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Steadfast Under Trial

James 1:2-18

MEMORY VERSE: James 1:2-3: *Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.*

SUMMARY

Those who navigate little streams and shallow creeks, know little of the God of tempests; but those who “do business in great waters” these see “His wonders in the deep.” Among the huge Atlantic waves of bereavement, poverty, temptation and reproach, we learn the power of Jehovah, because we feel the littleness of man. Charles Spurgeon

- Joy in trials: verses 2-4
- Wisdom needed in trials: verses 5-8
- Comfort to the poor, warning to the rich: verses 9-11
 - Trials: the great equalizer whether rich or poor
 - For the poor, their trial is poverty, yet they are rich because they recognize their need for God.
 - For the wealthy, their wealth is their trial as they are prone to rely on themselves and not their God.
- Reward for remaining steadfast and enduring trials: the crown of life: verse 12
- God is not to be blamed for temptations: verses 13-15
- All good gifts from our good God, including the new birth: verses 16-18
 - God gave us spiritual birth because of His own grace and will.
 - The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to bring about the miracle of the new birth. (John 3:6, I Peter 1:23)
 - In the same way the OT Jews brought the first fruits (the first and best harvest crops) to the Lord as an expression of their devotion and obedience (Exodus 23:19, Leviticus 23:9-14, Deuteronomy 29:1-19); we are the first fruits of the second birth (spiritual).

I. THE TESTING OF FAITH: TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS AND A GOOD GOD

II. FOUR ESSENTIALS FOR VICTORY IN TRIALS (Wiersbe)

- A. A Joyful Attitude: verses 2-4

- B. An Understanding Mind: verse 3
Faith tested to increase it (Abraham)

Testing assures us and others that our faith is genuine. (Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 4:17, 1 Peter 1:7)

- C. A Surrendered Will: verses 1-4, 9-11

God's goal is spiritual maturity but our cooperation is needed.

The principle of surrender is applied to both poor and rich. (9-11)

Money and social status plagued James' readers, not unlike today.

Rich or poor, the need to celebrate God and His goodness is the same.

Both rich and poor need to rely on God.

The poor are challenged because of lack of economic resources.

The rich are challenged because of them.

Worldly possessions or lack can threaten faith and spiritual growth.

- D. Ask: A Heart That Believes: verses 5-8

We need wisdom when facing trials and temptations. James says to ask for the wisdom we need, believing that God will give it to us.

III. TEMPTATION

- A. Don't Be Deceived; God Is Not to Blame: verses 13-15

- B. Deformed Desire (Dr. K.A. Richardson)

- C. Progression of Sin (Wiersbe)

Desire: involves emotions

Deception: involves the intellect

Disobedience: involves the will

Death

We all fail. God extends his lavish grace to those who ask for it with repentant hearts.

IV. GOD IS GOOD AND THE GIVER OF EVERY GOOD AND PERFECT GIFT (verse 17)

Don't be deceived!

A great barrier against temptation is remembering and clinging to the goodness of God.

Suffering, trials, and tests: *A Grace Disguised* (Jerry Sitzer)