Audio file

(Study 36) Teaching Service. Journeying with James. James chapter 5 verse 7 Waiting Patiently for the Lord. Pastor G.S. Marley mp3

Transcript

00:00:00

And turning in the scriptures to James chapter 5, James chapter 5 and verse 7.

00:00:08

James chapter 5 and verse 7.

00:00:12

Let us hear the word of God.

00:00:13

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.

00:00:19

Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

00:00:30

Be ye also patient, establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

00:00:37

Grudge not one another against brethren.

00:00:41

Another brethren, lest ye be condemned.

00:00:44

Behold, the Judge standeth before the door.

00:00:49

Take, my brethren, the prophets who have spoken the name of the Lord for an example of suffering, affliction, and of patience.

00:00:59

Behold, we count them happy which endure.

00:01:04

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.

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And the Lord will bless His word to our hearts.

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Now the title of the message this morning is Waiting Patiently for the Lord.

00:01:24

Waiting Patiently

00:01:26

for the Lord.

00:01:28

Now friends, there is no more certain thing in the Word of God than the two comings of Jesus Christ.

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Let us take for a moment the first coming.

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It was prophesied hundreds, thousands of years before He actually came.

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You read the Old Testament prophets.

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They foretold His first coming

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in these kind of details they didn't give years but they gave places of birth Bethlehem of Judah Micah 5 and verse 2 the prophets tell us that he was to be born of a virgin not a young woman Isaiah 7 and verse 14 says behold a virgin shall be with child it also tells us

00:02:21

of what circumstances he would be born in and perhaps even who would come to visit him.

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And you read through the scriptures and you find that it tells us about his birth, about his life, about his ministry.

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You read through the Old Testament and you find all these truths about the coming of Christ.

00:02:42

He will heal the sick.

00:02:44

He will heal the lame.

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He will unstop deaf ears.

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He will give hearing to people that are deaf.

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He will even raise the dead.

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David also tells us what kind of suffering he'll endure.

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Psalm 22.

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We look at that tonight very briefly.

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How he would endure it.

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How it would start from his infancy and how it would go on right through to his very moments on the cross of Calvary.

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It would tell us about the intensity of His suffering.

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And the prophets tell us so much more.

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But they also tell us He would rise from the dead.

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And though we know that He was crucified on the cross and we know He was buried in the tomb, He only stayed three days and again that is prophesied that He will be raised up from the dead and He will ascend back into glory and it's all there.

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and all I'm doing is relating the Old Testament.

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We do not have exact dates of when Christ was born.

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He doesn't have a birth certificate.

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The Roman Church decided that he was born in 0 BC.

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The Roman Church decided a lot of things in the past.

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But I go with an Irishman who was a man who studied the Bible and he was a

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He was a Church of Ireland scholar back in the time of the Reformers.

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And Archbishop Ulster tells us that Christ was most likely born in 4 BC.

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Strange, isn't it?

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Christ was born before Christ.

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Well, the Church of Rome decided it.

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It wasn't actually written anywhere in Scripture.

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But nonetheless,

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And why should we say this?

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Well, if you look at the tenure of Pilate, the governor of Judea, it was very short.

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And it ties in historically with three or four BC.

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Let's give it maybe another year.

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But just as with this first coming of Christ and His earthly ministry and His suffering on Calvary and His death and His burial and His resurrection and His ascension into glory, so it is with the second coming.

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And the prophets of the Old Testament mention this in passing.

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They point forward to a great word in the original language, parousia, when he comes again.

00:05:26

It tells us what will happen.

00:05:28

The Bible tells us what will happen when he comes.

00:05:31

He will judge the wicked, the unrighteous.

00:05:35

Paul summarizes like this, he will judge the living and the dead.

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Paul tells us what we should not be like in preparation for His coming.

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We shouldn't be lazy.

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Sounds ludicrous, doesn't it?

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But some people in the New Testament church have begun to have gotten lazy.

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They said, well, we don't need to work anymore.

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We don't need to be industrious because Christ is coming.

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The Bible doesn't teach us that either.

00:06:01

But what about James?

00:06:03

Here's James.

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I could have preached from Paul, but we're doing this study in James.

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We're journeying through James.

00:06:11

We're getting towards the end of James.

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And we're going to just look this morning at this lovely topic in God's providence that someone would say, waiting patiently on the Lord's coming.

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And I've got three things I want us to think about this morning.

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A remarkable change begins in verse 7.

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Last week we considered what about the rich?

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We saw their judgement, their crime, their destiny, and then we also learned some principles of how to see our money and our wealth in a completely different way according to the scripture.

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Now James changes tack.

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That's a sailing term.

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Now he changes direction.

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Now he becomes very pastoral.

00:07:01

I want you to imagine perhaps for a moment that he's sitting there with you as a young Christian and you've been through trials, you've been through temptations, you're going through difficulties in your life and in the church situation.

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And here he says, Be patient.

00:07:19

Be patient.

00:07:22

Now, I was reading a commentary by Pastor Keddy, he's now in Glory, and he outlines this section in a very remarkable and yet memorable way.

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I tried to divide up this text in different ways, but I came up with the same idea, so I just used his headings.

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The first heading is this, and I won't tell you the heading, I'll tell you why I've chosen this way.

00:07:45

Well, I'll tell you the headings, the future, the past,

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and the present.

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That doesn't sound right does it?

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Logically that doesn't seem sensible.

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But we all think in chronological order you start with the past, the present and the future.

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But that's not how the Holy Spirit inspired James to write it down.

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He focuses on the future, then he deals with the past and then he comes right back to the present.

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And I hope you remember this order because when you're reading it next time you'll see it.

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So we begin with the future.

00:08:29

The future.

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Notice what James says.

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Our little minds sometimes forget these things but I hope we remember this.

00:08:38

This is God's pattern in the Word of God and it is a divine scripture.

00:08:42

It's inspired.

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The Holy Spirit superseded that this would be written in this way.

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And every sentence is important.

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So we're going to look first of all at the future.

00:08:56

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.

00:08:59

Behold, verse 7, James 5 and verse 7, Behold, the husband man waited for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, and he received the early and latter rain.

00:09:13

Patience.

00:09:15

He uses this word four times in this chapter.

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He mentions it first in James chapter 1, when he says in verse 4, But let patience have our perfect work, that he may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

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That doesn't mean that we'll be perfect when we become Christians.

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That means we'll be complete in the original language.

00:09:36

But one day we will be perfect.

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Just a little aside, there was an old preacher, he's now frail and he's in his 90s.

00:09:45

And he said one day at one of our fraternals, he says, Men, pastor's fraternal, he says, Men, we should never teach sinless perfection.

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And we all agreed, of course, because nobody's sinlessly perfect in this world, but we should aim for it.

00:10:02

What a difference.

00:10:03

We should aim for it.

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And of course, in glory, we'll be sinlessly perfect.

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But let's move on, patience.

00:10:10

Now, in contrast to the rich in extravagance and their godless ends,

00:10:14

James shows us to be patient and he looks into the future.

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Now, how can we say that?

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Well, look at James chapter five and verse eight.

00:10:29

The coming of the Lord.

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It's in verse seven and it's in verse eight.

00:10:36

The coming of the Lord.

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Not the Lord has come.

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but he's looking forward into the future.

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I give you this word.

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It's the great coming of the Lord, the parousia, when Christ comes in all his glory and power and strength.

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And you read through our hymn book and you'll find in that section on the second coming of Christ that most of it is focused on his glorious coming in that section.

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Yes, there's a mention of the judgment of the wicked, but the fact that Christ is coming and he's coming, he draweth nigh.

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It's near.

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And you say, But this is written almost 2,000 years ago.

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How could James be so sure?

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Well, what's 2,000 years in God's calendar?

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It's nothing.

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It's just a drop in the ocean of eternity.

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It's drawing now.

00:11:43

If you read in Matthew chapter 24, you will read much more detail about Christ's coming.

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Too many people get hung up on the coming of Christ and forget that Matthew 24 is Christ's inspired, infallible teaching on His coming, what He'll do, what it'll be like.

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And what I say to folk when they ask me, I say, Go to Matthew 24 first.

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Not Revelation, not Daniel, not Ezekiel, not even these texts here, but go to Matthew 24 and learn there what it's like for Christ to teach on the second coming.

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And He is coming.

00:12:26

To borrow a phrase from someone else, it's as plain as the nose on your face.

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It's as guaranteed as you're sitting here.

00:12:37

We have this idea that's way, way, way, way, way in the future.

00:12:41

Now, some of us may already have been translated to glory, but some of us may still be on earth.

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And if we're still on earth, we won't miss out because we'll be all caught up together with the Lord.

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That word rapture, oh, that's caused an awful lot of people to spend an awful lot of years writing an awful lot of words about a certain word.

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It's only one word in the New Testament.

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What does it mean?

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Well, the rapture has a direction of travel.

00:13:18

Christ comes and He doesn't disappear again, He stays.

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And if you read through the New Testament, you'll realise that when He comes, He comes finally and He comes to judge.

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Some people have this idea and they try to fit it in and they do all kinds of gymnastics with the words of word of God to try and fit all these things in.

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But they didn't exist until the in the evangelical church until the 1900s.

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Most churches held to a biblical view, this biblical view that Christ will come and he'll come once.

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You see what the idea of saying that Christ comes twice

00:14:02

is that it takes away the immediacy of it.

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And pastorally that's serious.

00:14:07

So that's why people can live and they can live and people say, well, you need to flee from the rapture rather than flee from the wrath of God.

00:14:19

But let's move on because I want to show you how James does it.

00:14:23

Behold, look, he's used that word already, hasn't he?

00:14:26

Verse four, behold, pay attention, sit up, behold,

00:14:32

the husbandman waited this word is for farmer one who works the earth literally it's a gorgos if you know somebody called George then that's what this word means a worker of the land and what is this husbandman doing he's waiting for the precious fruit of the earth he's labouring he's not just sitting around he's waiting he's labouring

00:15:02

In 2 Timothy 2 and verse 6, Paul makes it very clear the husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits.

00:15:11

Someone who works the land doesn't just sit at home and hope that the crops will grow.

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They go out and plow the land and then they till the land and then they plant the seed and up here there's no problem with water shortages and they wait for the rain to come

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And the rain falls upon these little seeds and lo and behold, in God's amazing creative order, these tiny little seeds then bring forth fruit.

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Not every seed.

00:15:42

But that's what this is about.

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Now we need to imagine in ancient times the farmer and he's out with his big bag of seed and he's done the land, he's tilled the land, he's ploughed the land, he's got it prepared, he's got rid of the weeds and even the stones sometimes.

00:16:01

And now he's scattering the seed.

00:16:06

And he scatters the seed and he probably covers some of the seed because otherwise the birds will come and eat it and take it away.

00:16:14

And he waits for the spring rains.

00:16:15

Now this is the way it would have been in James' time in Judea.

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And he'd wait for those spring rains and the spring rains would come and then he would see these tiny little shoots.

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Maybe we could think of wheat.

00:16:30

tiny little green shoots coming up through the ground.

00:16:34

You notice what James says.

00:16:36

He waits for the early and the latter rain.

00:16:40

There's two sets of rain here.

00:16:42

So the diligent farmer is waiting for the crop to ripen.

00:16:47

Then what?

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The great harvest.

00:16:52

That's what he's been waiting on.

00:16:54

And so it is with the coming of the Lord.

00:16:58

The Lord has planted the seed

00:17:00

He has planted his church.

00:17:02

He has planted the seed of his word in our hearts.

00:17:05

He is nurturing it and maturing it and bringing it forth.

00:17:10

And one day there'll be a great harvest.

00:17:13

A great harvest.

00:17:15

You see, this is the future.

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And it's marvelous.

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And it's encouraging and it lifts us away from all the distractions of this world and shows us that the next world is more real than we ever realized.

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Are we like the farmer?

00:17:33

Are we waiting?

00:17:36

Are we diligently waiting?

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By the way, the waiting here isn't sitting at home in the armchair, folding our hands and saying, He'll come sometime.

00:17:46

He'll come sometime.

00:17:48

No, no, no, no.

00:17:50

were to be active.

00:17:52

Paul rebukes the people in Thessalonica and the church for being lazy, for thinking, well, there's no point in investing.

00:18:01

There's no point in investing in the work of the Lord.

00:18:04

No, no, no, no, no.

00:18:05

That's not the teaching.

00:18:08

So the diligent farmer is looking to the future and the diligent Christian is also looking to the future.

00:18:20

Think of the coming of the Lord in spiritual terms.

00:18:24

Oh, what a harvest of souls.

00:18:28

The old writers speak about there'll be more souls in glory than there will be eternal condemnation.

00:18:38

This is the marvel of what's going to happen, and everyone will be present.

00:18:44

Those who have died,

00:18:46

in the Lord and those who have died outside of the Lord and those who are alive in the Lord in Christ are saved by His grace and those who are not.

00:18:54

It is the greatest gathering of all the people of all time of every age in one place.

00:19:07

Looking to the future.

00:19:12

Oh dear friends,

00:19:15

Can you see how the Lord has ordained this?

00:19:18

He wants us to lift our eyes up and to lift our hearts up and to be filled with hope and expectation that we will continue in the work of the gospel and continue in the path that has been set before us by our forebears.

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Because the great coming of the Lord is coming soon.

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The future, the goal of patience.

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I have to say this, it's not inactive patience.

00:19:51

It's active waiting.

00:19:54

The Psalmist speaks about this in Psalm 27, verse 14, Wait patiently on the Lord.

00:20:01

I say, wait patiently on Him.

00:20:04

Wait on the Lord and He shall bring you your strength.

00:20:08

Wait, I say, on the Lord.

00:20:12

That's for us as individuals.

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But let's apply it now in this text.

00:20:20

Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts for the coming of the Lord.

00:20:26

Stablish.

00:20:28

Fix it.

00:20:31

Nail yourself down.

00:20:34

Put your feet in these truths.

00:20:36

Stand on them.

00:20:39

Doesn't matter what the world says.

00:20:43

Christ's coming will not be hindered one millisecond.

00:20:48

Not one millisecond, not even a nanosecond.

00:20:52

It will come exactly as God's calendar has ordained it to be since eternity itself.

00:21:05

Can't you see the encouragement?

00:21:07

Establish your hearts, establish yourself.

00:21:12

speaks about this.

00:21:14

Establish, strengthen and settle you.

00:21:17

The Apostle Paul speaks about this in Hebrews.

00:21:20

Establish yourself.

00:21:22

Be always abounding in the work of the Lord, says Paul in his epistles.

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What is a great sign of a Christian man is to be firm, to be courageous, but to be established.

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And a woman too.

00:21:42

But men, today, we need to be firmly fixed on the truths of the Bible.

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But the next thing is, we look to the future, the goal of patience.

00:21:53

Secondly, the past, the examples of patience.

00:21:57

And look what James does.

00:21:59

He's quite remarkable.

00:22:01

He says in verse nice, Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest you be condemned, behold the judge standeth before the door.

00:22:07

That's application to the church at the time.

00:22:10

Take, my brethren, the prophets.

00:22:15

And he's not thinking of just one prophet.

00:22:19

He's not just thinking of the great prophets.

00:22:22

He's thinking of all the prophets of the Old Testament.

00:22:28

The prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord.

00:22:31

And this, secondly, is to pass the examples of patience.

00:22:39

Now my friends, if we press on in the gospel now, looking to the future, we are not left without encouragements from the past.

00:22:54

The great cloud of witnesses that the apostle Paul speaks about in the epistle to the Hebrews in chapter 12.

00:23:01

Who's in that company?

00:23:04

The prophets, of course.

00:23:07

The godly prophets.

00:23:09

The truly converted priests of the Old Testament and the kings and everyone else who truly knew the Lord.

00:23:19

But he focuses on the prophets for a reason.

00:23:21

Notice this.

00:23:23

Take my brethren.

00:23:26

Just take these as examples.

00:23:27

That's what he's doing.

00:23:29

The prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord.

00:23:36

He doesn't talk about the kings who ruled in the name of the Lord.

00:23:39

I'm thinking of David and Solomon and others.

00:23:41

He doesn't speak about the priests who served in the name of the Lord.

00:23:45

He's talking about the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

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And I'm going to give you a very brief overview of some of the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

00:24:04

We don't have time.

00:24:07

But it's a marvellous study to read the Old Testament and to trace their preaching and prophesying of the second coming of Christ.

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Think of it like this.

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Just note this.

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Let's think about who James would have been familiar with.

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Well, he was a Jewish believer.

00:24:36

He'd been brought up in a Jewish home.

00:24:38

We believe he was a relative of the Lord Jesus Christ.

00:24:42

But here's the thing.

00:24:43

He would have read the Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament, the writings, and he would have read the Psalms and the prophets.

00:24:52

He would have been very familiar with Moses, who was a prophet.

00:24:56

He spoke about one who would be a greater prophet than he would be raised up.

00:25:00

That's prophecy.

00:25:02

Jeremiah,

00:25:03

Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel.

00:25:06

He would have been familiar with them all.

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And he's just saying to the congregations that he's writing to in his day and to us today, think of the prophets of the Old Testament.

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But they're the ones that we think of.

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They're called the great prophets because they've written an awful lot of words, of course.

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We have Jeremiah, the weeping prophet.

00:25:33

We have Isaiah, the evangelical prophet, who's pointing towards the coming of Christ.

00:25:40

We have Ezekiel, who gives us the glorious visions of Christ and God and what will happen at the destruction of the temple.

00:25:51

And we have Daniel, who's over there in a foreign country, in Babylon, and he gives us prophecies of Christ coming and all of these great prophets.

00:26:02

But what about the lesser prophets?

00:26:05

What about those 12?

00:26:10

We all learned them at Sunday school, I'm sure.

00:26:12

And some of us who were very young Christians were encouraged by our seniors to memorize the 12 prophets, to be able to recite them.

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Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Habakkuk, Nahum, Zephaniah.

00:26:31

Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

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And if you go through them now and again, you will find these gems how the Lord is prophesied of His coming.

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Let me give you one from Zechariah.

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It's a bit off to point.

00:26:54

It's not the usual one you think of.

00:26:55

Zechariah 14 verses 3 to 5.

00:26:58

We have their description of God, the Lord, going out to fight against the nations.

00:27:04

And where is his feet standing?

00:27:06

On the Mount of Olives.

00:27:10

How about Malachi?

00:27:12

In chapter 3 and verse 1 and 2 and verse 4, chapter 4 verses 1 to 3.

00:27:17

Malachi in summary speaks about the sudden coming of the Lord as a refiner's fire.

00:27:24

And in Malachi chapter 4 he speaks about one who will come before the Messiah and that of course is John the Baptist.

00:27:33

And you read through Malachi and you read through Isaiah, you read through Joel, you read through them all.

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But here's something that most people don't realise.

00:27:43

When Christ comes again there will be a great shaking, not a great comfort.

00:27:53

In Job 3 and verse 16, Haggai 2 and verse 7 which is of course developed in Matthew 24:29 we have these words Therefore I will shake the heavens and the earth shall remove out of our place in the wrath of the Lord of hosts and in the day of his fierce anger.

00:28:12

A great shaking is coming dear friends and most people are not aware of it.

00:28:19

A tumultuous shaking

00:28:22

that this world has never seen.

00:28:24

A shaking of the world of creation and a shaking of society itself.

00:28:31

God tells us what's going to happen and most people have no notion and couldn't even care about these things but even the church is not aware to these things.

00:28:47

A great shaking?

00:28:51

You think about that, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord for an example of suffering, affliction and of patience.

00:28:57

But there's just one other area I was going to mention, the patriarchs.

00:29:01

Who are the patriarchs?

00:29:04

Well, there's an example here in verse 11, Job.

00:29:07

What's a patriarch?

00:29:10

Literally it means a father figure, the head of the clan.

00:29:15

Well, we're in the right part of the world to talk about clans, aren't we?

00:29:19

the McLeods and you've got the mcdonald's and you've got the uh the other ones I I won't know name them all but you know who I'm talking about and in Ireland it was the same we had clans who were Chiefs and they were there was one man who was head of his tribe or his clan or his his um his Kingdom as we used to call it but who's the patriarchs in the Bible the great fathers of the faith

00:29:47

Men who stood in their generation.

00:29:50

Men who stood for the truth in the face of wickedness and unrighteousness.

00:29:56

I'm thinking of Enoch.

00:29:58

I'm thinking of Noah.

00:30:00

You could think even of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

00:30:04

They're patriarchs.

00:30:05

They were head of their homes and their families, but they were also leaders and they were godly leaders.

00:30:13

And you read through the Old Testament, you'll find again and again there's references back to those Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

00:30:23

The 12 patriarchs, the heads of the tribes of Israel, all 12 tribes.

00:30:30

Even Abraham was recognized by the three world religions, Christianity or Christendom, if I could call it that, and Islam and Judaism.

00:30:43

They all go back to Abraham.

00:30:47

But who are we looking to?

00:30:48

Well, Job.

00:30:50

Why did James choose Job?

00:30:51

Well, I believe he chose Job because Job was a picture of suffering.

00:30:58

And the people that James is writing to are going through suffering.

00:31:02

And if we're going through suffering, Job was a great book to read now and again to encourage ourselves that the Lord is sovereign in our suffering.

00:31:15

Look at the patience of Job.

00:31:18

That's a very interesting phrase.

00:31:21

Most people think that means you're very laissez-faire.

00:31:31

You're very relaxed.

00:31:33

You never get intense about anything.

00:31:35

That's what people think is the patience of Job.

00:31:39

That's not what it means at all.

00:31:42

It means you endure, you persevere, that great doctrine of the faith that so many people forget today, the perseverance of the faith.

00:31:51

That is the patience of Job.

00:31:55

When we press on even in our suffering and even in our trials and we press on in faith, the patience of Job.

00:32:05

And Job is looking forward to the resurrection of Christ.

00:32:10

When he declares in faith, I know that my Redeemer liveth.

00:32:19

He knew it.

00:32:20

He was assured of it.

00:32:22

He was absolutely convinced of it.

00:32:26

The patience of Job and have seen the end of the Lord or the purpose of the Lord.

00:32:30

This is verse 11 that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.

00:32:37

But now let's we've looked at the future.

00:32:39

which is the goal of our patients.

00:32:42

And the past, the examples of our patients, for our patients.

00:32:46

And then lastly, the present.

00:32:49

And in a few moments, we'll just summarize this, verses 11 and 12.

00:32:52

I've already mentioned a few things, but I want now to focus on this.

00:32:56

The present, the Lord, our patience.

00:33:00

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.

00:33:15

He is very pitiful and of tender mercy.

00:33:28

The believer always looks outwards.

00:33:31

The child of God is always looking upwards.

00:33:35

The child of God is always looking onwards.

00:33:39

We look up to God in prayer and praise.

00:33:42

And we look to the Lord for a certain sure and certain hope.

00:33:49

We're not doubters.

00:33:51

We're not wavering.

00:33:54

We're not like the flaky church today.

00:33:57

We stand on rock-solid truths that can never be denied.

00:34:03

We stand on the gospel of redeeming grace.

00:34:07

We stand on the purpose of God and saving sinners.

00:34:10

We stand on the preservation of God's grace and keeping sinners in the life of grace.

00:34:16

And we also are convinced that Christ is returning.

00:34:21

The present, the here and now,

00:34:25

You might say, well, how is James going to encourage his congregation who are so scattered?

00:34:31

How is he going to encourage them now?

00:34:33

He's going to remind them of the present.

00:34:36

The examples of the past give us strength and confidence for the present.

00:34:43

One of the great things I encourage young Christians to do is to read good Christian biographies, not hagiographies.

00:34:53

What's the difference?

00:34:55

Well, a hagiography is basically one that seems that the person was superhuman.

00:35:04

The Roman Catholic Church loves hagiographies.

00:35:07

All its saints have a hagiography.

00:35:10

But the Christian likes reading biography.

00:35:14

Warts and all.

00:35:17

Ups and downs.

00:35:19

I did that deliberately.

00:35:21

Ups and downs.

00:35:23

No.

00:35:24

ups and downs and they stay firmly rooted in the truth of God's Word.

00:35:32

You see this?

00:35:34

And how can we be so sure?

00:35:36

says someone.

00:35:37

How can you be so confident when you're going through a trial or when your church is going through a time of sadness or weeping or mourning?

00:35:48

God hasn't changed.

00:35:51

God's grace hasn't changed.

00:35:54

God's word hasn't changed.

00:35:56

God's promises haven't changed.

00:36:00

And here he tells us, James says, Because the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.

00:36:09

At home.

00:36:11

Very pitiful.

00:36:14

Can't you hear, as it were, James writing this and maybe even with a tear, he's reminding his readers

00:36:23

The Lord pities those who are His.

00:36:26

This isn't self-pity.

00:36:28

This is God showing compassion.

00:36:32

That beautiful word, tender mercy.

00:36:34

There's so many phrases in the Old Testament speaking about tender mercies.

00:36:39

The Lord is full of tender mercies and loving kindness.

00:36:44

You read how Moses sees the back parts of the Lord

00:36:50

The voice of the Lord speaks and says, The Lord is full of compassion and tender mercies and loving kindness.

00:36:59

Tender mercies.

00:37:01

The Lord's not harsh.

00:37:04

Not to His own.

00:37:06

Not to those going through trial.

00:37:10

He's near.

00:37:13

Paul sums it up like this.

00:37:14

He says, He's the God of all comfort.

00:37:19

and the Father of mercies.

00:37:22

There's no God like our God.

00:37:25

That's why the second coming of Christ should be a great encouragement to us.

00:37:33

The same God who kept Job and all the prophets and all the godly men and women of our previous generations in the Old Testament and the New Testament and church history is the same God today.

00:37:47

He hasn't changed.

00:37:50

He hasn't changed.

00:37:53

And I love the way the Greek is taken in the translation here.

00:38:01

He's not just pitiful.

00:38:05

He's very pitiful.

00:38:09

It's almost as if James is trying to say to the congregation, to the readers,

00:38:17

He stoops even lower than you can imagine because he cares for you.

00:38:24

He loves you.

00:38:27

Christ loves his church and he loves each one of us and he never stops loving us in this life or the next.

00:38:37

And he's full of pity and tender mercy.

00:38:43

It's one thing to be merciful

00:38:45

Not to treat somebody as they deserve.

00:38:48

Ah, but our God is greater than that.

00:38:50

Our Saviour is greater than that.

00:38:52

He's tender.

00:38:54

He's tender.

00:38:57

Many of us could learn from this, couldn't we?

00:38:59

Sometimes we're a bit too straight talking at times.

00:39:03

But when you're dealing with a little sheep, and I don't mean a sheep that's going astray, just a tender little sheep.

00:39:12

Or even better, a little lamb, a little Christian, a young Christian.

00:39:16

And I need to learn this myself.

00:39:18

Mr Seaton would say it to me.

00:39:21

He said, Be a lion in the pulpit and be a lamb in the pew.

00:39:28

Because we're all lambs, really.

00:39:30

Some of us are a little older.

00:39:32

But we need tenderness at times, don't we?

00:39:36

And he's full of it.

00:39:38

He's full to the brim of it.

00:39:41

There's no limit to this tender mercy and to this pity and compassion and care and love for His own.

00:39:47

There's no limit.

00:39:49

And soon we'll see Him.

00:39:53

Ah yes, soon we will see Him.

00:39:56

And we'll no longer be waiting patiently on the Lord.

00:40:02

We'll be present at His coming.

00:40:06

And what a day that'll be.

00:40:10

Well,

00:40:15

Be patient, dear Christian friends.

00:40:18

The Lord will soon come and all things will be done as he had ordained to be so.

00:40:27

And then, perhaps only then, will we recognise that truth, that he not only saves us by his grace,

00:40:39

He keeps us by his grace and he will transform us by his grace, fit for heaven and glory.

00:40:49

Only then will we recognise the fullness of this text and realise that God's word is truly true, reliable and Christ is coming and it may be very soon.

00:41:06

Amen.

00:41:07

Our gracious God and loving Father, we're grateful for all thy mercies and kindness to us.

00:41:13

We pray that indeed we would take on board these truths that indeed we learn from this scripture to look to the future and to be reminded of the past that we may live in the present.

00:41:31

Help us to live in the present with our eye fixed on Christ

00:41:37

and our faith ever towards him.

00:41:40

Forgive us any sin we've committed, any wrongdoing, any evil thoughts.

00:41:47

Prepare us, O Lord, for the coming of thy Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

00:41:51

May thy Spirit descend upon this congregation, our church, and teach us much and instruct us much and lead us in the ways that thou hast ordained and that indeed thy church will be built up

00:42:07

in our most holy faith and many more will flock to the Saviour and be truly converted.

00:42:13

We ask all these mercies in Jesus' name.

00:42:17

Amen.