**NEED WISDOM? ASK GOD!** **Text: James 1:5-12 Date: 5-21-23 Sunday AM**

My goal is not to keep us from trials or suffering. **Why not**? Trials are guaranteed by God for all of us. *On the other hand*, God makes each of us a promise as well. What is His promise? He promises us that the trials of life will bring us spiritual growth and ultimately glory in His presence. God can be trusted!!!

**There are many types of trials that come into our lives:**

**Fiery trials**: intense encounters or struggles; bursts of anger, grief, or lust

**Infirmities**: physical limitations and illnesses

**Reproaches**: ridicule and rejection on account of faith or holiness

**Persecutions**: harassment and oppression due to religious convictions

**Necessities**: wear and care of daily responsibilities

**Distresses**: disappointments and deep hurts

**Tribulations**: unusual pressures and challenges

**Temptations**: enticements to sin

**Billy Graham** recounts a friend of his during the Depression who lost everything – job, fortune, wife. And he was walking along the streets of New York and he saw some workmen working on one of the city’s great cathedrals. And he was shaping this stone, very, very carefully. And the man, Graham’s friend, walked up and said, “What are you doing?” He said, “Well, I’m shaping this down here so it will fit up there,” and he pointed up at the steeple. Billy said, “My friend’s eyes filled with tears as he realized what was happening in his life by God’s sovereign grace.” **That’s what God’s up to**! *He’s shaping us down here by trials, by difficulties, by hardships, so that we’ll fit up there, with Jesus, the one who walked through all trials and all difficulties in our place*. Therefore, trials are a sign that you’re His, that you’re walking the same path the Son walked, and that one day when it’s all said and done, you’ll fit, up there.

I. First, Notice the **REALITY** of Trials – 1:2-4

* **1:2** ~ **First**, **A COMMAND** “Count it all joy” – **WHY and HOW CAN THIS BE**? Because God is in control!
* **James 1:2 (KJV)** My brethren, ***count*** it all joy when ye ***fall*** into ***divers*** temptations; [Strange command, isn’t it? YES!]
* “**Count**” = consider, count, regard it all **JOY**!
* **Let’s clear something up here**. Happiness and joy is not the same thing! **Happiness** is based upon life’s circumstances. **Joy** is based upon the promises of GOD! One is temporal… the other is eternal!
* Often trials come out of *nowhere*.
* **GOD’S PEOPLE ARE NOT EXEMPT FROM TRIALS! Job 5:7 says (KJV)** Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.
* **1:3** ~ **Secondly**, **A CHALLENGE**
* **James 1:3 (KJV)** Knowing *this*, that the ***trying*** of your faith works OR produces patience. [God works in and through trials!]
* **1:3** ~ “For you know that the **trying/testing** of your faith produces patience/steadfastness, and let steadfastness have its full effect that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” That word for “**steadfastness**,” means “Patiently enduring whatever comes without allowing distress to influence one’s convictions.”
* **1:4** ~ **Thirdly**, **A COMFORT/BLESSING**… Spiritual growth… maturity… Christ likeness! [Our **completeness** in Christ!]
* **James 1:4 (KJV)** But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.
* **Paul put it this way in Philippians 1:6 (KJV)** Being confident of this very thing, that **HE** which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:
* Our Heavenly Father works in us ***through*** *the trials/****in the midst*** *of the trials* that come our way! **Yes, HE does**!
* **Joseph wrote about his experience with trials in Genesis 50:20 (KJV)** But as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive. [God takes pics using a wide lens at times.] [**Producing unswerving constancy**]
* First, Notice the **REALITY of Trials** – 1:2-4

**Today we come to James 1:5-12**. Our focus will be on:

**II. RESPONSE TO TRIALS**

**III. REWARD IN TRIALS**

This is not a **self-help message** so that we can feel better about ourselves. Neither is it a message to point us to a **feel good session** about our lives.

This message shows us what it means to **grow up** in our faith in Jesus Christ. We will learn how to trust the Lord and how to rest in Him through the blessing of spiritual growth. Growing up in Christ is not without its trials.

II. Secondly, Notice the **RESPONSE** to Trials – 1:5-11

* **Two Questions**:

1) How are these scattered believers to deal with being displaced and disgraced as God’s children?

2) When trials come our way, and they will, how are we to handle the troublesome issues that come our way?

* **First**, we see **The Approach** in Asking
* **James 1:5-8 (KJV)** If *any of you* lack wisdom, ***let him ask of God***, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 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. 7 For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. 8 A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways.
* We need to define this wisdom. **Douglas Moo** gives us this insight into wisdom. “*Wisdom is the God-given means by which we discern the will of God, so that we know what it is that we are supposed to believe about God and His purposes in the midst of difficult times*.”
* If we fail to understand what’s happening here trials will overwhelm us! **PRAYER MATTERS**! *Being prayerless implies we do not need the Lord; we can fix things ourselves*!
* PRA**YERLESS SAINTS** become victims of their circumstances. Blaming God becomes easy.
* **POINT**? Not praying during trials sends a clear message to the Lord! **WE DON’T NEED HIM! I’V GOT THIS!**
* **REMINDER…** Nothing escapes God! NOTHING! He cares about everything happening in our lives. EVERYTHING!
* **1:5** ~ **CH Spurgeon wrote,** “It is the beggar’s word. The beggar ***asks*** alms. You are to ***ask*** as the beggar ***asks*** of you in the street, and God will give to you far more liberally than you give to the poor. You must confess that you have no merit of your own.”
* The Jews identified **wisdom** as an attribute of God. They also associated **wisdom** with God’s Spirit.
* **1:6** ~ I prefer the **NASB** translation here: let him ***ask in faith***, free from *divided motives and divisive attitudes*, for such a person is like an ocean wave being tossed about!
* Without **PRAYERS** of faith trials will always have the upper hand in our lives. Prayerless attempts to *disarm* trials leave us dependent upon our flighty emotions! Emotional responses to trials only sustain the trials at a weightier level!
* The key to asking in faith without doubting is to look carefully at the track-record of the **ONE** whom we are asking for wisdom. When we consider that **GOD** foreordains whatsoever comes to pass, that HE is all wisdom, that **JESUS** is Wisdom incarnate (wisdom in human form), and that **GOD** has kept each and every one of His promises, only then can we ask Him for the wisdom He has promised in faith, without doubting. The key is not us, but the track-record of the **ONE** whom we are asking. It is much easier to keep from being double-minded, if we keep before us the wonderful examples of the obedience of Jesus, and the faithfulness of God in keeping His promises. [**Kim Riddlebarger**]
* **James is restating Jesus from Matthew 7:7 (KJV) Ask**, and it shall be given you; **seek**, and ye shall find; **knock**, and it shall be opened unto you:
* An unstable Christian life creates anxiety, fear, worry, and confusion! That’s **not** the Lord’s desire for His children!
* ***UNBELIEF*** is the seedbed for anxiety, confusion, fear, and worry.
* **Proverbs 2:6 instructs us (ESV)** For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come *knowledge and understanding*.
* **1:8** ~ A “Double minded man” is an “Unstable” man. **Let me explain**…
* **James 1:8 (AMP)** [For being as he is] a man of two minds (hesitant, dubious, irresolute), [he is] unstable *and* unreliable *and* uncertain about everything [he thinks, feels, decides].
* **Paul gives us this powerful reminder from 2 Timothy 1:7 (AMP)** For God did not give us a spirit of timidity (of cowardice, of craven and cringing and fawning fear), but [He has given us a spirit] of power and of love and of a sound mind [*calm and well-balanced mind and discipline and self-control*.]
* **Secondly**, we see **The Attitude** in Understanding [God’s perspective on trials]
* James ***encourages*** the poor, while at the same time he ***warns***the rich about placing too much confidence in their riches.
* **1:9** ~ **First**, James deals with **The Poor**
* **James 1:9 (KJV)** Let *the brother of low degree* ***rejoice*** in that he is exalted: [Learns self-respect]
* **Both** the poor and the rich live under the mercies of God.
* **Both** require the grace of God.
* **Both** are dependent upon God when it comes to matters of life and death!
* The poor boast in the riches of Christ Jesus our Lord!
* **1:10-11** ~ **Secondly**, James also deals with **The Rich**
* **James 1:10-11 (KJV)** But *the rich*, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. **1:11** For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: *so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways*. [Learns self-abasement-humility]
* Wealth doesn’t add one second of time to one’s life. Trials/sufferings are the great equalizer for every child of God. Our times are in His hands!
* **Both** are believers and **both** are touched and thus impacted by trials.
* **Lenski, the commentator** says, “As the poor brother forgets all his *earthly poverty*, so the rich brother forgets all his *earthly riches*. ***By faith in Christ the two are equals***.”
* First, Notice the **REALITY** of Trials – 1:2-4
* Secondly, Notice the **RESPONSE** to Trials – 1:5-11

III. Thirdly, Notice the **REWARD** in Trials – 1:12

* **James 1:12 (KJV)** Blessed/Happy *is* the man that endureth *trials*: for when he is *tried*, *he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love Him*.
* **James is saying…** God blesses those who ***patiently*** endure trials… they will receive the crown of life that **God** has **promised** to those who love Him.
* **Matthew Henry** points out, “It is not the man who ***suffers only*** that is blessed, but he who ***endures*,** who with patience and constancy goes through all difficulties in the way of his duty.”
* **The Apostle John inspires us to be faithful. He tells us the end from the beginning! Revelation 21:3-4** the Apostle John reminds us of this truth! “And I heard a loud voice from the Throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”
* **John 16:33 (ESV)** … **In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world**.”
* First, Notice the **Reality** of Trials – 1:2-4
* Secondly, Notice the **Response** to Trials – 1:5-11
* Thirdly, Notice the **Reward** in Trials – 1:12