



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

ENDURANCE OF THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US!– JAMES 5:10-11

COLORADO

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James reminds believers that our troubles are temporary and will end. He encourages us to have a settling conviction that Christ will return and an understanding of this true and certain future reality will strengthen our hearts now in the present. This will not only bring comfort, but encourage us to live our lives to please Him, knowing that His return is imminent and will include a serious assessment of our own behavior towards one another as fellow believers.

ENDURANCE OF THOSE BEFORE US!-JAMES 5:10-11

James 5:10-11-“As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. (11) Behold, we count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord’s dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.”

James points out that privilege, suffering and ministry belonged together in the lives of the prophets. Though the prophets were greatly privileged with responsibility to speak for God, even they were not protected from the sufferings of this life. Yes they had a special place in God’s plan, but it never came with immunity from trials. It will be no different for any faithful believer in Jesus Christ.

I. THE EXAMPLE OF OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS -JAMES 5:10

James 5:10-“As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.”

A. “AS AN EXAMPLE” – JAMES 5:10A

To encourage believers further to endure unjust suffering and have patience under duress, James reminds believers of the experiences of God’s saints in the past, the Old Testament prophets.

“example+Greek %*μυποδειγμα*” an objective illustration that gives a model to spur us to pursue the conduct desired, spurring another on to imitate.

James points to the heroic example of the prophets and calls on us to “take the prophets” as a definite act, and hold them before our minds as examples, who in the midst of their difficult circumstances, endured patiently.

B. “OF SUFFERING AND PATIENCE” – JAMES 5:10B

James uses two nouns to describe the prophets who endured

“suffering+Greek %*κακοπαθεια*” compound form of %*αυιλ*+and %*αυφερ*+ meaning the experience of suffering what is base or evil, to suffer misfortune, has an active force to denote the strenuous effort made to endure the difficult situation.¹

“patience+Greek %*μακροθυμια*” noun pointing to brave endurance and steadfastness under affliction without succumbing. Long Suffering

James points to the brave endurance through which the prophets suffered unjust persecution, calling us to the same. Their faithfulness to God amid such suffering is a mark of their true character. The fortitude of the martyrs who have gone before us are worthy examples of strength under trials. Jesus encouraged His disciples to boldly face persecution like the prophets in Matthew 5:11-12, “Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

C. “TAKE THE PROPHETS”– JAMES 5:10C

James 5:10-“As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.”

It’s implied that these examples James refers to were well known to the readers. Even the Lord’s most eminent servants in the past were not exempt from ill-treatment. God honored them as His spokesman, but they didn’t escape suffering and by their very work and words, they even provoked the world’s opposition as they “spoke in the name of the Lord.”

The “name of the Lord” represents all that God is, does and wills and the prophets spoke for Him as His delegated messengers. James wants us to understand that the prophets suffered in the cause of their God as they “spoke in the name of the Lord.” Doing Gods will, James is suggesting, will often lead to suffering. If God’s prophets did not escape persecution, we should not expect to escape it either. What is needed is a willing heart set on bearing up under suffering while maintaining spiritual integrity and walking patiently. The prophets not only suffered great injustice, but they spoke out as well. We must learn as believers to suffer patiently, but that doesn’t mean we can’t speak out against evil.²

What prophets might James be referring to? Take *Jeremiah* who suffered greatly under the hands of pagan kings and his own people as he faithfully delivered God’s message of sin and repentance. Or what about *Ezekiel* who suffered greatly in the course of ministry. What about *Daniel* who was torn from his home as a young boy and served in Babylon faithfully to the Lord but not without much adversity, even thrown into a den of lions at a very old age for not compromising on his faith. Take *Hosea* whose marriage and its hardship was an example itself and the Lord’s word to His people. *Amos* faced lies and continual scorn. *Isaiab* was sawed in two and Hebrews commends a host of prophets who might have been less well known but were still no less faithful! And so James reminds us of patience under trials by faithful prophets which encourages believers today to live with faithfulness, endurance and patience.

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS, GOVERNOR & SPOUSES: TUESDAY AT 7:15AM, CAPITOL BASEMENT, ROOM 0109

STAFF, LOBBYISTS, JOURNALISTS & SERGEANTS: TUESDAYS AT NOON, CAPITOL BASEMENT, ROOM 0109

Colorado

ENDURANCE OF THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US!– JAMES 5:10-11

II. THE EXAMPLE OF JOB -JAMES 5:11

James 5:10-11-“As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. (11) Behold, we count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord’s dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.”

James reminds believers that there is a blessing in exercising steadfastness in the mist of affliction and suffering. The example of Job makes that clear. God allows us, His servants to suffer trials that call for steadfastness because somehow through them He can accomplish His own purpose for us and in us.

A. “WE COUNT THOSE BLESSED WHO ENDURED” – JAMES 5:11A

James calls special attention to the matter of endurance through testing with “Behold”, and then uses the first person pronoun of “we” uniting himself with all believers as he expresses admiration for the endurance evidenced through trials. Referring to the prophets, James says that we “consider”, which is a present tense verb meaning to admire a display of such courageous perseverance. The word “blessed” must not be confused with happy, but refers more to the objective, unalterable approval and reward of God’s pronouncement of blessing on those who persevere. And “those who endured” refers to a general group of those who have suffered and successfully completed their test. They remained bravely under a siege of trials without losing heart and so faithfully endured to the end, and they will not remain unrewarded as we saw from Matthew 5:12.³ It is here that James shifts from the vocabulary of patience to “endurance” which is bearing up under the load of suffering. God’s blessings don’t come to people who do great things, but to those who endure.⁴

B. “THE ENDURANCE OF JOB” – JAMES 5:11B

Obviously James’ readers had gained knowledge of Job and his endurance, perseverance through trials. We know that Job endured unimaginable suffering through the loss of his kids, his wealth, his possessions and even his reputation. And we also know that Job cried out in misery and confusion to God but he did not sin. (Job 2:10) While Job lashed out at his “comforters” and even protested to God Himself about his sufferings, in the face of unexplained suffering, Job remained an example of endurance under tremendous suffering. Yes, Job seemed to demand an explanation from God for his unjust suffering. He complained about God’s treatment of him, but never abandoned his faith. In the midst of his incomprehension, he clung to God and continued to hope in Him. (Job 1:21, 2:10, 16:9-21, 19:25-27)⁵ Job struggled and questioned but the flame of his faith was never extinguished in his heart.⁶

C. “THE OUTCOME OF THE LORD’S DEALINGS” – JAMES 5:11C

Literally, “the outcome of the Lord’s dealings” means “the end of the Lord”. It refers to the goal, the purpose God had in mind by allowing Job to suffer and what God finally brought about. God accomplished His divine purpose through Job’s faithful steadfastness. For God’s

objective was that Job know Him more fully! This is what Job finally realized and so does James. This is the outcome of the Lord’s dealings with Job expressed in Job’s own words, “I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees Thee.” James points not to the blessing that the Lord bestowed ultimately on Job by restoring his family and possessions, but rather to the intimate knowledge of the Lord Himself. John Calvin said, “Afflictions ought ever to be estimated by their end.” Job learned about the majestic and sovereign goodness of God in the midst of suffering. Our present suffering is not the end of our story.

D. “THE LORD IS FULL OF COMPASSION/MERCIFUL”, JAMES 5:11D

James closes this section with a reminder of the character of God. We can tend to forget the true character of God when we face trials, oppression and injustice. But through them, James reminds us that if we remain steadfast and faithful to God, then we will come to know the compassion and mercy of God first hand. Here James uses two adjectives to characterize the dealings of God with His people.

First James says that God is “full of compassion”, meaning “many bowled”, not found anywhere else in the New Testament and applies to the Lord only. Essentially James declares that the Lord is not vicious nor does He love to watch His people suffer, but rather He is very compassionate. And James says that God is full of “mercy” referring to the idea of reaching out to mankind by giving us what we desperately need. Our suffering elicits a merciful, compassionate response from God. (Psalm 103:13) James desires to help believers to overcome the tendency to react like the world when injustices are heaped upon them. The world will continue to oppose God’s people, but remembering the truth about God can help us grab ahold of our hurting hearts and enable us to endure and overcome.

The good end that God brought about in Job’s situation reveals that God is “full of compassion and mercies”. It doesn’t mean that endurance through suffering will always be rewarded through material prosperity. We know that’s not true. But James wants to encourage believers to be faithful, to persevere in suffering and affliction and patiently endure. And James reminds us of the blessing we receive from our merciful and compassionate God for faithfulness. Job gives testimony to that. May the flame of faith in our hearts never be extinguished by the affliction, opposition and testing of that faith. Your present suffering is not the end of your story. God will transform your heart and your situation for good when Christ returns.

¹Hiebert, D. Edmond, *James*. Moody Bible Institute: Chicago, Illinois, 1992. Pg. 275.

²Moo, Douglas J., *The Letter of James*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2000. Pg.227.

³Moo, Douglas J., *The Letter of James*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2000. Pg.227.

⁴MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on James*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.260.

⁵Moo, Douglas J., *The Letter of James*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2000. Pg.229.

⁶Barclay, William, *Letters of James and Peter*. 2nd Ed.; Daily Bible Study; Glasgow: Saint Andrews Press, 1989. Pg. 117-118.