

Sermon on James 1:12-18

Title: Envisioning the Steadfast Christian

Series: Resilient

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. 14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

James 1:16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. 18 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

James 1:2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds...

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial.

"Blessed introduces someone who is to be congratulated, whose place in life is an enviable one."

- RT France

Trials raise questions about faith and life.

- Can I trust God really loves me because of this trial in my life?
- What is the relationship between the God who is in charge of my trial and my response to the trial?

1. Caution: God holds us responsible for unbelieving responses to trial

A. Caution: Don't Impugn God's Character When Trials Come

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.

"People in tight places tend to turn and challenge God, and the ought never to do so, for it is unfaith. This theme is summed up in the ... command, "You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah" (Deuteronomy 6:16).

- Peter Davids

Ex. 16:4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not."

Ex. 17:1 All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness... according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. 2 Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink."

And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?"

3 But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"

4 So Moses cried to the LORD, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.”

5 And the LORD said to Moses, “Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. 6 Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.”

And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the LORD by saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?

B. Caution: Death is the Outcome of Unresolved Unbelief

James 1:14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

How can we heed James's caution and battle unbelief during trial?

- Recognize the priority.
- Substitute lament for complaining.
- Let community work for you...
- Recognize that times of failure are still the right time to fight.

2. Clarity: the strength of God's will is stronger than your trial

James 1:16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights,

James points us to the night sky so that he can make two points about God.

- First, James reminds us that God as “FATHER” is distinct from creation.
- Second, directs us to the night sky because all kinds of change happen in the sky.

James 1:16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

18 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

NT writers use the phrase “word of truth” to describe gospel message about Jesus.

Eph. 1:13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit...

James 1:18 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.