

- **\*Read James 5:7-11/Prayer\*** We have well noted that the **Letter of James** is a treasure trove for wise and practical living for the Christian in this life. As James begins to wrap up this great letter, he turns his attention to the matter of suffering that was being experienced by many who were receiving this writing. "The rich" had brought down persecutions and difficulties upon the faithful of God, and James gives strong encouragements for them to overcome. He implores for them to be patient in their trials. "Be patient and strengthen your hearts" is his cry for the coming of the Lord was near.
- As a means of encouraging these brethren to patience and endurance, James points them towards the examples of the prophets of past days who spoke in the name of the Lord. Certainly, their sufferings are well noted throughout the the Old Testament, but we are also aware of the immense sufferings of another individual that is well noted in the Old Testament and that person is Job. James specifically mentions this man as a person who displayed immense endurance as he suffered beyond what many of us can comprehend. This evening, I'd like for us to take some time to consider the endurance of Job, how he suffered, how we might suffer the same way, and what we must keep in mind when we endure through such sufferings as he did.

## I. Job Endured Loss

- A. The story of Job is well known by so many throughout history. Our introduction to Job, from his standpoint, couldn't go much better. He is called a blameless, upright, and God fearing man who turned away from evil. He was a godly man in every sense of the word. But not only this, he was also a blessed man. He was extremely wealthy within the land he lived. He was also blessed with a very large family. **(Job 1:1-5)** Job lived a good life, and God was proud of the way he lived that life.
- B. God was proud to the extent that He even bragged upon the character of Job to Satan himself when he came among the heavenly beings that were gathered together in the midst of God. **(Job 1:6-12)** Of course Satan, being the evil being that he is attributes Job's goodness to the blessings in his life. God upholds his faith in Job, and allows him to be experience great loss of property and loved ones. **(Job 1:13-19)**
- C. Job responds with endurance & grace that we probably have a hard time understanding and comprehending consider what he has gone through...but he is able to do so because he recognizes that everything good things comes from God and ultimately it is His to take away if He so wishes. **(Job 1:20-22)**
- D. While we may never lose as much at one time as Job did, it is undeniable that we have and will suffer loss in this life from time to time. There will be times when we lose possessions either through theft, deterioration, or incident. Even so much worse are those times when we lose those that we love. The fact of the matter is that we do live in a very much broken world. Bad things happen to everyone. Whether just or unjust...good things happen to both and both suffer loss. **(Matthew 5:45)** Job recognized just how blessed he was and he knew that just as good things could happen to him, so could bad things and he was at peace with that.
- E. But still...how was Job able to get past this horrible day in his life? I'm convinced that he was able to do so in the same way that James told his readers to get through it. Look for something better! Knowing this life is broken and troublesome ought to cause us to long for something so much better, and that something better is heaven where no more loss will ever be experienced.

## II. Job Endured Physical Suffering

- A. With Job not crumbling in his faith, God once again boasts of his faithful servant and how he withstood such great loss. Satan, again placing doubt in Job's faith, claims that Job would abandon his faith if his actually body was harmed in some way. So Job's body was stricken with horrible boils from his head to his foot. **(Job 2:4-8)** Even with this immense pain and agony, Job's faith remained intact and he refused to sin with his lips. **(Job 2:10)**
- B. How was Job able to endure such pain and misery within his own body and how can we do the same if ever faced with the same physical illness or suffering? It begins by recognizing that the broken nature of our bodies is a result of sin's introduction into the world. The sin of Adam condemned him to life outside of the Garden and without access to the tree of life **(Genesis 3)** thus leaving our bodies open to decay and brokenness and eventual death.
- C. It would be nice if we all would pass from this earth by natural causes of a tired body, but sadly we often suffering physically before our passing. Sickness and illness often bring about our deaths, and that's just a sad fact of life in this broken world.

- D. However, we are able to accept reality of our bodies not being eternally durable because we look towards the next life where this perishing body becomes one that will not perish. **(II Cor. 5:1-8; I Cor. 15:51-58)** None of us want to suffer in this earthly body, but we are able to endure such suffering and pain because we know that there is something better on the other side.

### III. Job Endured A Difficult Spouse

- A. Not only was Job suffering physically with the boils, but his wife adds insult to injury by encouraging him to denounce God and just give up. I often wonder what kind of woman Mrs. Job must have been for Satan to take all that Job had family wise...except his wife. Maybe to take her would've been a blessing, but all kidding aside...Job's wife was being difficult through his sufferings, yet Job endured even her and did not sin with his lips. **(Job 2:9,10)**
- B. How was Job able to do this? How was he able to continue to do what he needed to do as a husband and not mistreat his wife who had done him wrong? How can we overcome having a spouse that doesn't fulfill his or her role as such within our marriage? Job was able to deal with this because he knew that he needed to. Even if our spouse isn't the faithful person that he or she ought to be, that doesn't excuse us from doing what we know we ought to do. I think about Peter's admonitions to the reader in **I Peter 3:1-9**. The woman whose husband is unfaithful isn't to just up and leave him simply because he isn't as he ought to be. Instead, she is to continue on fulfilling her role as the wife in the hopes that her good example would motivate the husband to do as he ought to do.
- C. Regardless of the actions of our spouse, we are to fulfill our role. We are to display the type of characteristics that Peter says will help to bring a great blessing to us in the end. **(I Peter 3:8,)** It can be difficult at times to endure difficulties or wrongdoings that go on in our marriages at times. After all, isn't this person supposed to love and respect me and isn't our marriage supposed to imitate Christ and His church? While these things are true, **(Eph. 5:22ff)** we must keep in mind that one of the ways in which our marriages are different from Christ and His church is that our marriages include two imperfect people. Even we can be and are guilty of falling short from time to time. If we expect patience and grace then we must be willing to give it, as well.

### IV. Job Endured Unjust Accusations & Treatment

- A. At the end of chapter 2, three of Job's friends come to console him. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar begin well by just being there to support him. However, they quickly mess things up by sneakily accusing him of sin. Eliphaz comes strongly at Job in **Job 4:7-11**, and then he says that he would seek God if he had sinned \*like Job did\* in his mind. This pattern of accusations of sin is constant throughout the conversations between Job and his friends. He is genuinely hurt by these accusations, yet he pushes on through them.
- B. Our final question of "How?" How is it that Job was willing to overcome these unjust accusations and harsh treatment from these men? How can we overcome when we are wrongly accused of things or treated wrongly for no reason? We begin by recognizing that our faith will often make us a target for slander or smearing of our good name. Satan would love for us to be hounded to the point where we give up our faith on account of constant attacks from those around us. Those people back in James were being persecuted because of their faith and James says to stand strong! **(James 5:7,8)**
- C. They certainly were not the first to suffer for their faith. In fact, Jesus was very upfront and clear with His followers that they would often be hated simply for wearing His name. **(Matthew 10:22)** He knew that His followers would have a rough go from time to time, but His words of encouragement must be kept fresh in our minds! The world might not bring us peace always, but in Christ we can always have peace and know that better things are ahead. **(16:33)** Our perseverance in this life, even to the point of physical suffering and pain is just temporary and it is leading to something that is far beyond what this life can offer. The crown of righteousness ought to be our goal day by day, **(Rev. 2:10)** and if that is our goal and focus then we can be like Job and overcome the unjust nature of this life.

Sometimes, this life is just hard. The broken nature of this world can leave us in places where it might seem at times as if we can't go on. However, James encourages the original recipients and us to remember the example of Job. He encourages us to remember the way he endured such difficulties in such a short period of time. May we look at the actions of Job and seek to emulate them when we are faced with trials of this life. And when we have overcome, may we give God all the glory recognizing that He supplied us the strength to continue to live on through the difficulties, and may we then go on to receive the crown of glory that awaits for us in the next life.