixion, rejection and death for us. It is here we see the whole force of the word *"strengthen"*. Our Lord *"resolutely set His face"*; set His heart on the cross *for us* with determination, steely resolution and perseverance. He stayed the course no matter how severe the trial that lay before Him. He was fixed on His purpose and calling. This is how we are called to be as well. All of this is to be directed towards our own hearts, focused on determination,

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sustained commitment, firm courage, fixed hearted, immoveable in the face of whatever comes our way until the Lord returns!

C. "BECAUSE THE LORD'S COMING IS NEAR" – JAMES 5:8C

James 5:8-"You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand."

James again reminds these believers that their trouble is temporary and will end. He encouraged them to have a settling conviction that Christ will return and an understanding of this true and certain *future* reality would strengthen their hearts *now* in the present.

"is near+Greek *εγγικεν*" perfect tense meaning at hand, to approach, to come close, could happen at any moment.

James emphasized to these believers that the return of Jesus Christ has come near, is near and could happen at any moment. He wanted them to live as if our Lord would return at any time. And don't you know that James must have been strengthened by the certainty of Christ's Second Coming as well! And now, some 2000 years later, this must be a living reality for us as well!

James urges those about to collapse under the weight of persecution, affliction, trials, oppression and opposition to remember, to stand, to have a resolute heart and firm commitment, to prop themselves up, to shore up their hearts with the sure hope of our Savior's certain return!

Yes Jesus Christ is present with believers now through the Holy Spirit, but Christ's bodily presence is a matter in the "near" future! Christ could come even today and that is how we must live! In fact, the next event on God's schedule is Christ's return! So keep your gaze heavenward and not on your difficult circumstances and remember that "*the Lord's coming is near.*"

It is clear that James, like Paul, Peter, and John all looked for the personal return of Christ as imminent. This is the attitude of expectancy that Christ asks us to have. (Mark 13:32-37, Matthew 24:42-44) We are to be ready and watching for His return. They were not any more certain than we are today about when Christ will return. It is an undated event and each generation of believers are given the opportunity to live in the hope of His return...thus it has a present impact on our way of living now. It influences vitally the way we live now! If it is just some day in the remote future then it has no present impact on the way we live now.⁶ But this great Christian hope, James says, must be brought to the forefront now in our lives, everyday! And we must keep in mind that if the Lord

delays, from our perspective, He delays to give more sinners time to repent. (2 Peter 3:9)

If our Lord's coming is near...that means it could happen any day. We wait on Jesus Christ to return as surely as the farmer waits on the early and late rains. We wait with eager anticipation of His coming with our hearts set, resolved, determined, fixed on the harvest like the farmer with patience, longsuffering knowing our troubles are temporary and will end. You must remember that the outcomes of your service to the Lord are in His hands, and you must be fixed with firm commitment, courage and resolve on the course set before you!

Paul wrote in Romans 8:18, "*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*" Instead of being shaken in any way by the troubles and difficulties you face, stand firm and immoveable, being confident in His perfect plan and purpose for your life. Stay the course no matter how severe the trial and shore up your hearts with the sure hope that Christ's certain return that is near.

And remember this:

"Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and you made the confession in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you in the presence of God, Who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, Who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He will bring about at the proper time- He Who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of Lords; Who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; to Whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen."

1 Timothy 6:12-16

¹Moo, Douglas J., *The Letter of James*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2000. Pg.222.

²Motyer, J.A., *The Message of James*. InterVarsity: Downers Grove, Illinois, 1985. Pg.180-181.

³Hiebert, D. Edmond, *James*. Moody Bible Institute: Chicago, Illinois, 1992. Pg. 272.

⁴Hiebert, D. Edmond, *James*. Moody Bible Institute: Chicago, Illinois, 1992. Pg. 269.

⁵Hiebert, D. Edmond, *James*. Moody Bible Institute: Chicago, Illinois, 1992. Pg. 272.

⁶Hiebert, D. Edmond, *James*. Moody Bible Institute: Chicago, Illinois, 1992. Pg. 273.