

## God Strengthens Through Troubles

### James 1:2-11

I would like to thank David and ViZion church for this invite to give the Friday night devotional.

Tonight, I want to share with you something to strengthen your walk with Jesus, that I gleaned from the book of James 1: 2-12.

The Epistle of James was the first book written of the New Testament and written by Jesus' half-brother James, between A.D 45-50.

Also, another brother of Jesus was Judas known as Jude who wrote the Epistle of Jude.

Though James was brought up with a household of siblings, in *Matthew 13:55, 56 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters...* James with his brother Jude wasn't converted when Jesus was alive on earth, but it was after when He rose from the dead. *1 Corinthians 15* lists the time when Jesus visited various people and groups after His resurrection but in *1 Corinthians 15: 7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles*. This was probably the time that James realised who his brother was!

I wonder what it would have been like growing up with Jesus, with a big family of brothers and sisters. Would Jesus have to do the hovering, washing up or run to the corner shop for milk and bread, I am sure He would be like us living a normal life.

Then later in *Acts 1:12-14* they were up in the Upper Room with the disciples, and Jesus' brothers and mother Mary were present, this was when they believed he was the Son of God, and in Acts 2 was when the church began, where James himself became overseer of the first Christian church in Jerusalem.

So, as I read through the book of James and the other times in the New Testament, I see a man who wrote with great authority.

Also, James was a straight talker and wasn't messing about with his words in his book.

Let's look at **verses 2-12** with 3 different aspects of being a mature and strong Christian.

Firstly **verse 1** *James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.*

James here is calling himself *a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ*. He isn't calling himself as a brother of Jesus, son of God! But a servant, how easy it could have been for him to brag about this, but James is so humble!

Who are the twelve tribes that are scattered abroad? These were Jewish Christians scattered around the Mediterranean in the Roman Empire through the dispersions caused by persecution under Herod Agrippa.

James has easy access to these Christians, with people traveling annually back to Jerusalem to celebrate various feasts.

So, James is addressing these Christians who are suffering persecution, discrimination, and issues with the Judaizers (They were Jews and Gentiles who followed the Mosaic Law) this letter sets practical instructions on how to live out their faith during various trials.

So, let's look at these verses.

### **1. God Strengthens us as we endure times of various trials. v2-4**

**Verse 2** *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various troubles,*

In our Christian walk we are either enduring troubles or coming out of trouble or entering a time of trouble, it could be called a vicious cycle, but we as Christians need the mindset of counting it all a joy.

Do you find it hard to count it a joy when you are enduring various troubles?

Sometimes these troubles come at a time, when we are on a high in your walk with the Lord, but suddenly troubles come our way.

Even if you become a new believer, it can be tough going, through certain times being hurt or mistreated by family members, friends that are unbelievers and by other people etc.

In some places around the world if you become a Christian, your parents will insist you give up your faith because they could be demoted at work or even lose their jobs. In some countries it could bring dishonour to your family and even your country if you become a Christian.

These things can bring us down, despondent and discouraged, when we are worn out.

But we need to remember God is in control in these situations!

You see in **Verse 3** knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. We need to be patient and let God do His work in us through these times of troubles or trials where patience comes through our Faith.

We read Paul's message to the Thessalonians in [2 Thessalonians 1:4](#) So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:

Just like us, the Thessalonians they suffered through persecution and trials. Just like them we know God is using our trials for our good and more importantly for His glory.

You see if we have patience and faith; it will strengthen us as we endure troubling trials; we need to remember God hasn't disappeared from us or forgotten us because in His perfect timing he will relieve us from our time of tribulation trials.

So how do we grow in patience and faith? It is through reading God's Word.

[Romans 10:17](#) So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

[Romans 15:4](#) For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

The more we read our Bible and study it, the more we know of God and His ways, it gives us a maturity when we go through trials and a confidence that God is in control.

This is what **Verse 4** tells us *But let patience have [her] perfect work*, this patience gives us the endurance so we are consistent as mature Christians. The end of this verse concludes *that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

## **2. God Strengthens us with wisdom if we ask as we overcome troubling trials. v5-8**

If you look down at these verses, look at **verse 5** it says, if you're lacking wisdom in these troubles, come to God and He will help liberally, God is generous! He will upbraideth not or without reproach in your Bible version. Upbraid not, this is such an important word to me because God isn't going to scold me for coming to Him for help.

To illustrate: - Peter it not you again, you are always coming to me in times of trouble or like Pastor David last week with the bus, God isn't going to scold him as he pleaded for help to get the bus for the baptisms. God listens and it will be given him.

You see through the work of Jesus shedding His blood on the cross, cleansing our sins, we can come before God in prayer, no matter how good or bad we are. This is the Gospel!

In **verses 6-8** it tells us in **verse 6** *But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.*

We are to come to God and ask in faith, not wavering, not doubting because God in **verse 7** you won't receive anything from the Lord if you doubt. In **verse 8** this person is double-minded, still meaning doubting and being unstable spiritually.

This can happen to us in our walk with the Lord, we can have doubts coming in, like the ocean, being nice and calm as we are not wavering, but niggles of doubt come in and the waves of the ocean are tossed about by the wind.

Just Like Abraham and Sarah, heroes of the faith in the Book of Hebrews 11:11,17, remember in Genesis 17:15-19; 18:9-15 where both Abraham and Sarah laughed, they doubted God because of their old ages to conceive a child, but afterwards through faith, they believed. God still used them as they overcame the doubts in a mighty way and Sarah

gave birth to Isaac and Abraham became the father of the nation Israel and his descendants were as numerous as the stars.

So, if you are a new believer or just struggling in your walk with the Lord, lacking faith. Ask the Lord for wisdom and trust Him to deliver what is best for you. That strength from wisdom will bring about a confidence and maturity that He will align your prayers with His purpose for your life.

### 3, God strengthens us spiritually if we depend on Him rather on worldly ways or wealth. v9-12

James here was dealing with dignity of different classes of Jewish Christians having different wealth's being or low degree a person of humble circumstances or being rich with prosperity.

**Verse 9** James is telling them the person of low degree that being rich means nothing to them and in **verse 10** the rich person is humble because they know that money means nothing to God because it can be easily lost and become a person of low degree, a working man.

James illustrates in **verse 11** with the sun rising that withers the grass and the flower of it falls off and the **grace of the fashion of it perisheth**: meaning the beautiful appearance of the flower will perish just like the rich man fades away in his ways of wealthy interests.

I get this illustration, I'm not wealthy, but at times I get envious of people with money, and I think about it, they have wealth, power, and status as they live in a big house and drive a fancy car, life seems easy for them.

I continue thinking and I know these things mean nothing to God.

But I'm not materialistic because my living for Jesus would be distracted by chasing these possessions to satisfy my life.

I know people who own the latest game console like the Xbox or the play station, and they get in such a frenzy when the latest game is coming out. They come out with cold

sweats, they can't sleep till this game comes out and I have even heard people cueing outside shops for days to get this game.

Do things like this give you purpose to live? What if your material possessions were gone, what would be left?

**Don't compromise because wealth fades!**

Keep your focus on the Lord and depend on Him, he will strengthen you spiritually in patience and faith if you keep in His Word the Bible, study the Bible, and know the Lord personally through prayer, God will bless you.

As we finish in **verse 12** Blessed is the man that endureth troubles: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

If you endure these times of trials of troubles, you shall receive the crown of life not here on earth but for when you enter heaven, receiving eternal life and living with God forever.