

James 5:7–11

“Strong Hearts for Forgiving”

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For what, and how, can believers strengthen their hearts? Pastor leads his family in today's "Hopewell @Home" passage. James 5:7–11 prepares us for the opening portion of Morning Public Worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these five verses, the Holy Spirit teaches us that until Jesus comes, part of the misery through which we will need to be patient is our brethren's sin and weakness. But remembering that this comes in the providence of our greatly compassionate and merciful God is how to strengthen our hearts so that we can be forgiving, rather than grumbling or bitter.

Tuesday, January 11, 2022 • James 5:7–11

Questions from the Scripture text: What does the apostle call us (v7)? What are we to be? Until when? Who is an illustration of this? What must we establish (v8)? Why? What aren't we to do against one another (v9)? Why not? How imminently? What does he call us a third time in v10? Whom should we consider? What did they do? Of what were they an example? Whom, then, do we count blessed (v11)? Of what have we heard? What have we seen? What did this show us about Whom?

Next week's Call to Worship, Prayer for Help, and first song all come from James 5:7–11 so that we will see that we are singing God's thoughts after Him with *Be Still My Soul*.

The prophet, Jesus's brother, began chapter five warning the rich for what is about to come upon them. Now in v7, the prophet turns to believers and addresses them as brethren. Just as with the rich, the brethren have something that is about to come: their Lord. But for them, it seems like quite a long time until he comes, so the command in v7, and again in v8, is "be patient." The farmer can do his tasks, but he must wait upon the time appointed by the Lord. So also believers must be patient for the time appointed by the Lord for His return.

But what are we to do in our patience? v8 answers, "establish your hearts." Strengthen/fix/set your hearts. Whatever our lot now, there is something it can never undo: the coming of our Lord. If He, and His compassion and mercy (v11c), are ours then it is only a matter of time until we come into full possession and enjoyment of all that He has determined for us. We are to use this truth, this reality, to establish our hearts.

And what are we not to do? We are not to grumble (v9a). We are not to groan. Not against the Lord's providence. And not against one of the most difficult parts of that providence: one another. Yes, believers delight in one another's sweet fellowship (cf. Ps 16:3, Eph 2:14–19), and it is in fact a fellowship with our Lord and our heavenly Father (cf. 1John 1:3). But until the Lord comes, believers in this world will also be sinners, and as such will have much to forgive (cf. Eph 4:32, Col 3:12–13) as they give one another much cause to groan (v9, cf. Eph 4:31). Still, we must forgive, since an unforgiving heart is a reliable indicator that one is condemned (v9, cf. Mt 18:35). Our passage today doesn't pretend to us that this blessed enduring (v11a) will be easy. Look at the examples it uses: Job (v11b)!! Not just the patience of the prophets but their suffering (v10)!!

Over-against such pain, the Lord sets His own extreme compassion and mercy (v11c). In the end intended by the Lord, Job knew it was so (v11b). And you will see that compassion and mercy soon. He is at hand. He is coming. He is very compassionate and merciful. By these things, establish your hearts, be patient, and do not grumble.

What pain are you enduring? Who has hurt you? What truth and reality do you need to bring to bear upon your heart in order to forgive? How have you seen the Lord's compassion and mercy?

Sample prayer: Lord, Your compassion and mercy are very great. And great they must needs be to overcome our sin and establish our hearts. Forgive us our sin, and make us forgiving of others. Grant unto us a clear and confident sight of Your soon return, and so strengthen our hearts in Jesus Christ, in Whose Name we ask it, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP80 "My Heart Is Not Exalted, Lord" or TPH532 "Be Still, My Soul"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

James chapter 5 verses 7 through 11. These are God's words. Therefore be patient brethren until the coming of the Lord see how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth waiting patiently for it, until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient, establish your hearts for the coming of the Lord's hand.

Do not grumble against one another brethren. Lest you be condemned behold, the judge is standing at the door. My brethren, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord as an example of suffering. And patience Indeed. We count them blessed to endured. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord that the Lord is very compassionate.

And merciful So far, the reading of God's inspired and inherent work. And so on the Lord, say, we'll be singing. Number 532 be still my soul, which is, in which we will sing about the Lord being for us and the Lord soon returning and the Lord's goodness, even in hard providence, and have these things should should train our hearts to be patient and not grumbling and groaning.

Under the providence of God, and in James chapter 5, he's been dealing with some of the disparities, some of the fact that there's a wide variety of experience in this world. And there are those who are rich and have good things in this life and in the first six verses, he has dealt with them.

And he told them to weep and howl because of the miseries that are about to come upon them instead of. Yeah. So instead of being satisfied with themselves and their position and their wealth, they should be weeping and howling and then he turns to believers who are suffering. He tells them to be patient to establish their hearts.

Because the Lord is soon coming for them. And There we are like a farmer who has done what he can. He puts the seed into the ground and, you know, maybe he reads or whatever, but he has to wait. And then that climate and that culture, the especially just had to wait for the seasons of rain to come at their proper times and there's nothing that they could do to make that happen.

And so we are those who are to wait, but what are we supposed to do? What we're while we're waiting? Or to put another way? What does this weighting look like? As we're patient under suffering until the Lord comes and gives us all that he has determined for us and earned on our behalf.

And you see in verse 8, the explanation of be patient. He says, verse 7 be patient. He gives the illustration of the farmer and then the verse 8, he says you also be patient. Establish your hearts for the coming of the Lord is at hand. So strengthen and glad in your hearts.

Well, why do our hearts need to be strengthened? Not gladton strengthen and make firm and encourage your hearts. That were established means. So why do our hearts need to be strengthened and made firm and encouraged in order for us to wait? Or as we wait and part of the reason is that we have suffering and it's a great amount of suffering because the example that he gives us is the prophets of the Lord verse 10, who suffered and were patient.

And then he picks one in particular Job verse 11. You've heard of the perseverance of Job, and then he endured right. Indeed, we count them blessed to endure. He starts first, letting you have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord. And you remember the end of the book of Job, how he received twice back, everything that that he had lost and the Lord.

Jesus tells us even more than that hundred times back more than we lose with persecutions. But if God is picking Job as the example, then were to expect, not a small amount or an easy experience of suffering. If Job is the example, then we should expect that. There's going to be a fair amount, a large amount of suffering, and a difficult experience of suffering.

And so what is so hard? One, another verse 9 do not grow nor grumble against one another brethren. Lest you be condemned the hardest part of being in the fallen world, is not the misery of the world. Unless by that misery, you mean primarily the sin of the world and God's providence to you, you have as your catechism question this week into what a state did.

The fall. Bring. Does it mankind? That's what a state did. The fall bring mankind, the fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery. And the greater part of the misery of life in this world as sin, and your brothers and sisters in the Lord are still sinners.

And you are still a sinner and we're going to be sinned against. But we must remember that that even being sinned against by other Christians, who are the ones from whom we'd expect not to be sinned against that that comes in the providence of God. And if we complain, If we have complaining grumbling groaning, bitter hearts about the sin, that others commit against us, then our hearts are grumbling against the providence of God, you don't have time in a short, family worship to go back and look at this, but you can go back and see in chapter 1, verse 12 and following the more general warning against grumbling against God's problem as well, our brothers and sisters sin against us is also in God's province, and he's told us to do what when our brothers and sisters ends against us.

If something we pray for the Lord's Prayer, don't we forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And then after the Lord's fair, the Lord Jesus says, for if you do not forgive, neither rule your heavenly Father, forgive you and the Apostle writes the same And then Epistle.

And this apostle says, do not grumble against one another brethren, unless you be condemned a forgiving heart, is one of the hallmarks of a believer and an unforgiving heart. There's one of the hallmarks of someone who is not saved even if they are members of the church. And so how can we establish strengthen make firm encourage our hearts and such a way that we receive even our brothers and sisters sin against us as coming in God's providence, the answer to that is at the end of our passage.

At the end of verse 11, the Lord is very compassionate and merciful. So it's not just property that we remember the end of the book of Job and we say see Job got twice as much Jesus at a hundred times as much. Yes, I will strengthen and establish my heart with that.

But it's especially a person that the Lord is the one you have. The Lord is the one who has earned for

you every blessing in heaven and earth in a new heaven and a new earth forever and ever. And you already have him who is very compassionate and very merciful.

And of course he has forgiven you. Therefore, you also forgive others and don't grumble and groan against them. Now, Where do you think this might be the hardest thing to practice? Remembering that your brother or sisters. Oh, those words are very helpful. Aren't they sin against? You comes in the province of God and that even if they are being wicked do you?

He is still being compassionate and merciful to you, right? He didn't suddenly stop being compassionate and merciful just because your brother or sisters sending it to you. That came in his providence, which is compassionate towards you and merciful towards you, and he is soon returning. And so, you can strengthen your heart in him for the purpose of not having a grumbling bitter heart.

But having a forgiving heart, it doesn't mean that there aren't consequences that doesn't mean that you have to trust someone who sins against you all the time or intentionally put yourself in places to be hurt by them. Or that you can get out of doing Matthew, 18 in order to help them.

But in order to establish and strengthen your heart in a way that is waiting upon the Lord until the misery of sin is done. And the Lord. Jesus has returned remember that? It comes in God's providence and that he is very compassionate and merciful my Lord help us as a family.

Be forgiving towards one another because we're remembering the Lord. As we interact with one another, let's spray.

Our father in heaven, help us to remember that. You are always on our side even in, especially when that means that you are against our sin, help us to be patient. Help us by your word. And by these particular truths to establish our hearts, grant that we would bear patiently with one another that we would bear patiently with our griefs, their patiently, with our pet pain.

But especially with one another when we are sinned against grant that we would forgive. And that we would see that gospel fruit, that we might be encouraged that you are the one who has produced forgivingness in our hearts. We pray, especially, Lord, that our home would be one in which There are not extended conflicts and storings up of bitterness.

And the kinds of things that would indicate that we have been forgetful of you and that you are very compassionate and that you are very merciful and then it is in your providence that even others actions against us come. So, make our home a sweet and forgiving place where we know you and know your providence and our confident of your great compassion.

And mercy. We ask it in Jesus name, Amen.