

<b>Topic</b>	Awaiting his Presence
<b>Reference</b>	James 5:7-10
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<b>Speaker</b>	Pastor Joash Chan

Good morning. My name is Joash. I'm the youth and campus pastor here. I've been here almost three years. I hope today when I speak right, you don't feel like I'm hitting you, but if my language don't sound like I'm preaching to myself, please forgive me, but I am. We all come under the word of God and we all bow at the feet of Jesus and we ask for help and mercy. I just give you a disclaimer, it is not easy. Let me give you the outline first before we read.

- the mandate
- the motivation
- the model.

What is the command? Why should I obey this command and how does this command look like in real life?

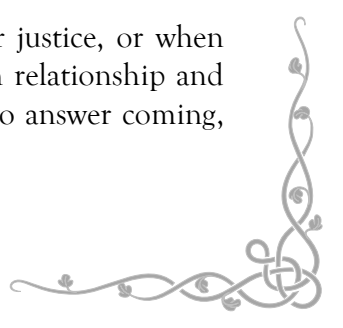
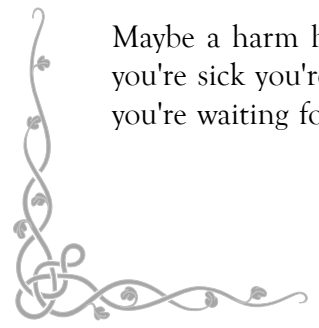
**James 5:7-10**

*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 too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. 9 Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! 10 Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.*

Patience is a virtue that carries a lot of wait. People that go to see the doctor are called patients because they have to wait. Who likes to be told to wait? Nobody. What is your favorite part of waiting? Nothing. Maybe the ending of waiting. That's my favorite part. When as parents when you ask your kids to do something, what's the most annoying answer to hear? Wait. When we are excited about something we say we can't wait, but we have to.

Patience is one of those things that we demand from others but we ourselves don't have. When someone tries to cut our lane we say, wait, your turn. When someone scolds us for being late, we say you cannot wait a bit. When people ask for something impossible or really difficult, we say you slowly wait. So the mandate to be patient, it brings about a conflict in our hearts. We know that is good, but we just don't have it in us. Furthermore, James writes to people who are going through suffering. They were oppressed, they were troubled. James 1:2 says that they are going to trials of various kinds. 1:9, they are called believers in humble circumstances. It's one thing to be patient when you're waiting in line for something, it is a whole different thing when you're called to be patient in suffering.

Maybe a harm has been done to you that has been foul played and you're waiting for justice, or when you're sick you're waiting for full recovery, or even just some relief, if there is a broken relationship and you're waiting for restoration. When you're worried about something and there's just no answer coming,



it's just dark days for you. You're waiting for your circumstances to change, for God to intervene somehow. Waiting is painful. Waiting in suffering is painful. James, he's not unfamiliar with suffering. As a head of the persecuted church in Jerusalem, he had to take care of people who lived in poverty and constant danger. The church was suffering. They were waiting for relief, whether it's food relief or rescue, they were waiting. They had to wait in pain.

So why does James calls suffering people to be patient? I mean, it's already tough enough that I'm suffering, why are you asking me to be patient. I mean, we know that it's good but it's really hard, especially when we're suffering. If you want me to wait, it better be worth it. If you want me to wait, it better be worth the wait.

So, what is James motivation for those who suffer patiently? What is at the end of this waiting. The coming of the Lord. Verse seven,

*Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord.*

Just now we read Isaiah 35, speaking of the overturn of events of outcome when the Lord comes again, verse 6 says, then we'll lead the lame deer. The lame leap like a deer and the mute tongue shout for joy, water or gush out from the wilderness and streams in the desert for those who are redeemed by the blood of the lamb. Verse 10 says, gladness and joy will overtake them, sorrow and sigh will flee away. When was the last time you sigh?

Sorrow and sigh will flee away, why? Because of verse 4, your God will come. He will come with vengeance, with divine retribution He will come to save you. Revelation 21 echoes the same sentiment when God comes to us, and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, behold, the dwelling place of God is with men. He will dwell with them. They will be his people and God himself will be with them as there God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning nor crying, nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away. God will dwell with his people.

God's presence with us spells the end of all sorrow, all pain, and all death. Why? Because Psalm 16:11 right? In your presence is fullness of joy and your right hand are pleasures forevermore. It is true that if you believe in Jesus, you put your faith in Jesus, he is with you now, he has never left you, he has never forsaken you, but he will come again and it will be even more glorious. Our trials, our circumstances, they will end. Your sorrows will be turned into joy. Christ is coming. He is worth the wait.

There is literally nothing better than Christ coming. We are called to wait for him, be patient. James say, be patient like a farmer. Second half of verse 7,

*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.*

Now Deuteronomy 11 gives us a picture of Israel's agriculture situation. God says, I will take you out from a land of irrigation where they can get water from the Nile River where they drink water from the sky. So from the rain. It says in Deuteronomy 11,

*11 But the land that you are going over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water by the rain from heaven, 12 a land that the Lord your God cares for. The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.*

So basically the farmer in Israel is completely dependent on rain to water the crops. Without the rain, the farmer loses everything but thankfully the person in charge of the rain is God himself, and God says, I will constantly be attentive to it from beginning to the end of the year. As surely as you can trust God's faithfulness, you can be sure that there will be rain for the crops and therefore the farmer in Israel, he waits with hope. There is hope in his waiting. The farmer plants and does his work based on the past patterns of weather, which reminds him of God's promise, the certainty of God's promise. And so the farmer, he's not idle, he's not doing nothing, he is investing, he is working in hope of precious fruit. He is not unsure of the coming of the rain. He believes that the rain will come. That's why he's still farming. He is not hopeless.

Likewise, the Christian is called to remember God's faithfulness in the past and labor in hope, to wait in hope in total dependence on God. I know I'm totally dependent on God but I trust him, I can hope in him. But what if there is a drought. I mean farmer of Israel don't do it, don't be a farmer man. Israel you depend on rain, don't be a farmer. What if there's a drought, is not worth the risk you are placing all your eggs in one basket, you are banking everything upon something that is uncertain. How sure are you that the rain will come?

As surely as Christ has come and walked among us, as surely as Christ who was nailed to a Roman cross and died, as surely as Christ was raised to life and now praying for us at the right hand of God, he will come again. It may seem like a drought now. Be patient. He is coming. And he is worth the wait.

So last Sunday, Pastor Leon called us to place our hope in God alone and not in anything else. What does it mean for people to be losing hope? For the farmer in Israel losing hope is, I'm going to quit farming. I'm not going to be a farmer anymore, or I'm going to be a farmer not in Israel. I'm going to go back to Egypt where I can depend on the river at least. I don't have to completely depend on God. So how does losing hope in God look like for us? How does losing hope in God look like light for you? So some of you maybe in this situation, you've been hurt, you really don't want to forgive. Some bad thing has been done to you and you want to take matters into your own hands. You're not trusting God. You're not waiting or hoping on God to bring vengeance. Or maybe as simple as your child has been rebellious and you're just, give up on disciplining him. Maybe you're single and you cannot find a good Christian boy or a girl and you're thinking any boy or girl will be okay, you're not hoping for God to bring that good that Christian boy or girl. Maybe your business is not going well and you're tempted to cheat, to bribe, to sabotage. Maybe life is just full on dark clouds and you're just tempted to give up on life altogether.

Hope in God, be patient, He is coming and he is worth the wait. Verse 8 says, ,

*8 You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.*

We just went through one outline. The mandate is to be patient. The motivation is the coming of the Lord and the model is like the farmer, be patient like the farmer because the Lord is coming. Verse 9 and 10 we see the same rhythm, the same outline. Verse 9

*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.*

The mandate here is do not grumble. Just hearing someone tell you don't grumble make you want to grumble. I'm like come on man, I like the grumble. I mean it's literally the air we breathe. How do we make friends by complaining about the same thing? We love to grumble. I mean if you want me to wait, you want me to be patient at least let me grumble. It makes sense for patience and grumbling to be parent together. Because patience isn't just about waiting, is about endurance, is about tolerance. If you're waiting in line for something but you are grumbling all the way, you are not patient. But we do it all the time, don't we? In our workplaces, we grumble against colleagues, we grumble against our bosses. We grumble against the customers. In our homes we grumble against family members, even in a church there is grumbling against brothers and sisters. It is so natural especially when we are suffering. While doing ministry you get so stressed, you get so worked up and you just lash out at someone and you grumble.

When there is sickness at home, both the care and a caregiver are under tremendous stress and there is a lot of grumbling happening, it is hard. It's really natural to grumble when you're suffering and in that moment of frustration, we lash out, we grumble, and we hurt the ones that we love. Verse 9 says,

*do not grumble against one another so that you may not be judged.*

Now two questions. Why will we be judged if we grumble against one another? And number two, what kind of judgment is James referring to? Why will we be judged and what kind of judgment we will get. To answer both questions we go to 1 Corinthians. In 1-Cor there was disunity in the church, the rich versus the poor, and Paul was scolding them because the rich people they were not waiting for the poor to eat together, the Lord's Supper. By the time poor comes, the rich are full already, drunk even. Paul says they were despising the church of God and humiliating those who have nothing. They were basically degrading the poor. They were devaluing their fellow brother and sister in Christ. And so Paul gives a closing word on the matter, 1-Cor 11

*29 For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. 31 But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.*

So because they did not give proper honor to fellow members of Christ, they eat and drink judgment upon themselves. So, to answer the question, why, why will we get judged when we grumble against one another? Because you are essentially dishonoring, degrading, devaluing a fellow member of the body of Christ, and for God that is not acceptable. We will be judged when we grumble because we are devaluing our fellow brother and sister.

Question two, what kind of judgment will we face? Verse 32 tells us that this judgment is not condemnation along with the unbelieving world, rather is a discipline from our heavenly father to his children. For some of us, we feel really relieved after we hear that. Oh, I will be judged but I won't be judged like condemned to hell. I would just be judged like I'll be disciplined, so yay I'm going to keep grumbling. Well, not so fast, you remember the discipline is strong, is very harsh, some are weak and ill and some have died. And when we come back to James, James is also not so fast to let us off the hook also. James 2 verse 17,

*Faith without works is dead.*

James 2:19

*you believe that God is one you do well, even the demons believe and shudder.*

In other words, our behavior must give evidence that we are true believers. And James reminds us, don't grumble against one another because second part of verse 9 says, behold the judge is standing at the door. Again after the mandate, James points to the coming of the Lord, but this time the coming of the Lord as a judge. Jesus say in Matthew 3

*8 Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. 9 And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. 10 Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.*

And so we have to ask ourselves, does grumbling give good evidence that we are good tree, does grumbling show good fruit and reveal that we are a good tree or does grumbling show actually that we are producing bad fruits and therefore we are a bad tree. Let's not make the same mistakes that the Pharisees make, thinking that a form of religion is enough. We need to bear fruit in keeping with repentance. Philippians 2:14 and 15

*do all things without grumbling or disputing that you may be blameless and innocent Children of God without blemish.*

There's only one judge and James tells us that the judge is standing at the door. He's coming and when we grumble against one another we are essentially taking the judge's place and we are playing judge. James say, the judge is coming, we better stop playing pretend and take our rightful places. We are not the judge. There is only one judge. Romans 14:10

*why do you pass judgment on your brother? Why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.*

Matthew 12:36

*36 I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak,*

And James tells us, even in our suffering don't grumble. Verse 10.

*As an example of suffering and patience. Brothers take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.*

So the model here is the prophets. The prophets were God's spokesperson to the nation of Israel. They got tree tasks

- To point out people's sin.
- To plead with people to repent.
- If the people don't repent to proclaim God's judgment,

Who wants to be a prophet, point out people's sin, plead with them to repent and proclaim God's judgment. These people are not very well alight, the prophets. They were recipients of much grumbling. These were men who spoke God's truth to a sinful generation and they paid a high price for doing so. They were ignored, rejected, abused, thrown in the prison, mocked and killed and yet they stayed faithful and they did not waver. They suffered much but yet they remained faithful to what God asks of them. James calls us to those of us who are suffering to remain faithful to God's command and not grumble against one another.

*Therefore, my beloved brothers be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.*

The mandate is do not grumble. The motivation the judge is at the door. Model are the prophets. Do not grumble like the prophets, they remain faithful throughout much hardship and suffering.

What a wonderful Christmas message? So far right it is bad news all the way. You asked me to be patient, I don't want to be patient. You asked me not to grumble, come on. I want to grumble. The only good news is the coming of the Lord, but I have to wait how long. I don't want to be patient. I don't want to be like a farmer. I don't want to be like the prophets. I don't want to suffer like them. I want to grumble.

Brothers and sisters may the wait of the common and the revelation of our helplessness drives towards the good news of Jesus Christ. For those who are impatient. For those who are grumblers turn to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel of Jesus Christ tells us that we belong to a God who is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. Yet we humans, we have rejected him as our master over and over again, and instead of coming down hard on us like a judge is, instead of coming to us with a vengeance to condemn us, he graciously sends his prophets to call us back to repentance. Hebrews 1 say

*In these last days, he has spoken to us by his son.*

Jesus is the prophet who faithfully delivered God's word, and ultimately that led him to a Roman cross and death. On the cross he did not grumble against his enemies. In fact, he prayed for their forgiveness. Until his final breath, he remained hopeful in God. He never stopped hoping in God. He cried out farther into your hands I entrust my spirit. His hope in God was vindicated because three days later God raised Jesus back to life, and because of his work on the cross, defeating sin and death through his sacrifice, we have the blessed hope that when he comes again, all pain, all sorrow, death will be wiped out.

Why did Jesus go through all of that? More than just to show us an example, more than just to be a model for us to imitate. I mean, Jesus didn't grumble, so you also don't grumble. No more than that. Jesus died on the cross to show us the patience, the steadfast love, and the faithfulness of God towards us. Through Christ we hear God speaking to us, not a word of judgment, not a word of condemnation, but a word of love. I love you. I am patient with you. I have loved you with an everlasting love. And if we receive these words of love with faith, we have the Holy spirit in us, the Holy spirit who empowers us to be like God, to be patient, to not grumble against others.

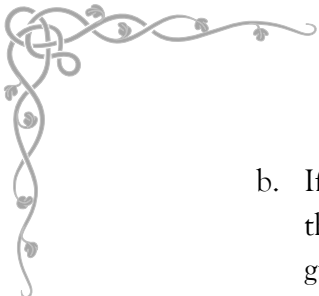
Our faithful patience displays God's great patience to the world. When we are filled with the spirit, empowered by the spirit to be patient with one another, we show the world the patience of God. And so may this gospel be the driving force of our love and obedience towards him. In our moments of pain and suffering, let us remember that we are the recipients of patience and not just any patience, divine patience from God and may our gratitude and our delight in that patience empower us by the Holy spirit to be patient towards all.

Reflect on the gospel. Whenever you are impatient, whenever you're tempted to grumble, remember that we have received divine patience from God. We are the recipients of patience. I will close with addressing three groups of people

1. If you are here and you have not responded to the gospel of Jesus Christ, you hear the patience of God towards you, I have two verses to share for you.
  - a. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some understand slowness but is patient with you not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.
  - b. Therefore having overlooked times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent because he has fixed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness through a man whom he has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising him from the dead.

If you are here and you have not responded to the gospel. I want you to know God is patient with you because he desires you to repent and return to him. He has given sufficient proof by the resurrection of Jesus Christ that this is the King you follow. This is the God that you must bow to and he is a judge. He has fixed a day of judgment. If you believe Jesus is the son of God, you believe he lived the life you should have lived and dying the death you should have died. You put your faith in him today. He died so that you may receive forgiveness. Do not wait any longer, fall at the feet of the cross and receive the divine word of love by making Jesus Christ your Lord and savior.

2. If you've been a grumbler, that should be all of us, right? Bear with one another. And if anyone has a complaint against another, forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. I give you three steps, each step gets harder.
  - a. Forgive that person as the Lord has forgiven you.

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- b. If you feel more convicted, confess to your grumbling partner. We all have that partner that we grumbled to. Confess to their grumbling partner and saying, I want to stop grumbling. Can you help me?
  - c. If you ever grumble at someone would you go and confess to them and ask them for forgiveness. Because when you grumble against someone, you're demeaning them, you're devaluing them, you are treating them as lesser than you. Would you go to the person that you grumble at, would you ask for forgiveness.

The third group is for those who are losing hope in God, you cannot wait anymore, you cannot be patient like the farmer. You're losing hope in God. Would you let someone know, could you tell someone about it? Just open your mouth and say, I'm losing hope in God. I'm starting to do things the way the world is doing it. God asks us to do it certain way, but I'm giving it up because I'm losing hope in God. Would you tell someone, do not walk the journey alone.

I pray that the Holy Spirit will reveal to you the glories of God. He is the only solid rock on which we can stand. He is worth the wait. There is literally nothing better. Therefore establish your hearts. The coming of the Lord is at hand, dark and cheerless is the mourn until your love in means born. The joyless is the evening song until Emmanuel has come. On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.

