

# JOY IN TRIAL

## JAMES 1:1-4

### SERMON POINTS

- The inevitability of trials
- The purpose of trials

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:** Trials are inevitable and are to be counted as joy because God uses them to make us more like his Son.

\*GROUP LEADERS>dont' forget to read the passage as a group before you begin. Encourage your members to open the Bible on their phone or a hard copy.

### BOOK OF JAMES BACKGROUND:

#### Similar to Wisdom Literature

James is often likened to Old Testament Wisdom Literature (think Proverbs) or the OT Prophets (think Isaiah or Amos). James is extremely practical speaking to us about things like trials, temptation, poverty and wealth, favoritism, justice, how we use our words, worldliness, pride, planning, illness, and prayer. While James mentions faith 14 times, he issues 59 different commands and calls those of us with faith to actually live it out.

#### Themes of James

TRUE FAITH ACTS! TRUE FAITH WORKS.

James challenges us, saying, “while we are saved by grace through faith alone” true faith will most definitely produce good works in the lives of believers. Today many of us bristle under that type of language and many would call it legalism, but not James.

James says, “You don’t just listen to the Word of God--you do it. Faith with no works is a dead faith.

#### Who was James and to whom was he writing?

James simply calls himself, “a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.” So it would seem that to his audience his identity was obvious, but to us, it takes some working out. The name James is the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew name, Jacob and so it was extremely common in Jewish families and that’s true in the NT. Two of the 12 disciples were named James. **James the son of Zebedee and the brother of John** was killed by Herod (Acts 12:2) and so scholars agree that this

wasn't his letter. **James the son of Alphaeus** was the other disciple, but nothing is said about him after the resurrection so not him. Most scholars agree that the author of James was the "James" who was the leader of the church in Jerusalem, and whom Paul calls, "the brother of the Lord (Gal 1:19/ 1 Cor 9:5). The Jewish historian, Josephus, talks about James and identifies him as a Christian leader in Jerusalem who was killed in 62. **Paul calls James, "the brother of the Lord"** and in Mark 6 James is listed as one of Jesus' brothers. The plainest way to understand this is that after Mary gave birth to Jesus, Joseph and Mary had other children. The Roman Catholic church teaches that Mary was conceived in an immaculate way and that her virginity was perpetual. However, the early church father Tertullian referred to James as the brother of Jesus; and along with the appearances of Jesus' siblings in the Gospel accounts (Mark 3:20-21) and Acts, the easiest explanation from scripture and history is that Jesus had half-brothers, and the author James was one of those. The gospel of John tells us that Jesus' brothers didn't believe in him as the Messiah until after the resurrection. But James not only became a believer after the resurrection he became the most prominent leader in the Jerusalem church along with Peter. James was known for his godliness and was often referred to as "James the Just" and "James the Righteous."

**James'** audience was the early Christian Jewish converts who were scattered throughout Israel and the Roman empire. Before Paul's missionary work, almost all of the early Christians were of Jewish descent--and this is his audience.

## **QUESTIONS:**

\* In the sermon Scott said:

**"Most Americans expect life to be filled with blessing, and are surprised by suffering but much of the world expects to suffer and is surprised by blessing."**

**He also quoted an international pastor in Phoenix (Michel Duarte) who said:**

**"Americans are shaped by comfort while the rest of the world is shaped by suffering"**

**Q:** Do you agree or disagree? How do you think comfort has shaped our culture as it relates to how we relate or deal with suffering?

**Q:** James comes out swinging and immediately says to "Brothers, count it or consider it joy when meeting various trials." He doesn't say, "if", he says, "when." What does it mean to consider trials in joy? What doesn't it mean? Would this verse be helpful to share with someone when they have suffered a great loss? Why, or why not?

**Q:** According to James, what is the purpose of trials? (see the Dan Doriani quotes below)

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**Malcom Muggeridge said:**

Indeed, I can say with complete truthfulness that everything I have learned in seventy-five years in the world, everything that has truly enhanced and enlightened my existence, has been through affliction and not through happiness, whether pursued or attained.

**Q:** Does this ring true for you? Why or why not?

**QUOTES:**

**Dan Doriani (James Commentary)**

Endurance, therefore, is no passive thing. Perseverance is strong and active. To persevere is to continue in the right path when continuation is difficult. In fact, true virtue does not exist without perseverance.

**Dan Doriani (James Commentary)**

Humanly speaking, trials seem like random evils that fall on us. But our Sovereign oversees the trial itself and oversees us in the trial, so it strengthens us and deepens our faith.

**Malcom Muggeridge:**

Indeed, I can say with complete truthfulness that everything I have learned in seventy-five years in the world, everything that has truly enhanced and enlightened my existence, has been through affliction and not through happiness, whether pursued or attained.

**David Platt (James Commentary)**

A James 1:3 kind of lifestyle, the kind that endures because of testing, requires a radically God-centered perspective. Trials are joy when God is our goal.

**OTHER SCRIPTURE:**

**Hebrews 12:2**

looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Thursday, January 17 @ 6:30pm at New Valley Chandler • AZ 1.27 “Finding Your Place in Foster Care and Adoption”. This night is for anyone who wants to find out where they fit in the foster care and adoption story. Please register at <https://arizona127.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/347/responses/new>.

We are looking for student ministry leader volunteers. Email Pastor Tyson if you are interested at [tyson@newvalleychurch.org](mailto:tyson@newvalleychurch.org).