

James 1

I have entitled today's message, "**Hard Times**" **Part 4**

James 1:1

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word.

James 1:1-8

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

2

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

3

Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

4

But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

5

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

6

But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

7

For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

8

A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

9

Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:

10

But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

11

For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

12

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

Let us pray

You may be seated.

“Hard Times”

The context of this passage is How to deal with temptations, trials, and the hardships of life of which we all experience.

Two classes of persons are addressed specifically.

The Brother of low degree and the rich man.

These are what I call the diversities between men.

Finances or fortunes vary according to abilities, opportunities, personal responsibilities, countries, Christianity,

Jesus Christ in a person's life makes them industrious. We are taught to work like ants and not to go in debt.

The Bible in a person's life makes them business smart, frugal, honest, content and blessed by God.

God gave us 2 extremes - the brother of low degree and the rich.

God gave us both ends of the Spectrum.

They are distinguished between each other.

The book of James speaks of the poor and the rich multiple times.

James 2 talks about the treatment of the rich and the poor.

James 2:2

For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;

The lesson is to not show favoritism. To treat people the same way. Don't give preferential treatment.

James 5 talks about the rich and the poor as well

For the rich to take care of his employees, his workers and be fair with them.

James 5:4

Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

James 1, we have poor man and the rich man.

They are in the same family.

They are both believers and were a part of the persecuted church in Jerusalem.

Life had changed drastically for them.

The believers, rich and poor, were scattered and suffered the loss of goods and were exiled from their homes, gardens, storehouses, jobs and communities.

Persecution had greatly changed the livelihood of these believers.

The poor lost what little they had but the wealthy believers lost a lot more.

Both are told to rejoice. Vs.9 and 10 unless you miss it.

What did the Bible teaches in verse 2? To Count it all joy.

Scriptures teach us to Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. **Phil. 4:4**

Matt. 5:11-12

Jesus said, Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12

Rejoice, and be **exceeding glad**: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

We are to rejoice when we suffer for Christ's sake.

Acts 5:40-41

And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

41

And they (the followers of Jesus) departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

I Peter 4:12-16

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to **try you**, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

13

But **rejoice**, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may **be glad also with exceeding joy**.

14

If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, **happy are ye**; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

15

But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

16

Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

Both have been scattered and both are to rejoice.

vs. 9

Let the brother of low degree

We are not talking about a humble spirit but a person of few material things.

His estate consists of not much.

We are not talking about his inward condition but his outward situation.

Brothers of low degreeIt means they are of humble circumstances.

This person is without wealth, without rank, without influence, without means.

Many of us can identify with the brother of low degree and more of us could identify in our pasts.

God is talking first to The impoverished believer.

God is speaking to a Christian who is poor.

This is a trial **of being poor**.

Being poor has its trials and temptations.

They may be tempted to steal.

Prov. 30:8-9

Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches (he asked not to be on the extremes); feed me with food convenient for me:

9

Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

The poor may be tempted to lie, manipulate, you name it.

Life is hard, everything is difficult.

Poverty tries the body- Labor and laboring - exhaustion, working my fingers to the bones.

It tries the mind and the heart - when we look around at others, why am I like this?
Vs. 9b exalted

He has not been exalted by persecution and struck it rich.

How is the poor exalted?

The poor would say, Where?

He is exalted because He is in Christ.

He has hope - he always has hope, confidence - God has not forgotten him, wisdom, sweet sleep, Jesus is his comfort and peace.

His Father owns the cattle on a thousand hills and his citizenship is in heaven.

He needs to rise above his outward poverty and glory in the treasures of being God's child.

He has already been living with little.

II Cor. 4:7-11

But we have this treasure (Jesus Christ) in earthen vessels (clay jars), that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

8

We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

9

Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

10

Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

11

For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

II Cor. 6:10

As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

Every time I think about this, I think of a certain episode 201 (Season 2, first episode) on the Little House on the Prairie. The central family on the show was poor (The Ingalls) and the wealthy family, the mercantile's family led by Nels Olson and his daughter NELLIE, and how she and her brother rubbed it in, stuck in the eye of the Ingalls kids, and how the father and mother felt their lack, but by the end of the show they were still poor yet had discovered that they were the richest family in town. Mr. Olson said to Mr Ingalls, You are the richest man in Walnut Grove.

I have taken wealthy American young people to Moldova. They went flush with cash and all the latest tech gadgets and clothes. And I watched them discover young people who had little and yet possessed greater things, things that money cannot buy.

Hardship may have thrown us down and trampled our lives and we may be called brothers and sisters of low degree yet,

We are exalted in Christ.

Let not our hearts be troubled,

Do not be double minded, don't waver believe God and His Word and rejoice in the simplicity of our plight.

We can attain to spiritual heights.
We can glory in our position in Christ.

Let the poor rejoice in that he is exalted.

The poor has lost some but the rich has lost more.

They were persecuted because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Their suffering and scattering was due to their belief and living for the Lord.

When we lose for Christ sake, when they confiscate our lands, homes, business for Christ sake, you will not lose those things.

Matt. 19:27-30

Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?

28

And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

29

And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

30

But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.

The rich are joining the brothers of low degree.

There are great temptations and trials that come with wealth.

One of those temptations happens when there is a reversal of fortune.

What happens to people when they lose everything?

If they have built their life upon material things, what happens when the rains come and beat upon that house?

They have built on sinking sand.

A reversal of fortune can happen.

On top of the world today and at rock bottom tomorrow.

It can come by outside circumstances, poor health or by old age.

I have been with men, when they have lost their business. When they padlocked the doors.

I have been with men when the banks foreclosed, call their note and took their farm, their farm ground, their tractors and the house that was passed down for generations.

I have been with people when their whole world crashed down around them through a loss of a child, abandonment of a spouse, when they would give all their wealth away for one thing.

I have been with pastors, when their staff walked out, quit and sowed seeds of discord, and took some of the flock with them.

We could suddenly be stripped bare of prosperity.

We are not far from failing.

The stock market plunged 800 points in a day last week.

An earthquake

Flood waters

Tornado

Diagnosis of cancer

Any time we move on the spectrum of life, it comes with trials and temptations.

Every floor in life from the basement to the pent house has its struggles.

The changes that happen to us have a competing opportunity to tempt and try us.

But the rich brother is tried as well.

The temptations of wealth

With finances and an elevated position, there is another whole world of temptations and trials.

The mind is distracted with the care of finances so as not to lose what he has.

He has to look after it.

He has to protect it.

A great fortune could become a great slavery.

IN "WEALTH", WE MAY BE TEMPTED TO FORGET GOD.

As God warned Israel that it might happen to them.

Deut. 8:10-20

When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee.

11

Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day:

12

Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein;

13

And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied;

14

Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;

15

Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint;

16

Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;

17

And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.

18

But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

19

And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.

20

As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.

What did Israel do when they came into their Land of milk and honey! They FORGOT GOD!

He is in danger of allowing his spiritual life to become corrupted by abundance.

The love of money is a "quagmire" and a source of "self- inflicted injuries" .

1 Timothy 6:9-10

But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

10

For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

The rich are prone to arrogance, the Bible calls it high mindedness.

1 Timothy 6:17

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

To live without being haughty, high minded, or arrogant.

The rich easily become self sufficient, self reliant and trust in their money.

The rich are tempted to abuse prosperity and shun work and become lazy.

The rich are tempted to boast and glory in their things.

All these riches cannot be carried with us into the eternal world.

Whatever is left in the bank of earth will be left in the bank.

Whatever is tied up in real estate will be left behind.

Nothing gets to go along with us on the ride to eternity.

They may put it in the casket or bury it in the grave with us but it is not going with us.

Now we can send it ahead of us to eternity.

Matt. 6:19-21

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Everything we have, sooner or later someone else will own.

Luke 12:15-21

And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

16

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17

And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18

And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19

And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

20

But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21

So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

We can rich on earth and poor toward God.

We can be poor on earth and rich toward God.

Psalm 49

1

Hear this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world:

2

Both low and high, rich and poor, together.

3

My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.

4

I will incline mine ear to a parable: I will open my dark saying upon the harp.

5

Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?

6

They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;

7

None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:

8

(For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)

9

That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.

10

For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.

11

Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names.

12

Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish.

13

This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah.

14

Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.

15

But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah.

16

Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased;

17

For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him.

18

Though while he lived he blessed his soul: and men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.

19

He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.

20

Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.

Phil. 4:11-12

Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

12

I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

The steady heat of the equator and the intense cold of the North pole.

And when forced to move from one to the other, can the human frame withstand it?

We are to rejoice in that our faith will be tested and tried to see if it is real and genuine.

The poor can rejoice.

He is exalted in his position in Christ.

The poorest believer is rich.

The rich man is to rejoice in what?

That he has been made low.

Hard Times

Let us stand for closing invitation

Gospel