

## Epistle of James XIII Endure and Look to the God of All Comfort

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James 4:13: “Now listen, those of you who say, ‘Today and tomorrow we will go into such a city, and we will spend a year, and we will conduct business and make a profit.’ You do not even know what *will happen* tomorrow! For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little while, and then disappears. Instead, you *ought* to say, ‘If the Lord wills we will live, and we will do this or that.’ But now you boast in your own arrogance. All such boasting is evil. Therefore, *if* anyone knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin” (vs 13-17).

First of all we need to understand that there is nothing in the world that is going to be against the will of God—*period!* That does not mean that God is going to interfere and make a person do any one thing or the other. Why is that so? *Free agency!* If God gives free agency, it must be free agency, which means that you have to choose.

Now, what if you choose the wrong thing? Is God going to stop you from choosing the wrong thing? No, He’s not! Unless He’s got a job for you to do, then God is going to intervene. You can look at Jonah. Jonah is a good example of that. He didn’t want to do the will of God. He chose the wrong thing, but God said, ‘no, I can’t let you do that because you’ve got to do what I told you to do.’ I’m talk just about the average person. If God gives free moral agency, He gives free moral agency! In a sense, even with Jonah, God did allow him to choose certain things to do, but He said, ‘I’m going to show you what needs to be done.’

Everything needs to be according to the will of God. Let’s see that even Jesus Christ—the night He was arrested—He put everything in God’s hands, according to the will of God. Of course, that’s supposed to be the first part of our prayer—isn’t it? ‘Our Father in heaven, Holy is Your name, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’ It’s going to be! And that what Jesus did knowing He was going to be arrested and crucified.

Luke 22:41: “And He withdrew from them about a stone’s throw; and falling to *His* knees, He prayed, saying, ‘Father, if You are willing to take away this cup from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Your *will* be done’” (vs 41-42).

He never asked for His own will. He started out by saying, “...**If You are willing**...” appealing to the will of God. Then He said, “...nevertheless, not My will, but **Your will** be done.” So, even Jesus had it on that level.

Colossians 3:17 gives us a little more understanding about the will of God and also how we are to live our lives and put it in such a way. In spite of the troubles I’ve had with my car, I’m sure it was not the will of God that my car breakdown again. It was the will of the machine. I had to work around that, but I still got done what I needed to get done. God intervened and got me a ride right away and it was right down to where I needed to get the rent-a-car. So, here’s how then once you ask for God’s will to be done then you do this:

Colossians 3:17: “And *in* everything—whatever you do in word or in deed—...” Whatever you’re doing, that follows right along with what James was saying:

- include God in on your life
- include God in your business
- include God in everything that you do

—here’s an overall summary: “...*do* all in *the* name of *the* Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and *the* Father by Him” (v 17).

There’s a perfect way, as a complete guidepost or motto, on how we need to live our lives. Whatever we do, we put it in God’s hands. I know that there are many things now that I say to God, ‘God, I just don’t know.’ You think: What are you going to do? You just say, ‘God, I don’t know what I should do. Help me to see what I should do.’ I think if we did that more, as it is here, then our lives will be more in line with what God wants them to be.

Ephesians also talks about the will of God. This is why we need to study the Bible, the Word of God and apply it to our lives in a daily way, such as James is teaching us.

Ephesians 5:17: “For this reason, do not be foolish, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*.” That’s what we are to be understanding! How are we to know the will of God? *By studying God’s Word!*

James 4:16: “But now you boast in your own arrogance....” This has quite an interesting thing to it; it actually means that you are boasting in how good your quackery is. *It’s vain and empty!* Like the one who sells ‘snake oil’ for \$2. You’ve seen these old westerns where they sell this ‘snake oil.’ They still do it today. Only thing is they have an 800-number. You can call in and get your own ‘snake oil’—boasting what a great thing it is.

Let's go to Proverbs and see some things concerning evil boasting, arrogance, pride, money and profit. The book of Proverbs is tremendous, if you want to know different things to do on a daily living basis, the book of Proverbs is fantastic.

Proverbs 20:14—and this is so true concerning buying and selling: “*It is bad! It is bad!*” says the buyer...” ‘It ain’t worth that much; I’m not going to pay that much for it. You know that this thing, if I bought it new, it would be \$5,000. I’m not going to give you \$2,500 for it. I’m going to give you \$500 for it.’

“...but when he has gone his way, then he boasts” (v 14). ‘Look what a deal I found, I really ripped this guy off. I really got the best of him.’ That’s exactly what it’s talking about.

Verse 17: “Bread of deceit *is* sweet to a man, but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.” We can think of Charles Keating—Lincoln Savings and Loan—who sold all of these worthless junk bonds to all of these people. And all of these people thought, ‘I’m really going to get it. I’m really going to make it.’ Because Keating said, ‘You can make 7% in your savings account here at the bank, but if you buy these bonds, which the bank is selling, you’re going to earn 15%. So, greed on both sides said, ‘Yeah, that’s a good deal.’ What happened? They’re all ‘eating gravel’! The bonds are no good. Keating is in jail. And we could go on and on and on with a lot of examples we could use to show how this proverb applies.

Here’s the same thing, Proverbs 21:6: “The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro by those who seek death.” You could almost make a movie of that! Quite a descriptive verse!

You could put in there all kinds of con games. They just had to cut off the phone privilege from a man who was in jail, who was calling women. He would put a little ad in the paper and they would call this number and ask for him, and he would con them into sending him money—he didn’t tell them he was in prison—and he would do certain things for them. Right there in jail. You talk about crass. Couldn’t believe it. Think about that the next time you buy a used car or whatever.

Verse 7: “The robbery of the wicked shall destroy... [Isn’t that the theme of many, many movies? *They end up destroying themselves!*] ...them because they refuse to do what is just.”

James 4:16: “...All such boasting is evil.” That is rejoicing in sin! I’ll just refer you to Dan. 4 about Nebuchadnezzar. Remember what happened to Nebuchadnezzar. He said, ‘Oh boy, I’ve built this

big city, this is great, by my hand’ and ZAPPO! he got it; he got called into judgment.

Verse 17: “Therefore, *if* anyone knows to do good... [this is talking about having left the right way and then going back and doing the wrong way] ...and does not do *it*, to him it is sin.”

2-Peter 2—this concerns more than just business practices; this concerns everything. This concerns the knowledge of Truth, the things concerning Passover. We’ll see how this ties right in with ‘great swelling words of vanity’ and so forth.

2-Peter 2:18: “For they speak bombastic *words* of vanity, enticing *others* through *the* lusts of *the* flesh by granting indulgences to sin, *and* *ensnaring* those who had indeed escaped from those who live in deception. While promising them freedom, they themselves are actually slaves of corruption because by whatever anyone is overcome, he is also held in bondage. For if, after escaping the moral defilements of the world through *the* knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...” (vs 18-20).

- They have known Truth!
- They have known to do good!

“...they again become entangled in them, and are overcome... [completely given themselves over to the evil] ...the final end is worse than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after knowing *it*, to turn back from the Holy commandment *that was* delivered to them. But the *pronouncement found* in the true proverb has happened to them: *The dog has returned to eat his own vomit; and the sow that was washed has returned to her wallowing place in the filthy mire*” (vs 20-22).

That’s what James saying here when he’s saying, James 4:17: “Therefore, *if* anyone knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin.”

Here’s what’s going to happen to everyone, every single person; there is going to be no escape from this; Romans 14:10: “Now then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you despise your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”

That’s what to remember in it. Also remember this: *If someone else is sinning, you do what you can to help them not sin, but then don’t let your correction itself turn into sin!*

For example: I’ve known people who have seen things that were done in a church that were wrong. They themselves in their condemnation of it end up sinning worse than what they saw was wrong. So, we have the same thing here. Don’t let

what happens turn into sin in your life, because you know that you're going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Verse 11: "Because it is written, "For *as I live*," says *the Lord*, "every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." So then, each one of us shall give account of himself to God" (vs 11-12).

Everyone of us shall give an account of himself to God! {Gen. 3—Adam said, when God ask him, 'Why did you eat?' Ask the woman and she said, 'The serpent.' Which means, they weren't accounting for themselves, they were blaming the other person.} ***Everyone's going to give an account of himself to God!*** That relieves a great burden!

None of us is a 'committee of one' to be God's correcting machine! That saves a lot of grief! *Yes, it does!* Then we know that God is going to take care of it. We have to do our part. If we do our part, and that is not sufficient, they're in God's hands. It's just that simple! We've seen that work.

Verse 13: "Therefore, we should no longer judge one another, but judge this instead: Do not put an occasion of stumbling or a cause of offense before your brother."

Verse 23: "...for everything that *is* not of faith is sin." That has a lot to do with knowing to do good and doing it not and so forth.

We've gotten quite a few sermons out the book of James. Some of these principles here in chapter five we've already covered, so I won't go into them in quite as much detail as I have some of the other things.

James 5:1: "Come now, *you* rich men, weep! Howl over the miseries that are coming upon *you!*" We covered that when we covered Rev. 18—about the fall of Babylon. It's interesting, the Greek word for 'howl' is like crying out to the gods.

Verse 2: "Your riches have rotted, and your garments have become moth-eaten.... [that's because they're not right with God] ...Your gold and *your* silver have been eaten away, and their corrosion will be a testimony against you, and will consume your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth for *the* last days" (vs 2-3).

Four categories of the rich:

1. the rich in the world who are poor to God
2. the poor who are rich in faith (James 1)
3. the poor in world and the poor toward God
4. the rich in this world and also the rich before God

They are rare, but somewhere there's got to be some

that are in that category

We'll see how all of this fits together. Put in your notes, I'll let you look this up: Isa. 2—talks about when God is going to rise and shake the earth and they're going to throw their gold and silver and their idols to the moles and bats and all this sort of thing. That ties in with Rev. 6:12-14. Here's something that is true and we're seeing it happen today, right before our very eyes today under this 'good trade agreement' that we're having.

Verse 4: "Listen! The wages of the workmen who harvested your fields, which have been withheld by you, are crying out; and the cries of those who reaped have entered into the ears of *the Lord of hosts*." It's says in the *King James 'sabbath'*—which is an untranslatable word, which means 'the Lord of hosts'.

Don't we see this today? How many factories are being closed down in the United States to move overseas for cheap labor to make a profit? *Happening all the time!* What is another way that you've had your labor in the field, you have paid into something and you're never going to see a penny of it? Pensions and Social Security! Demanded and extracted out of you! All part of it.

Here's what happened to the rich people, v 5, "You have lived in luxury upon the earth..." We have the pleasure today of watching Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous with Robin Leach. I think they could not have gotten anyone more perfect for that role, and his name even fits, too. You see how some of those people live. I mean, their bathrooms would be like our bank vault if we had so much.

Verse 5: "You have lived in luxury upon the earth, and *you* have lived in self-gratification; you have nourished your hearts as in *the* day of slaughter." I think that's quite a poignant verse there. We have one example of this in Luke 16 about the parable of the Lazarus and the rich man. So, I'm sure that James is referring back to some of the things here that were taught by Jesus. This was a parable of Jesus.

Luke 16:19: "Now, there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen... [had the best of everything] ...and daily indulged himself in luxury. And there was a certain poor man named Lazarus, who was laid at his porch, full of sores. And he longed to be nourished with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table; and the dogs even came and licked his sores" (vs 19-21).

Only ones to have compassion on him were the dogs. So bad, so ugly, so horrible, so terrible that no one even wanted to have anything to do with him.

I can't help but interject here: They've got

this controversy going on, and in my own mind it's hard for me to even imagine. There was this baby girl born whose brain is not there. She had just developed up to the stem of the brain. She can breathe and so forth. Here are all of these greedy doctors going to court and saying, 'Let us kill this baby since it isn't going to live so we can get the organs out of this baby'—the heart, the lungs, the liver and all of this—so 'we can use it for transplants into other people.' I think the judge judged rightly and said, 'No, No, you aren't going to do it.'

It just shows the evil and the greed! Even the mother wanted to do it. But I tell you, when men begin playing God that's when they get in trouble, because they don't know when to stop! What are they going to do with these things? Who knows! What about the genetic code that's on the heart, lungs and liver? *It still carries the defect gene, which made the baby born without a brain!* I mean, that's a terrible situation!

That's just to take advantage of the situation. What you need to do is just put it in God's hands and what happens, happens and let it be. Don't cannibalize the body to sell the parts. Can you imagine what a baby's heart is worth on the open market? *No way!* The doctors are thinking if it saves another baby, well then everything is fine. But you have to get back to the cause of these things. Why do these happen in the first place? What do we do to teach people so that it doesn't happen, in the second place? *It happens because of sin!* Every one of these problems we're dealing with happens because of sin somewhere along the line!

Just like this article on AIDS points out. Condoms aren't going to help anyone, because the very nature of the construction of condoms in relationship to the airspace that's in between the monocular structure of how it's put together with the latex is small enough that the AIDS virus can go right through it! Then we have a situation similar to that back in Philadelphia, this homosexual who paid hundreds to boys to come and have sex with him.

The rich taking advantage of the poor and all of this sort of thing. ***God's judgment is going to come!*** This example of Lazarus and the rich man fits into so many different things. There are those in the world that have the money, that have the power, that have the ability, and they are going to make it happen upon our backs regardless of what happens. And God is saying, ***The judgment day, folks, is going to come!***

Verse 22: "Now, it came to pass *that* the poor man died, and he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom...." This is obviously has to be at the resurrection! How do we know? Rev.

20—the rest of the dead live not until the thousand years were finished. All those in Christ are resurrected when Christ returns. That's when Abraham is, Isaac is, Jacob is, and so forth.

"...And the rich man also died and was buried." When is He resurrected? At the resurrected at the resurrection for the incorrigible wicked.

Verse 23: "And in the grave he lifted up his eyes and was in torment... [he has consciousness now] ...*for* he saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out *and* said, 'Father Abraham, have compassion on me and send Lazarus, so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am suffering because of this flame.' Then Abraham said, "'Child, remember that in your lifetime you received good things to the full, and likewise Lazarus evil things. But now he is comforted, and you are suffering. And besides all these things, between us and you a great chasm...'" (vs 23-26)—between physical life and eternal life—and you can't cross that.

God is showing in this that there's going to come a time when everyone of these evils is going to be rectified. But in the meantime, what it is for us is: it's awfully difficult for us to comprehend why God lets the downtrodden of the earth get so downtrodden. God is going to take care of it in the long run. *We can trust that!*

I won't go through the rest of it, but he said you've had all the good things in your life and now it's Lazarus' turn.

James 5:6—quite a very interesting verse: "You have condemned... [the poor, the workers, and so forth, while living in your luxury] ...**and you have killed the righteous, and he does not resist you.**" The word 'condemned' comes from the Greek word which means has an implication to bring into a court of law.

- Sound a little familiar? *Yes!*
- What are Jews famous for? *Being lawyers!*
- What was one thing they had with their synagogues? *Courts!*

So, this is literally giving the implication that they set their way up through the judgments of the synagogue court to extract what they wanted in legal sense. Is that not what we find today? *Yes, indeed!* I mean, this makes a lot of bells ring in my mind.

"...you have killed the righteous, *and* he does not resist you." We can think of Exxon, Dow Chemical in India and all those poor people there all blinded and killed because of the chemical, just so they can run a profit. They went to court and had everything taken care of legally. That's what it's implying here.

Then he gives a little encouragement to the poor, v 7: “Therefore, brethren, be patient until the coming of the Lord.... [God is going to work it all out His way] ...Consider the husbandman *who* waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient for it, until it has received *the* former and latter rains.” We can tie many things in there:

- the former and latter rain (Isa. 55:8-11)
- concerning the fruit, which has to do where Christ said, ‘I am the vine, the true vine and My Father is the husbandman; you are the branches’ ( John 15:1-7)
- that ties in with Rev. 14—the resurrection—the harvest of the ‘precious fruit’ is the resurrection of the just

God is patient for it and it’s going to have to have the ‘former and the latter rain.’

Verse 8: “You also be patient. Strengthen your hearts because the coming of the Lord has drawn near.” When he wrote this they were expecting Jesus to return. Of course, one of the things that was a key that Jesus was not going to return soon was when James was martyred (62<sub>A.D.</sub>) So, we know this was written before then.

Verse 9: “Do not complain against one another, brethren, so that you may not be condemned. Behold, *the* Judge stands at the door.” We read a little bit about that: everyone’s going to come before the judgment seat of God.

Verse 10: “My brethren, take the prophets who spoke in the name of *the* Lord as an example of endurance *in* afflictions and of steadfastness.”

Look what Jeremiah went through. Look what Isaiah went through. Look what Ezekiel went through. And poor Ezekiel, he went through more than anybody else as far as a prophet in God asking him to do things. We have to look to that as an example.

Verse 11: “Remember, we call those blessed who endure. You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the end result of *serving the* Lord: that the Lord is very compassionate and full of tender mercies.”

We did a couple of sermons on the book of Job and saw what Job went through. And I translated this endurance rather than ‘patience’ because Job was anything but patient. *He endured!* We endure those different things because we don’t know what God has in store—do we? Let’s see about one man, whose particular plight in life was most difficult, so that God could show His works.

John 9:1: “Now, *as Jesus was* passing by, He saw a man who was blind from birth.” That’s

quite a situation. Imagine how the mother and father felt. You have a child that is born blind, most difficult.

Verse 2: “And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’” Isn’t that the question we always ask? *We always do!* And we ask it in such a way it’s not an informational question most of the time. It’s mostly a question of condemnation.

How could someone be born blind and sin, then cause himself to be blind? Obviously, he didn’t do to himself as an infant; he didn’t do himself in the womb. We know there’s a Scripture that says—in the Ten Commandments—about idolatry that the sin comes down—the second commandment—to the second and third and fourth generations—doesn’t it? This was a legitimate question to ask, but notice His answer:

Verse 3: “Jesus answered, ‘Neither did this man sin, nor his parents; rather, *this blindness came* so that the works of God might be manifested in him.’” That’s quite a statement!

This is why you have such things as killing the handicapped is wrong, why killing this baby the way it was is wrong; let God take care of that. Who knows what God may have in store for that individual? I know in my lifetime I’ve been put to shame many times by my own attitude toward some situation when a person has a handicap or something. They just put me to shame! I think one of the reasons that these things happen and are there to show us *that we don’t take God in a very contemptuous way!* That there’s more to life than our own ends, our own means, our own goals and our own life. Think about that, being born blind for this very work!

There are some things of suffering that we don’t understand and maybe we’d better not be so quick to judge—maybe God has a hand in it like He did here.

Verse 4: “‘I must work the works of Him Who sent Me while it is still day. When *the* night comes, no one is able to work. As long as I am in the world, I am *the* light of the world.’ After saying these things, He spat *the* ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to the eyes of the blind man. And He said to him, ‘Go *and* wash in the pool of Siloam’ (which is, by interpretation, “Sent”). Then he went and washed, and came *from there* seeing” (vs 4-7).

What was the man’s attitude? *The man’s attitude was thankfulness and gratefulness!* God made him blind from birth for this very miracle. Isn’t that something? That’s why God doesn’t have

us running around hospitals telling people to get out of the wheelchair, get out of the iron-lung and all this sort of thing, because all that would be would be nothing but vanity and stupidity on our part to do so.

There are some that have to go through suffering that way, and it's a shame that it has to be. God is going to take care of them.

Let's look at those who suffer who know better! So, in either case we have to endure regardless of what it is; we have to endure.

(go to the next track)

These things are good examples to the intent that we should lust after evil things as they also lusted. Here then is an example of when we get into difficulty, sometimes we suffer for our sins; sometimes we suffer because others have sinned—and then we will see the final result of all this.

1-Corinthians 10:6: “Now these things became examples for us, so that we might not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be idolaters, as *were* some of them; as it is written, ‘The people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.’ Neither should we commit sexual immorality, as some of them committed, and twenty-three thousand were destroyed in one day. Neither should we tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted *Him*, and were killed by serpents. Neither *should we* complain against *God*, as some of them also complained, and were killed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them *as* examples, and were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages are coming. Therefore, let the one who thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall” (vs 6-12).

This is the whole key, v 13: “No temptation... [no trial, no difficulty, no temptation that you're going through] ...has come upon you except what is common to mankind...” That's so we don't get the big ‘picked on’: Why is God doing this to me? Why is God doing that to me? *We just need to look to God and ask Him to help us!*

“...For God, Who *is* faithful, will not permit you to be tempted beyond what you are able *to bear*; but with the temptation, He will make a way of escape, so that you may be able to bear *it*” (vs 13-14).

That's why we're to be patient and have endurance. To endure means to bear up under. God will provide the way. Sometimes we don't even see it. And He'll do it in a way that's different than what we may think.

James 5:11: “...You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the end result of *servicing the* Lord: that the Lord is very

compassionate and full of tender mercies.” And God is “...full of tender mercies”! That's why when we're in these difficulties, we need to throw ourselves on the mercies of God.

Let's see where it talks about God's compassion and comfort and so forth in relationship to us, 2-Corinthians 1:3: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and *the* God of all comfort.”

I'll guarantee you one thing, sometimes you'll come to a point in your life where suffering is going to seem like you can't endure another minute of it—whether it is mental, physical, an illness or disease. Regardless of the circumstances, you come to the point where you can't take it anymore! We all get there! I've gotten to that point and maybe you've gotten to that point. That's when we need to go to God and say, ‘God, You're the God of all comfort!’ You finally realize in your own misery you can't save yourself. In your own misery you can't change your circumstances—only God can!

Verse 4: “Who comforts us in all our tribulation... [trials and difficulties] (why?): ...in order that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trial...”

That's one of the things of living that we go through, so that we can turn around and help others who are in trouble. When we're going through it, sometimes we don't see it that way. I didn't! You didn't! But that's the whole lesson, so that when we finally get the comfort—which comes from God—then we're able to do the same thing and say to others:

Look, trust in God, wait in His way, cry out to God and ask Him to help you. That's the time you go to God and say:

- I don't know anything
- I don't know what to do
- I can't solve this problem
- I don't know how to handle it
- It is more than I can bear
- I can't stand whatever it is
- I just completely throw my life on Your hands
- I just throw my life before Your very throne,
- that's just the way it is, God.
- I just don't know
- just help me, please

***That's when God can do more to help you than at any other time.*** Why? Because

- the vanity's gone
- the self-righteousness is gone
- your own plans are gone
- your own solution is worthless
- your own life is encompassed with your

own difficulties and problems and sins and everything

You just come to God and say, ‘Ah, God, I need Your grace, I need Your help, I need Your mercy!’ You can be guaranteed that somewhere along the line someone is going to come to you in the same circumstances and you’re going to be able to help them. And you can help them in confidence because you’ve gone through it.

Verse 5, Paul says: “For to the degree *that* the sufferings of Christ abound in us...” None of us have had the sufferings of Christ abounding in us like the Apostle Paul. I call your attention to the sermons: *So, You Think You have Suffered!*

“...so also our comfort abounds through Christ.” ***God is going to comfort us! God is going to help us!*** In some cases, the true consolation will come at the resurrection! That’s when it will come. Do we have to endure till the resurrection? We have to endure to death! Then the resurrection after that!

Verse 6: “And if we are in distress... [notice how Paul looked at his afflictions] ...*it is* for your comfort and salvation, which is being worked out by *your* enduring the same sufferings that we also suffer; *and* if we are comforted, *it is* for your comfort and salvation (and our hope *is* steadfast for you); knowing that as you are partners in the sufferings, *you are* also *partners* in the comfort” (vs 6-7).

***That gives us a lot of hope! In the suffering that we go through there is a lot of hope!***

It’s interesting that James has this right here at this particular point, because when we get to the point of suffering, what is that you want to end immediately? *The pain! The suffering! The agony!* What is that most people will say? *I will do anything to get rid of this or that or the other thing!* Some people, at the point of extreme, have given up on God because of their suffering.

I read an account where these 40 Christians who were asked to deny Christ and to offer sacrifices to one of the Roman gods, and Licinius, the emperor at the time, said, ‘If you don’t do it, I’m going to torture you.’ So they didn’t do and 40 of them were cast out into a freezing lake in the middle of the winter.

They were told, ‘If you denounce Christ, you can come in and get warm and be fed.’ So, 39 of them stayed out there in the freezing water. One of them recanted, went in to get warm, but between the warm water to warm him up and the heat of the room, he died anyway! Then, one of the soldiers who was administering this took off his clothes and ran out there and joined the other 39 and said, ‘I am

a Christian also.’ He froze to death with them.

That’s why James is saying here, James 5:12: “But above all things, my brethren, do not swear, neither *by* heaven, nor *by* the earth, nor *by* any other oath... [when you are under pressure, when you are legally put into a situation] ...but let your yes be yes, and *let* your no *be* no, so that you do not fall into hypocrisy.” If you do fall into hypocrisy, God can forgive you for that. Can God forgive you for your hypocrisies? *Yes!*

1. Matt. 5:33-37—Jesus said, ‘Swear not at all...’
2. Matt. 23:16-22

Verse 13: “Is anyone suffering hardship among you? Let him pray...” That’s why difficulties come. Look if everything went just fine, if everything were perfect:

- Would you pray every day?
- Would you study every day?
- How many times when you’re suffering you don’t pray?

You walk around in your misery, so miserable that you don’t pray.

“...Is anyone happy? Let him sing praise. Is anyone sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him after anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.... [that’s for our healing] ...And the prayer of faith shall save the sick one...” (vs 13-15). Has to be your faith, minister’s faith and the very faith of Christ altogether!

“...and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him” (v 15). This shows that sickness is the result of some kind of the breaking of some law, which is sin some where, whether your fault or not.

Sometimes you just shake the someone who has the flu, and then inadvertently you rub your nose with your hand and you’ve got the flu. That virus is on their hand because they just blew their nose and it goes from their hand to your hand, from your hand to your nose and right up your nose into your system. They’ve discovered that’s how many flu and cold things are passed around. So, if you do happen to becoming down with a cold and you’re in church, don’t feel as though you have shake hands with anyone. Just tell them, ‘I may becoming down with the flu,’ but don’t shake hands.

One other little tip—just for a family thing concerning sickness and flu and so forth: If someone has distresses of the bowls, don’t all of the people in the family use the same commode. Let the one who is sick use one commode. Make sure it’s cleaned and

cleaned, because the virus can be in the water and with the flushing, the mist comes up and settles on various parts of the commode and the next one who sits down then gets the virus. Just a little precautionary. That way then you're not going to have things come upon you that you didn't expect.

Needless to say, there are some sins that you do and bring upon you, for which anointing and praying for you will forgive those. There are some things that come upon you that you have nothing to do with, except you just happen to be there. Those also will be forgiven.

Verse 16: "Confess *your* faults to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed..." This is really quite a close situation, quite a mature responsibility, that you can understand a person's faults and mistakes without talking about them and condemning them. Isn't that the first thing that people like to do: 'Have you heard...' Shows quite a mature level of Christianity here.

"...*The* supplication... [fervent prayer] ... of a righteous man prevails much, being effective" (v 16). This has the meaning of a specific prayer, a specific request. That's what anointing is.

Verse 17: "Elijah was a man of emotions like ours, and he prayed earnestly *that* it would not rain, and it did not rain upon the earth *for* three years and six months. And again he prayed, and the heaven gave rain, and caused the earth to sprout its fruit" (vs 17-18).

I love that story. When Ahab is summoned up there and Elijah prayed the last time and behold there was a little cloud coming on the horizon. He said, 'Ahab, you better get in your chariot and you'd better head back to the palace, now! Because if you don't, the flood is going to wash you away!' Then after that the rain came and what did Elijah do? He was so afraid of Jezebel he went down and hid in a cave in Mt. Horeb. Had the same emotions that we have. Even though he was able to do these things and these great miracles, he was still subject to human weakness.

After he prayed that it not rain, what happened? He went down by a brook for a while, then a raven fed him the bread and the flesh morning and night! Then the brook dried up and God said to go over to the widow in Sidon and stay there with her. Elijah stayed there almost a full three years. That tells you what a great office that his was. It was a great office, but he didn't make much of it, and God didn't make must of it. Stayed with a widow for three years. Of course, you know the miracle of the flour and oil and the healing of her son. There's quite a bit we can learn from the story of Elijah and everything that he did.

Verse 19: "Brethren, if anyone among you strays from the Truth, and someone brings him back, let him know that he who brings back a sinner from *the* error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins" (vs 19-20).

That's the end of the book of James. No 'Amen.' I think that I mentioned why there is no 'Amen' on it, that it may have accompanied the book of Hebrews as an introductory letter. But needless to say, ***the whole book of James has so many different lessons for us!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) James 4:13-17
- 2) Luke 22:41-42
- 3) Colossians 3:17
- 4) Ephesians 5:17
- 5) James 4:16
- 6) Proverbs 20:14, 17
- 7) Proverbs 21:6-7
- 8) James 4:16-17
- 9) 2 Peter 2:18-22
- 10) James 4:17
- 11) Romans 14:10-13, 23
- 12) James 5:1-5
- 13) Luke 16:19-26
- 14) James 5:6-11
- 15) John 9:1-7
- 16) 1 Corinthians 10:6-14
- 17) James 5:11
- 18) 2 Corinthians 1:3-7
- 19) James 5:12-20

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Daniel 4
- Genesis 3
- Revelation 18
- James 1
- Isaiah 2
- Revelation 6:12-14; 20
- Isaiah 55:8-11
- John 15:1-7
- Revelation 14
- Matthew 5:33-37; 23:16-22

#### Also referenced: Sermon Series:

*So, You Think You Have Suffered*

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