

James 1

I have entitled today's message, "**Hard Times**" **Part 5**

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.

Specifically the hardships of the believers in James 1 was because of their faith in Christ.

The believers were scattered abroad from Jerusalem, from their church, from James who was their pastor.

He is writing to them.

Two classes of persons are addressed specifically.

The Brother of low degree and the rich man.

Both are told to rejoice.

James 1:10

But the rich, in that he is made low,

He is made **low**.

He is like the brother of **low** degree. Low estate.

The rich hath joined the brothers of low degree.

The rich are now poor.

This new low, low in rank, rich and poor, both extremes.

Low as in depressed, low as in feeling low.

Notice in verse 10, how he became low? He is Made low.

He was up here and now he is down here.

Their Property was confiscated, businesses were lost, and their wealth is gone.

It has been taken away.

They have become poor thru the persecution.

They were made low because they chose to follow Christ. And to suffer for His name and His cause.

They stayed the course, to not compromise, to not assimilate, to stay faithful to God and His Word.

There is a cost to following Christ.

There is a cost to Christianity. Now in our society, a very little cost.

In China, higher cost. In muslim countries, even higher cost.

Under Communism, high cost to follow Christ.

This led to losing things in this world.

Our brothers and sisters that were under Communism testified to me the cost of their faith.

What it meant to be a Christian in a hostile environment that you were not permitted to leave.

Because of their obedience to Christ and the Bible, they have been persecuted and scattered from their wealth.

Many times, believers will choose comfort and their material possessions over living for Christ.

This is truly a test for us, who live in the West.

We live with comfort and pleasure and riches and goods.

We are wealthy.

Do you remember the rich young ruler?

When Jesus gave him the choice of his goods or following him.

When we are poor, the choice is easier.

But when we are rich,

The rich young ruler chose his stuff.

We say, What a foolish choice?

Yet we choose the same things.

What do we choose over Bible reading?

What do we choose over church attendance?

What do we choose over sharing the gospel?

What do we choose over discipling someone?

Mark 10:21-25

Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

22

And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

23

And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

24

And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

25

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

What did Jesus say about being rich?

It is hard to be a Christian and be rich.

Listen to what Jesus said to the lukewarm church:

Rev. 3:17

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

Riches are a hurdle.

Wealth can produce pride and vanity. Ecclesiastes and I Timothy 6:

Many wealthy people in the Bible had great faith and testimony.

How about Job?

How about Abraham?

Abraham handled his wealth correctly but his nephew did not.

Lot was wealthy as well and lost his entire family.

Genesis 13:5-7

And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

6

And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.

7a

And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle:

What was the problem? Too much stuff, substance was great

Wealth can separate families. It can ruin relationships.

It created strife.

Do all rich men know how to be rich?

Where is the ship of wealth meant to sail?

A person does not know how to be rich if his money takes him and drowns him.

If his money makes him its slave.

If he loves his money, the love of money is the root of all evil.

Many of God's greatest servants were wealthy.

Many wealthy people are soldiers of the cross and have been able to keep finances in the proper place and use their finances to the glory of God.

But we are given a honest view of the situation of having both finances and faith.

Riches can clog the soul.

It is not riches themselves that are hurtful, it is what accompanies wealth that is so dangerous.

Look at the dangers that surround the wealthy,

The leisure that gives temptation, having free time makes for the opportunity.

Leisure must be filled up.

Man has an insatiable appetite and worldly pleasures are abundant.

Having wealth can be a curse, especially to the kids of wealthy people.

The rich trust in their finances to pay or buy their way out of jams.

The wealthy are treated differently, that is the warning of chapter 2.

They have a feeling of living in a different world, or a different level and lose the reality of life.

These are some of the dangers of wealth.

In James 1, we see a reversal of fortune, such a transition is often of deep sorrow.

To see all your things, all that you have built and worked for, to be taken or lost.

This will furnish a test of the reality of our faith.

A transition from prosperity to adversity.

This is a trial of loss.

Many different types of losses.

Loss of a child

Loss of a spouse

In our passage, it is the temptations and trials of losing riches.

Let the rich rejoice in that he is humbled to the level of the poor Christian.

This could be one of the greatest things that ever happens in our life.

To be made poor!

If the rich person can see the temporary nature of all his treasures, and compare it to eternity.

And not hold too tightly to the things of this world.

Then they will have good reason to rejoice.

Their faith is in Christ and not in their stuff.

Their life is not in mammon nor built upon money but upon Jesus Christ and His Word.

Everything will vanish as flowers in the field. Vs. 10

This life is temporary.

The metaphor used here in verse 10 is enlarged upon in verse 11.

Vs. 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.

Sun of persecution

Life has turned up the heat too much!

Now things are being scorched.

Burning heat, drying out

Withereth - to shrivel,

Notice the progression in verse 11.

The grass, the stalk, that which enables the flower.

God said it this way so that man sees himself as grass.

We are blasted by life and withering away and then all that we personally have been able to hold up and support will fall to the ground.

Like a flower whose support is gone.

We understand this, we cut that flower and it loses its support and because of this, the flower fades.

Its support is gone.

Grace of the fashion (face of it) perisheth - Its beauty disappears.

All earthly glories of mankind decay, go away.

The heat will come, begins to work on the holder upper of all beauties,

The stalk begins to struggle, then the flower and then the beauty.

The Flowers wilt, they turn ugly, fall and disintegrate.

They go the way of all the earth.

Just a few pages away

I Peter 1:24

For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

All flesh, all human beings are = to grass.

and ALL the glories of man = to the flowers of grass.

What is the difference between poor men and rich men?

The rich man has more glories, more flowers.

But all grass and all flowers will Fade away, will Pass Away.

And all the glories of man

All the prestige,
power, honors, youth, beauty, health, talents, wealth, clothing and cars,

all that man prides himself in, all that man lives for,

It will pass away vs. 10, it will witherth, falleth and perish. Vs. 11

And so too will our bodies and all the glories of man and all that man has accumulated.

Our earthly life will end.

It is good for the rich man to be made low for he realizes His need for God.

It is good for the rich man to be in grave difficulty, because it makes him depend upon God.

In his trials, he can be made richer. In being made low, he can be exalted.

We are made richer through difficulty, if we allow the difficulty to do its work and we respond correctly.

If we live like the rich man of Luke 16, who fared sumptuously every day and had no trials.

He made a bad investment for he forfeited his eternal home for his earthly home.

If we value this life, over our eternal life.

If we value this world, over the next world.

If we tie ourself to this world, and love the things of the world, we cannot have 2 masters.

Thus when the rich man died without Christ, he passed away to be seen no more and all his honors and privileges and possessions die with him.

He had his portion in this life.

He had a lifetime of good things, now he has torments because he lost his soul to a devil's hell.

The book of James asks us to consider Job.

Was Job a rich man, a wealthy man? YES

James 5:10-11

Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction (hardship, hard times), and of patience.

11

Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

Job 42:10 the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.

12

So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning:

How did Job respond when he lost all?

He lost his livestock, lost his children, lost his health,

Job. 1:21-22

And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; **blessed be the name of the LORD.**

22

In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

Many people curse God today when things don't go well.

Like Job's wife wanted her husband to do, when they had lost everything

Job 2:9

Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.

Vs. 11b

The rich man will **Fade away**, pass away from his position of worldly greatness and elevation.

He is made low one way or the other.

I Timothy 6:7

For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

vs. 11 in his **Ways** - in his journeys, in his proceedings, in his travels, in his career.
In his Mode of life - the projects and pursuits in which he has been immersed.

A sudden and large reversal of fortune can make us low.

Or a change in health.

Or old age, when he no longer has the energy or will to keep it all going.

Just like the passing flowers, all beautified and kept, the rich will pass away.

All that comes with the wealthy will be gone and likewise themselves will pass away.

He is beautiful but fading. Vanishing, and then gone.

And all his riches are transitory and passing.

The rich man is to rejoice.

Be comforted and rejoice if we suffer loss for Christ due to persecution.

The things that we lose for Christ sake are things of a fading nature which could not have been kept long anyhow.

Even though they have been stolen or taken, they have parted from us, stripped of earthly goods for Christ sake, so this trial and temptation, now we can never lose them

God is reminding us that all we see will pass away.

The comparison of worldly goods and the fading flower of the field is common in Scripture.

And notice how much more encouragement the man of wealth receives in this passage.

Spiritual wealth is better than material wealth.

Hard Times

Let us stand for closing invitation

Gospel

In that, all he surrounds himself will fade away with him.

Jer. 9:23-24

Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:

24

But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.

We are neither secure in this life, nor in our wealth.

But we can be secure in Christ,

Secure in His Word.