

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF JAMES

STUDY NUMBER 11 – JAMES 5:7-12

HIS RE-ENTRY IS ON SCHEDULE

Today we are in study number eleven. We have one more to finish.

The title of today’s study is “His Re-Entry Is On Schedule.”

Our key verse is going to be verse 8:

“You also be patient; strengthen your hearts because the coming of the Lord is near.”

Evelyn Husband wrote a book, High Calling: The Courageous Life and Faith of Space Shuttle Columbia Commander Rick Husband about her husband Rick who was the commander of the Columbia space ship that did not make it’s reentry on February 1, 2003.

She titles the chapter: The Longest Day.

At the top she quotes Michael Anderson, who was also on that doomed flight.

“If this thing doesn’t come out right, don’t worry about me; I’m just going on higher.”

Then Evelyn has these words, while she's waiting on the tarmac for the flight to return:

I looked into the sky. Where is the shuttle? Where is Rick? What is happening? Lord, please bring them home. Where are you, Rick? Oh, Lord, please help us. Please help us. Keith was quiet as he looked at me. I had desperately wanted him to provide a logical explanation. Keith is a pilot with America West Airlines and has flown with the company more than a decade; he is no novice regarding flying. I was unaware he had been listening to communications with the *Columbia* and the subsequent loss of communication. Keith had heard his brother's last words.

Then they watched the landing clock count down to zero; then it started counting up again.

(High Calling: The Courageous Life and Faith of Space Shuttle Columbia Commander Rick Husband by Evelyn Husband with Donna VanLiere) Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson. Copyright – Evelyn Husband, 2003. p. 167.

It is true in life even in circumstances, our expectations suddenly are all changed. Things don't happen the way we think they should happen.

The space program was always priding itself on never being late. The sad, sad story is that morning the re-

entry was not accomplished. I can tell you there's another one that's been scheduled from eternity only known to the Father. And that one will be on schedule. You will not be waiting in disappointment for that one to take place. For it's been planned and designed. And we're all going to participate in that one way or another.

I think it's fitting that this morning we take some time to just think for a brief moment or two about the urgency of the day in which we live. We've got to be close to the coming of Jesus Christ.

There are two things you have no control over this morning as you sit here. The first is how long you are going to be here and when you're going to die. And the second is not known to us, is when Jesus in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, will end this tale down here to begin eternity up there.

So with those thoughts in mind I think James has been writing from the perspective of wanting to help people cover the full landscape of experiences and responsibilities. To be prepared and to grow and to mature by cooperating with what God is trying to do in their lives.

And so each of us has had to answer some questions over these previous ten weeks. We've talked about the test. We've talked about the temptation that that can distract us. We've talked about the necessity to have a

hunger for the Word. And impartial love that passes all boundaries produced by the Spirit of God. Fruit that would flow from our lives is evidences of the fact that we are related to the Lord Jesus. Only the Spirit of God can control the tongue. And there's a wisdom available to us from above that comes from Him when we tap into it and we're eager to know and have Him guide our lives.

We talked about the warfare on all three fronts: the world, the flesh, and the devil. We talked about the brevity of life and the fact that God desires that we be dependent complete upon Him. And the last time we were together, it was sort of a hard message. It was hard to deliver and it was hard to listen because James was so passionate in those first verses of chapter 5, talking about material things and the wrong use of wealth. And what a distraction that can be to us as believers.

And now today we come to the urgency of His coming. I think it's kind of like wrapping up the message. He wants you to know that He believes that Jesus Christ is soon coming back and you'll feel that in the verses that come under consideration.

Let me just remind you of a few before we get started.

Galatians 4:4-5 describe His first coming:

... when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son. . . .

We call that Christmas, the incarnation. The coming of the Son of God to take on human flesh.

The only way that Paul could describe it, is to say it was perfect. It was the right time. It was the place for Him to come.

You kind of feel, when you study this whole subject of His schedule while He was here, that He was not wasting time. He's constantly reminding us of the fact that this, and this, and this. And I hope you've come this morning with that kind of an attitude. That this is the next step. After you get through here, is the next step, and the next step. And where God is leading, you're comfortable. You're finding joy. You're finding happiness. You're finding fulfillment. You've learned the secret of surrendering it all and trusting Him. And now you're knowing that joy in your life as you go through the episodes of this wonderful, wonderful gift that's been given to us of life itself.

For instance, in John 4 after his encounter with the woman at the well, the men come back from getting groceries in that Samaritan village. And he says:

John 4:35

“Don’t tell me there are four months and the harvest is going to come. Lift up your eyes and look on the fields. They’re white already unto harvest.

Get out of here. and get busy. Don’t make it any more of a delay.

John 9:4

I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day. For the night is coming when no man can work.

Then there’s that little phrase throughout the gospel of John:

“His hour had not yet come.”

“His hour had not yet come.”

But when you get to John 13:3-4:

Knowing that the hour had come, He rose to wash the feet of the disciples.

And then go on to Gethsemane and then the next day and then the next day to Calvary.

It’s marking time. I hope you aren’t just taking up space. I hope you’re not a person who’s wasting time.

But that you're truly in a relationship with the Lord where you've got a passion to finish well and to finish strong and to be accomplishing significant things while you're still here.

I realize my message is unpopular. I realize it's anti-cultural. Because you've earned a certain reprieve in life and you've earned it so therefore you ought to be able to sit around and wait for the call from home office.

That's the most foreign thought to Biblical scripture. And I think James is right in coming back and addressing the urgency of the coming of the Lord in our thoughts this morning.

"Today if you hear His voice, don't harden your hearts."

"Now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation."

Right in the middle of the little epistle of 1 John we read these wonderful words in:

1 John 3:2-3

Yes, dear friends, we are already God's children right now and we can't even imagine what it is going to be like later on. We do know this that when He comes we will be like Him as a result of seeing Him as He really is

and everyone who really believes this will try to stay pure because Christ is pure.

Now look at the verses with me this morning, picking up with verse 7 on your sheet.

v. 7 Have patience, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer is waiting expectantly for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently over it until it receives an early and a late rain.

Now what does this mean when it says “*Have patience*”? Does it mean to just sit around and wait and then hope that everything is going to work out? Or is there another side to that in that in part of us, once we get instructions, are passionate about the fulfilling of them? And never, ever letting up.

And yet there is the other side that the flesh wants to get it done yesterday. We want to run off without having full instructions from the Lord because it’s fulfilling or it’s exciting.

One of the hardest passages of scripture for us to recognize that goes so against that everything that we believe and don’t think about is “Be still and know that I’m God.”

God plays the waiting game so many times in scripture. And here as James begins to pen again this morning

these thoughts about the coming, he says “Have patience.” To mean to have patience means that I’m submissive to another so I’m ready to wait until I get full, clear instructions as to what the Lord wants me to do and then He will verify that by the blessing that will come and the peace that will be in my heart when I do what He wants me to do.

All of us needs this message in a hyperactive culture that is so shallow because we are afraid of silence. We’re almost afraid of sitting down and just letting the Lord evaluate us from the scripture and from our devotional time of prayer. How we’re doing in our marriages, how we’re doing in our parenting, and how we’re doing at work. Are we glorifying God or are we glorifying ourselves? James just says: “*Have patience, therefore, brethren,*” and we can say sister as well. He’s using a word to describe the relationship. He’s writing passionately to believers: “*until the coming of the Lord.*”

Just be patient. Don’t be impatient. Don’t be critical. Don’t be living in unbelief, just be patient. It’s going to happen.

“*Be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord.*”

Then he tells you the process that he wants is described like the farmer.

“The farmer is waiting expectantly for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently over it until it receives an early and a late rain.”

Caution don’t think that patience means just kicking back because Paul wrote to the Thessalonians in 2 Thessalonians about “Don’t quit your job and sit around thinking the Lord’s going to come soon”—there is the other side of passion and ministry to want to finish well. So don’t find an excuse over here in this “*waiting patiently*” for the fruit to be ripened and through it in contrast. Use this verse:

1 Corinthians 9:26

Though I run straight for the goal with purpose in every step.

Philippians 3:14

I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize which God is calling us up to Heaven because of what Jesus Christ has done.

All we’re learning in this first verse is to learn to wait and to trust God’s timing. Would that get it done? Learn to wait and to trust God’s timing. Don’t think that it’s not going to happen. Just learn to trust and to wait in God’s timing, with regard to His coming. It will be on schedule. There’ll be an early and a late rain, then there’s going to be a lot of fruit.

Verse 8 is our key verse.

v. 8 You also be patient; strengthen your hearts because the coming of the Lord is near.

Now he tells you why he's so passionate. He doesn't want you to think that you've got an unlimited stretch of time that you can do what you want to do. It is near from his perspective and you "*be patient.*" That is, you continue to stand where you stand, convicted that the Lord is going to come and that He's working it out. And He will provide the ability, the strength, for that.

Psalm 27:14 I think would help us:

Don't be impatient, wait for the Lord
and He will come and save you.
Be brave, stout hearted and courageous.
Yes, wait and He will help you.

With courage and purpose, stand firm in view of these promises because you will not be disappointed is the message that he would give us.

J. Sidlow Baxter wrote a multi-volume little set on Exploring the Book and I've used it many times to get an overview to books before beginning the actual preparation for exposition. He said:

A Scotsman and his two sons were returning from a fishing trip. The younger son said; "I can see her now,

my precious wife, waiting at home for me. Oh, yes, she is indeed a faithful one.” The older son said: “My wife will not only be waiting, but she will be perched on the windowsill watching for me to come home. That is what I call faithfulness.” The father Scotsman said: “Sons, I can show you where your mother, bless her dear heart, will excel them both. She will not only be waiting and watching for me to come home, but she will be fixing my dinner as well.”

Watching, waiting and working. Occupy until He comes in complete confidence that His coming will be right on schedule. There will be no delays in the flight.

What we take out of here in view of the fact that Christ is coming. Well, first of all I would just say there are two things you have no control over. You have no control over when He is coming. And there will be people just your age when He does come. And secondly, you have an appointment with physical death that you don't know the date of it or how soon it will be or how late it will be. But you have that appointment. And your days are appointed in view of that. Now live it to the fullest with fantastic intensity, cooperating fully with the Spirit who's trying to make you more like Jesus Christ.

To homilytize all that, I came up with some words.

FAITHFUL,

**FRUITFUL,
FINISHING WELL,
WAITING,
WATCHING,
WORKING,
PERSEVERING,
PRESSING ON,
PAYING THE PRICE.**

Doing all that with your focus on Jesus and pleasing Him. I think that distills pretty much the message of the scripture in relationship to what we should do as believers in view of His soon coming.

v. 9 Stop complaining, brethren, about one another, in order that you may not be judged. Behold, the Judge is standing now before the doors.

This is a present negative imperative. Whenever you have that together, they're doing it. You have a present imperative negative in John 14.

John 14:1-2

Stop being troubled in your hearts. You believe in God, believe also in me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it weren't so, I would have told you.

They were troubled in their hearts. He says "Stop it!"

Here there's a sense of discontent that James senses among believers. And you know, when you've got some discontent, you've got to find some blames for it. And so they're complaining and they're blaming each other instead of staying focused on their ministry and on the Lord. So, "*stop complaining, brethren, about one another.*" They've got their eyes off the Lord and on him.

The reason he gives this negative command and wants them to stop it, the purpose is stated in the next phrase: "*in order that you may not be judged.*"

Whoa! We're going to be judged for the things we say critically about one another. That ought to scare you just a tad that we're going to be held accountability for the words we say we learned, not only in James 3, but he's coming back one more time to this and visiting it with a sense of "be careful." And then on top of that, he hits that emotional word "*Behold!*" Look! "*The Judge is standing now before the doors.*" He's just outside the chambers. He's soon coming in. So if you're going to get it right, get it right now. Stop doing this! Stop grumbling!

Paul addresses that issue in:

Philippians 2:14-16

And in everything you do, stay away from complaining and arguing so that no one can speak a word of blame against you. You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of people who are crooked and stubborn. Shine out among them as beacon lights and hold up to them the word of life. Then, when Christ returns, how glad I will be that my work among you was so worthwhile.

The fulfillment of staying on task. You know, you almost get the feeling in this and I've sensed it throughout my study of the book of James that James is quoting a lot of things that Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount. They are just references after reference that takes on meaning when you hear Jesus saying it over here in His opening address and you see James writing about it.

For instance, on this issue in Matthew 7:1, the final chapter of His address:

Matthew 7:1

Stop judging others, and you will not be judged.

And then jump down a couple of verses:

Matthew 7:3

Why worry about the speck in your brother's eye, when you have a log sticking out of your own?

In other words, he says handle your own stuff. You've got a full-time job just taking care of that. And you let the Lord deal with the rest of it. It's a good, sound principle for us to realize that James has done his homework and it's coming out again, verifying with the Savior had said earlier.

v.10 As an example of suffering and patience, brethren, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Now James wants to illustrate that it isn't easy being a believer. When we do have tough times like the children of Israel did in the wilderness, we do complain, we do gripe, we do blame. "Don't do that," he says. But take the "*example . . . and patience, brethren . . . [of] the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.*"

These men suffered horrendous, persecution and personal pain as you read their stories in their biographies.

Matthew 5:11-12 as Jesus finishes the beatitudes. The last one is:

Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for

my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad for great is your reward in heaven for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

v.11 Behold, we are considering fortunate those who showed endurance. [Perseverance. They stayed by the stuff. They stayed focused. They struggled. They did what needed to be done. That's what the writer to the book of Hebrews said in chapter 10. "You have need of perseverance that after you've done the will of God, you might receive the promise." So stay in there, be patient, wait as the Lord works out His processes and then it's going to be wonderful to see what God has done. Then he uses a second illustration.] **You heard of the patience of Job and you saw the outcome which the Lord brought about because the Lord is sympathetic and compassionate.**

Oh, those statements in Job:

"When He has tested me I'll come forth as gold."

"I know that my Redeemer lives."

"I will stand in that day." Oh, the confidence!

"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

What a witness of one who really believed that God was at work in some way. He had no privy of what was

going on between Satan and the Father. All he knew was what was going on earth and the total losses that he had. And the wife who said “Curse God and die.”

You’re just amazed that this man so triumphant, so expectant, and God in perfect timing meets Job and does an incredible thing. And that incredible thing is described in:

Job 42:10-12

And the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends . . . Also, the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning. For he had 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels and 1,000 yoke of oxen and a thousand she asses.

James is saying:

“The Lord is sympathetic and compassionate.”

v.12 But especially, my brethren, stop swearing, neither by the heaven nor by the earth nor by any other oath; but let your yes be yes and your no be no, in order that you may not fall under judgment.

Matthew 5:37 in the Sermon on the Mount:

Say just a simple yes I will, or no I won’t. To strengthen your promise with a vow shows that something is wrong.

Here, when you're having a hard time, obviously in that hard time you can use profanity, you can use oaths.

You can say things that display your impatience rather than speak those words of expectant affirmation and trust that God indeed is on the throne and He's going to work it all out.

There are only three lessons today but I hope you'll take time to read those at the end of your study.

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Our maturity in Christ is reflected in our attitude to His coming.

LESSON #2: Is my life characterized by purity and patience today?

LESSON #3: Is my life characterized by a critical attitude and outbursts of profanity?

Study Number Eleven - His Re-entry Is On Schedule — James 5:7-12

KEY VERSE 5:8

v. 7 Have patience, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer is waiting expectantly for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently over it until it receives an early and a late rain.

v. 8 You also be patient; strengthen your hearts because the coming of the Lord is near.

v. 9 Stop complaining, brethren, about one another, in order that you may not be judged. Behold, the Judge is standing now before the doors.

v.10 As an example of suffering and patience, brethren, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

v.11 Behold, we are considering fortunate those who showed endurance. You heard of the patience of Job and you saw the outcome which the Lord brought about because the Lord is sympathetic and compassionate.

v.12 But especially, my brethren, stop swearing, neither by the heaven nor by the earth nor by any other oath; but let your yes be yes and your no be no, in order that you may not fall under judgment.

NOTES

QUESTIONS:

1. Read James 5:7-12 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. Why should we be patient, according to verse 7?

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3. Is the Lord coming back again and if so, when, according to verse 8?

4. What should we be doing, according to verse 9?

5. What two examples of patience does James give us in verses 10 & 11?

6. What does James ask us not to do in verse 12?

7. What does he ask us to do in verse 12?

8. Have you had any problems along this line?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Our maturity in Christ is reflected in our attitude to His coming.

LESSON #2: Is my life characterized by purity and patience today?

LESSON #3: Is my life characterized by a critical attitude and outbursts of profanity?

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

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