

1. Example of conversation with Josh and Sue
 - a. Differing thoughts and feelings at the same time
 - i. Concern...love...hope...resentment...anger
 - ii. Differing tones as different emotions surface
2. Same is true of James letter
 - a. Concerns about their behavior and faith
 - b. Deep love for them
 - c. Righteous anger over mistreatment and disobedience
 - d. Frustration over their pride
3. Changes in tone
 - a. Chapters 1-3...the tone is one of appeal
 - i. 1:19 *"This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger"*
 - ii. 2:5 *"Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?"*
 - iii. 2:14 *"What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?"*
 1. Note that he brings before them questions...this idea of an appeal; asking them to consider...to think.
 - iv. 3:1 *"Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many ways."*
 1. Again, "brethren". And note the "we"... a word of inclusion
 - b. James 4:1 – 5:6... the tone shifts to one of accusation
 - i. 4:1-4 *"What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? 2 **You** lust and do not have; so you commit murder. **You** are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. **You** do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. 4 **You** adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God?"*
 1. "YOU" ... do you hear the change of tone?
 - ii. 4:9 *"Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom."*

iii. 5:1-6 *“Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. 2 Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure! ... 5 You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and put to death the righteous man; he does not resist you.”*

a. Harsh words...the clear change of tone continues

i. Again, “you...you...you”

ii. Words of judgment

c. We see James addresses two groups or categories of people

i. The “haves” and the “have nots”

ii. The oppressors and the oppressed

iii. The “confusers” and the confused

iv. The overtly proud and those falling into subtler forms of pride

d. As an aside, We don’t really see James addressing a third group that is surely there...the spiritually mature

i. They are not the subject of his concerns

ii. They would likely be affirmed and relieved to see James exhibiting and addressing the same concerns that they are keeping them up at night and on their knees.

iii. There is, perhaps, a single verse that is addressed to this third group, and even then, not exclusively.

1. The last verse in the letter, *“My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and **one** turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.”*

a. Gal 6:1 *“Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness”*

4. So we come to our text this morning, and we see another shift in tone and audience

a. From talking to the oppressors, to talking to the oppressed.

b. James 5:7-12 *“Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. 8 You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. 9 Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so*

that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. 10 As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful. 12 But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment."

- i. "therefore"...to what does it refer?
 1. Basically this...In light of the reality of the oppression just mentioned, what is to be the reaction and response of the oppressed?
 - a. That is his new audience...it is the oppressed to whom he is now speaking
- ii. James word to them is "be patient", *makrothumeō*
 1. TDNT "to persevere patiently and bravely in enduring misfortunes and troubles; not to lose heart". It demands, and is based upon, trust and hope...in something or someone.
- iii. In this case it is **both**...*"Until the coming of the Lord"* (vs 7)
 1. He says the same in vs 8, *"You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near."*
 - a. "Strengthen" TDNT "to make stable, place firmly, set fast, fix"
 - i. In hope...in trust...in the Lord and His coming
 2. We could spend many weeks in discussing and examining the "coming of the Lord"
 - a. It is to be our hope...why?
 - i. **It will establish justice.** Ps 96:11ff. *"Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; Let the sea roar, and all it contains; 12 Let the field exult, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy Before the LORD, for He is coming, For He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness And the peoples in His faithfulness."*
 - ii. **It will establish our hearts, blameless and holy.** 1Thess 3:12ff. *"may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you; 13 so that He may establish your hearts*

without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.”

- iii. **It will culminate in “newness” of all things.** Rev 21:1ff.
*“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, 4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.” 5 And He who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” And He *said, “Write, for these words are faithful and true.” 6 Then He said to me, “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. 7 He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.”*

3. Why do we believe? Why do we follow?
- Would you not affirm he is worthy of our belief and worthy to be followed?
4. Jesus makes the same offer to everyone. If you are here and have not come to follow Him...to believe in Him... to entrust your lives to Him... hear His words in Matt 11:28ff *“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”*
- If you long for justice and equity...for personal holiness and freedom from guilt and sin...for newness of life and purpose...for hope of entering His rest and kingdom... Jesus offers all of that to those who follow and serve Him

- b. Message is for two groups...those outside the kingdom and those inside. To those inside, the message is to come deeper in... to let the "Spirit of Christ dwell within you richly". To those outside the message is to enter in... to
 - i. Nate or I... or others here today... would be honored to come along side you and help you understand and consider Jesus offer of redemption and salvation. As Nate said last week, "Now is the acceptable day of salvation"
 - ii. Great place to close, but James is not done
- iv. James offers a warning to those who are longing for justice, but are unwilling to be patient, waiting upon the Lords coming. It serves as a warning to us as well. In 4:9 we read, *"Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door."*
 - 1. "complain" ,Literally "groan", it is not so much the idea of overt complaining as it is a sense of "really?" it is a sense of being "put upon" ...of unfairness, or perhaps wistfulness and longing.
 - a. Rom 8:23 *"And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body."*
 - i. Not necessarily negative...it is the "against one another" that gives it the negative sense and feel.
 - b. Same word in Heb 13:17 *"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with **grief**, for this would be unprofitable for you."*
 - c. Mark 7:23ff Jesus goes up to Tyre and Sidon...gentile territory 30-50 miles away
 - i. story of demon possessed child; story of the deaf man
 - ii. *"and looking up to heaven with a **deep sigh**, He *said to him, "Ephphatha!" that is, "Be opened!" 35 And his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was removed, and he began speaking plainly. 36 And He gave*

them orders not to tell anyone; but the more He ordered them, the more widely they continued to proclaim it.”

2. So, James is saying, “As you endure the hardships and injustice of life, do not do so with groaning and grumbling against those unfair people and things, but with the hope and certainty of God’s faithfulness and Jesus return”
- v. If James’ reminder of finding hope in the coming of the Lord is not enough, James also gives them examples of those who hope and trust that they might follow.
 1. The farmer, vs 7 *“The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains.”*
 - a. The farmer plants with a heart of trust and hope
 - i. For the early and latter rains; both are needed; one comes shortly after planting to aid germination and the other comes shortly before harvest to enlarge and enhance the fruit.
 1. No irrigation
 - b. He must have patience
 - i. Can you imagine a farmer constantly digging up the seed to check its growth?
 1. Lot of work
 2. Injurious to the seed; it’s not going to work
 3. We have to wait... to be patient
 2. The prophets; vs 10 *“As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 We count those blessed who endured.”*
 - a. Matt 23:37 *“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.”*
 - i. Under severe persecution, they remained faithful to their message, their ministry, and their hope in God
 3. Job vs 11 *“You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord’s dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.”*

5. Story of Job *“Now on the day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house, 14 a messenger came to Job and said, “The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, 15 and the Sabeans attacked and took them. They also slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.” 16 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you.” 17 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and took them and slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.” 18 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house, 19 and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you.” 20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 He said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.” 22 Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.”*

- i. God goes on to allow Satan to attack Job’s health, sparing only his life. Job’s response... *“Though He slay me, I will hope in Him.”* (Job 13:15) Job is an example of endurance and trust.
- ii. God’s faithful restoration Job 42:10 *“The LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the LORD increased all that Job had twofold... The LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning;”*

6. Final verse, vs 12 *“But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.”*

a. What does this have to do with the passage?

- i. Stand in contrast to both the passage we just read as well as the passage that follows
 1. Oath; a promise based upon an appeal to some authority or power... *“As God is my witness”* ...
 - a. We have no intrinsic power in ourselves.

- i. James 4:14 *“You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.”*

- ii. Ps 103:14 *“For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust. 15 As for man, his days are*

like grass; As a flower of the field, so he flourishes.

16 When the wind has passed over it, it is no more, And its place acknowledges it no longer.”

- b. We have no right to appeal to, or claim, an external power.
 - i. Matt 5:34ff. *“ But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING. 36 Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 But let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’; anything beyond these is of evil.”*
- c. It is a poor alternative to the patience of the previous verses and the prayer of the following verses. Swearing an oath is usually an expression of pride...patience and prayer are expressions of humility.

7. So, what do we take away from these verses?

- a. Our eyes and hearts are to be patiently fixed on the coming of our Lord
 - i. The coming of our rescue and exultation
 - ii. The coming of His justice and kingdom
- b. We are to live in reliance on His power and mercy, not seek to find our own solutions in our own strength
- c. In doing so, we are protected from falling into depression, despair or into a grumbling self pity.

It seems the former would be preferable to the latter. Let us pray.