

BLUEPRINT

FOR A FAITH THAT WORKS

Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church
James 5:7-12 | August 25, 2019

Prepared by Joshua T. Higgins
josh@gspc.org | 562/493.2553 x102

- I. Introduction to this Study
- II. This week we continue studying James, one of the earliest books in the Christian Scriptures, uncovering God's blueprint for a faith that works. In this study we again engage our language – how we speak of others and how we boast of future plans, instead of relying wholly on God's will for our lives.
- III. Connecting with One Another
 - a. Take a moment to reflect and share with each other about a difficult season you have experienced.
- IV. Study the Text
 - a. Read James 5:7-12
 - a. Circle the words *patient* and *patience* in the text. How many times do they appear?
 - b. What words in the passage indicate that the Lord will return?
 - c. What impact should the certain return of the Lord have on your perspective when you experience suffering?
 - b. For James' audience, the reality of Jesus' return wasn't a distraction that led to speculative predictions and false teachings. It was a source of comfort and hope in the midst of difficulty and suffering.

The repeated reminder to be patient was James' pastoral way of focusing their perspective of the suffering they were experiencing. The believers could patiently endure their suffering because Jesus will return as Savior.
 - c. Reread James 5:7-12 (yes...you really have to reread it!)
 - a. What hardship comes to mind when you read about the farmer waiting for rain? How can you relate?
 - b. What hardship do you see in the admonition against grumbling? How can you relate?
 - c. What hardship do you see in the example of the prophets? How can you relate?
 - d. Suffering always happens in a context, and the ultimate context is God's sovereignty. Yet the Bible never holds or attributes suffering to God. Adopting Scripture's perspective on suffering allows us to see it within God's providence while also seeing sin and death as enemies.



- e. Look back at the beginning of the letter. How does addressing the readers as “the twelve tribes of the Dispersion” in James 1:1 set a context of suffering for the entire letter? What does this phrase refer to?
- f. Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-17
 - a. How is Paul’s view of suffering similar to the view of suffering in James?
 - b. When we’re in the middle of suffering, why is patience so hard to come by?
- g. Suffering is now, but not forever. Scripture doesn’t downplay the reality of suffering. It acknowledges all the ugliness and pain in life, but it also reorients us towards hope. Jesus willingly took on a life of suffering to defeat death. Because of Him, the glory that lies ahead isn’t worth comparing with the pain of the present.
 - a. What has helped you endure hardship? How can you help others who are suffering?
- h. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-6.
 - a. Summarize what Paul said about suffering and comfort.
- i. As Christians, we’re able and expected to comfort others. We extend hope to people who are hurting, empathizing with their pain. We encourage others to patiently endure, knowing that our pain isn’t wasted and that God will ultimately use it for His good purposes.
- j. Read James 5:7-12 (yep...you need to read it again!)
 - a. James’ instruction to be patient was a word of comfort. It was a word of hope. It was a spiritual perspective that framed the suffering and hardship of daily life. The words “be patient” (v. 7) were strong yet gentle pastoral hands that lifted the weary heads of believers to fix their eyes on Jesus. James concludes his thought on comfort and suffering by saying that we should be people of our word (see v. 12). We shouldn’t try to assure people that we’re trustworthy by swearing by things we can’t control. Our words should convey the integrity of the gospel. Our words and actions can cause great harm or bring great healing. We should use them wisely.
 - 1. What does being people of our word allow us to serve and minister to others?

V. Pray

- a. Ask God to whom do you need to extend grace to this week?
- b. Ask God to provide opportunities for you to encourage others and to share the hope you have found in the Good News of Jesus Christ.

