

“I Surrender All” - James 5

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2024 - CALEB STARR



Summary

Over the course of our study through the book of James we will cover 108 verses and see 50+ commands given to us as believers regarding how we are to live out our faith in action. We have addressed many practical issues such as trials, temptation, poverty, riches, materialism, favoritism, social justice, our words and taming the tongue, boasting, making plans, praying for others, and rejoicing in suffering, just to name a few. In all of these things we have learned that our faith in Christ should impact how we live our lives. It should lead us to faith in action. It should cause us to surrender all; to let the confession on our lips match the practice of our lives. As we wrap up this week in chapter five, James walks us through a warning regarding self-indulgence and wealth, patience in suffering, and the importance of prayer in our lives and the lives of others. We have learned during our time in James that our role as Christians is to help other brothers and sisters live out this calling. It is not just about an individual relationship with Jesus, but more deeply, that God has formed a people, His Church, and we are called to live the Christian life in a Biblical community. Despite what individualism may say, and despite our natural tendency to want to at times to isolate ourselves, the picture of the Biblical community here in James is one that takes sin seriously and yet loves intentionally. It is each individual Christian, within Christ centered relationship with one another in community, that is able to say, “I surrender all” and thus truly shape the community at large in which they all live.

Scripture - James 5:1-20

Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. 2 Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. 4 Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. 5 You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you. 7 Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. 8 You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. 9 Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. 10 As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful. 12 But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation. 13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. 16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. 18 Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit. 19 My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, 20 let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

Key Apps, Websites, and Online Tools for Further Study

- <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>
- <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
- <https://biblehub.com/>
- <https://www.youversion.com/>
- <https://www.bibleref.com/>
- <https://bible.org/>
- <https://netbible.org/>
- <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/>
- <https://www.gty.org/>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/>
- <https://carm.org/>
- <https://dwellapp.io/>

Further Scripture Study - James (read entire book each day)

Take time to read the background, history, purpose, setting, etc. of James. Use your study bible for this and/or go to the following sites:

<https://www.esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/introduction-to-james/>

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Book-of-James.html>

Right Context:

- The verse itself and key word(s) that stand out in the verse (meanings)
- The verses around the verse, the section of scripture, the chapter, the book, old/new testament, and relation to the rest of scripture
- Author and Date (Who wrote the book and when?)
- Audience (Who is the book written to? Main characters in the story and/or text?)
- Main points and overall purpose of the book
- Historical background, cultural significance, setting, people, rulers, etc.
- Scripture references; let scripture interpret scripture as much as possible

Right Questions:

- What does this passage say?
- What does this passage mean to its original audience?
- What is this passage teaching me about God?
- What does this passage tell us about man?
- What does this passage demand of me? (Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a sin to avoid? How is this applicable to me?)
- How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (What actions must I take in response to this passage?)
- What does this passage prompt me to pray? (For God, for others, for my community, for family, etc.)

Key Thoughts

Our reading each day is our way to implant God's word in our hearts. We must plant God's word in our hearts, souls, and minds if we desire to become more like Christ and allow that relationship to change our actions and examine our intentions.

In verses 1-6, James is addressing the rich, but not simply because they have wealth. To be clear, James is not saying that people cannot have success, wealth, and abundant resources. We understand from Scripture that we all have a responsibility to steward our resources well for the kingdom. James is not so much concerned with wealth as he is with how the rich in this particular case are oppressing the poor and mishandling their resources. And so there are strong words delivered that are a warning to the rich and at the same time a comfort to those being crushed by the hand of the wealthy.

They had stocked piled so much, that their garments, long sitting, had become food for moths, their gold and silver were being wasted, unused, and in that sense "corroded." In other words, James is saying that they had stored so much excess that it was beginning to waste. This was selfishness at the expense of others and poor stewardship of resources.

In the midst of this warning in 1-6 to the self-indulgent rich, James is reminding these believers, and also us as believers, that the Lord will execute justice on their behalf and that the Lord of hosts hears their desperate cries...James' reminder to his readers is that those who are doing the oppressing will have to answer to God.

In verses 7-12 James goes from a sharp word to the wicked, to a comforting reminder and exhortation for the believer. When we see people suffering at the hands of sinful people, or we ourselves are suffering unjustly under the hand of someone who means us harm, God sees, He knows, and we can trust that He will take care of it in His timing and sovereignty. This is not a call to sit back, not speak up, or ignore evil. Rather, it's a reminder to the believer of the character of our great God.

James commands the believers to be patient, he provides examples of steadfastness and endurance in the midst of trial. We almost automatically want to take things into our own hands, we want to retaliate, we want to try to make things right according to our understanding...but James says be patient brother and sister in Christ.

He is sovereign OVER your suffering and He is WITH you IN your suffering. You can trust Him!

Key Thoughts (continued)

We must be grounded, steady, confident, and assured of the character of our great God. It is one thing to trust Him when things are going great, but He deserves no less trust, praise, worship, honor, and wholehearted devotion when things seem sideways, when it seems that things are not going our way, or when we don't comprehend God's ways or there's seeming inactivity (see also 1 Peter 1:3-9 and Job 1:21 for further study on this).

James 5:7-12 shows us...

1. Exhorts the believers to be patient.
2. Reminds them to remain steadfast even in the midst of extreme difficulty.
3. Encourages them to establish their hearts with what their heads already know, and that is this.... The coming of the Lord is at hand. He will come back, and he will make all things new.
4. Called them to recall faithful examples from the past of those who have suffered well. Not perfectly, but persistently trusting the Lord.

In the final major section in James' letter (vs. 13-18) , he moves from patience in the midst of suffering to prayer in the midst of sickness.

We must caution here that we can't develop our whole theology of prayer from these few verses. Scripture has much to say about prayer, praying according to God's will, praying in faith, etc. James is not saying every prayer we pray for the sick and suffering will be answered exactly as we ask. But rather, when there are those among us hurting, it is good for us to gather together and pray for them.

"The Church is one of the God-ordained means God uses to keep us faithful. God is sovereign, and He does the preserving, but He does it through the church looking out for, caring for, and loving one another to keep one another from sin." ~David Platt

As Christians, we must know others and be known, we must help one another walk in faithfulness to the Lord. Christian care involves meeting physical needs, but it also goes beyond the physical to caring for people spiritually as well.

We must exhort others to return to the one whom James says is compassionate and merciful. Beloved, this is our only hope.

Reflect & Respond

How have you done so far this week on reading and/or listening to the book of James each day? Remember, this can be accomplished in just 15 minutes a day! We all have time to do it if we choose to make it a priority in our lives?

What specifically, from chapter 5 is standing out to you as you read? What is convicting you? What do you know needs to change in your life as you read this chapter?

Read James 5:1-6. This text is not saying that a Christian cannot have wealth; however, this text should cause us to consider what we own, what God has given us to steward, and how we treat others who work for or partner with us. How do these verses play a role in us following Jesus and being faithful to advancing His kingdom rather than our own?

Regarding 5:1-6, is there anything in your life that you perhaps have hoarded for yourself? Is there anything that is in danger of being "moth eaten, rotting, or corroding"? What "riches" do you have or experience that you are most prone to commit idolatry with? Are there ways you have traded relationships for riches? Is there anything you may need to consider regarding your faith, your life, and God's truth here in these verses.

As you dive into verse 7-12, where are you currently struggling, or have struggled in the past, to remain patient in the midst of suffering? How do you remain steadfast? How do you persevere? OR...what causes you to grumble against your brother in these situations?

As you think about verses 7-20 regarding suffering and prayer, what life circumstances are you facing that drive you to the Lord most regularly? Are you facing these alone or with other believers. Are you turning to your biblical community, GROW group, pastors, or elders?

Read verses 13-20. As you read this in full context, what type of healing do you believe that James is most concerned with? Physical healing or spiritual healing? Who is in control of the outcome of the healing here (see Exodus 33:19 and Romans 9:5 for more understanding)? Reading Revelation 21:1-8, what, where, and by whom is our ultimate healing given?

Spend some time in verses 19-20. Who in your life do you know that you need to pursue after because they are caught up in the errors of a sinful life? How can you do so and yet also live the life that the book of James calls you to live: in love, slow to speak, quick to listen, taming your tongue, non-judgemental, not showing favoritism, leaning into God's wisdom, avoiding the world's wisdom, with patience, in suffering, in prayer, with others, and without boasting just to name a few? How do these verses challenge you to share your faith with others who are far from God?