

“Be Patient Because the Lord’s Coming is Near” (James 5:7–11)(12.11.22)

James 5:7–11 (NIV84) *Patience in Suffering*

⁷Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. ⁸You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near. ⁹Don’t grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

¹⁰Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job’s perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

The word of God for the people of God.

LET US PRAY.

Title: **“Be Patient Because the Lord’s Coming is Near”**

INTRODUCTION:

“In Western Africa, it was fourteen years before one convert was received into the church. In East

Africa, ten years; in New Zealand, nine years before one baptism and two more years before one communicant; in Tahiti, it was sixteen years before the first harvest.

William Carey labored seven years before the first Hindu convert was baptized. In Burma, Judson toiled for seven years before he had one. Once writing England:

“Beg the churches to have patience. If a ship were here to carry me to any part of the world, I would not leave my field. Tell the brethren success is as certain as the promise of a faithful God can make it.”

“Lone Star” Of India

“In 1853 a denominational mission society discussed closing a station in Ongole, India, because only 10 converts had been won to Christ in 15 years. They made up the single church which someone called the “Lone Star” of India.

Samuel Smith, author of “My Country ‘Tis of Thee,” was a member of the mission board. As he contemplated this matter, he was moved to write the following bit of verse: “Shine on, Lone Star, in grief and tears,
and sad reverses oft baptized;

shine on amid thy founder's fears;
lone stars in Heaven are not despised."

The next day he read this poem to his colleagues, and they unanimously voted to continue the work. Because of this decision, God moved in mighty power. Thirty years later the Ongole church had grown to 15,000 members!"

Billy Graham shared, "There is an inscription in the dome of our Capitol in Washington which few people know about. It says: "One far-off divine event toward which the whole creation moves." A visitor saw this inscription and asked the guide what it meant. He said: "I think it refers to **the second coming of Christ.**"

When the dome of our Capitol was erected, some God-fearing official ordered that inscription to be etched in the dome of our seat of government, believing that its truth was vital to the concern of our nation."

BODY:

Some read this scripture by the Apostle James and think that he got it wrong. They think Peter was wrong. They think that Paul was wrong. The promise of Jesus' imminent return was foundational to the early church. It sustained the people in their persecution. If James, Peter, and

Paul were wrong, then so was the Lord Jesus. If Jesus was wrong, we have no Savior and no hope.

An old-time preacher, C. Jerdan, frames the central place of the Lord Jesus' Second Coming in a life of faith:

"The coming of the Lord is at hand." This implies, first of all, that the Lord is **sure** to come. While no farmer possesses an absolute certainty in reference to the harvest on his own particular farm, every one who in the spiritual sphere "sows to the Spirit" may rest assured that the day of an abundant and blessed ingathering will arrive.

The Lord Jesus, who came to our world nearly nineteen centuries ago, is to come again, His second coming is the greatest event in the future of the Church. It is the pole-star of her hopes. When he appears, the spiritual harvest shall be reaped.

We, accordingly, shall cherish the true spirit of long-suffering, only in so far as we "love his appearing," and realize that the purpose of it is to reward his people and take vengeance upon their enemies. It is a sign that our faith is weak, if we meditate seldom, and pray little, about our Lord's second coming.

How different was it in this respect with the apostles and the early Church! But, if the final

advent was near in the first century, it is still nearer now; and in the interval what arrears of vengeance have been accumulating! It should be our comfort in the time of trouble to reflect that "the coming of the Lord is at hand."

The whole New Testament Church lies under the shadow of the second advent. It will be an event of infinite moment, and therefore it is never far away. To the view of God, with whom "one day is as a thousand years," this event is nigh; and the men of faith learn to see it from God's point of view. Compared, also, with the great eternity on the other side, the second advent seems "at hand."

What an encouragement does this thought supply, in the direction of devout patience, both in working and in suffering! It should be at once a spur and an anodyne (which is a painkilling drug), to know that the Lord is already on his way. For, when he comes, he will reward all service, and right every wrong, and take his people home to himself."

Yes, our lives should be ordered, should be framed, and should be sustained by the certainty of Christ's return. The Jewish Christians to whom James wrote were suffering under persecution. His command to them is to be patient, to persevere. He gives them the examples of farmers, the prophets and Job.

Instead of me talking from books and secondhand knowledge about farming, I have asked a real farmer to share for a couple minutes about patience and farming. Bob please come forward and share some of your experience with patience.

[Bob speaking] Thank you Bob.

The next example that James gives us is the prophets who showed patience in the face of suffering. The prophets were always opposing the authorities and the culture when they veered away from the ways of God. No matter the pressure that they felt, they persevered and patiently followed the word of the Lord.

“A vivid example of such a prophet would be Jeremiah, who was known as the “weeping prophet.” He was beaten, placed in stocks, imprisoned, and thrown in a cistern. Yet he trusted in the Lord.”

Of course, we cannot forget John the Baptist, who spoke out against sin and for repentance. He was imprisoned. Then he literally lost his head when he spoke against the adultery of King Herod and his wife.

We hear Jesus lament the cruelty suffered by the prophets in Matthew 23:37 (NIV84)³⁷“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets

and stone those sent to you, **how often** I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were **not willing**. That very same week, Jesus was crucified by the Roman rulers at the behest of the Jewish religious authorities.

Stephen's preaching got him stoned, Acts 7:52 (NIV84) "Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him—"

And the final example of patience and perseverance is Job. The story of Job is one of the oldest we have. The people in James' day were well acquainted with this story as most of you are too. God Almighty was very pleased with his faithful servant Job. Satan claimed that Job only seemed faithful and if put to the test, he would curse God. The LORD allowed Satan to test Job, but he persevered and remained a blameless servant of the Most High God. To give you a feel for Job's perseverance in his suffering, the story takes 42 chapters to tell.

James exhorts Christians to be patient and stand firm. Other translations say be patient and establish your hearts; or be patient and strengthen your hearts. Why? Because the Lord's coming is

near or at hand. You see, the Bible is very clear that contrary to pop-culture Christianity, we are to expect hardships. More than that, we are to expect persecution. We have Jesus' promised return to frame and encourage us in our Christian journey.

This week, I received an invitation to be a speaker at a gathering of churches where the subject is the coming persecution. I accepted the invitation and told the organizer that the persecution has already started. We must not be afraid to speak the truth, but always in love.

Let me shift gears now as I demonstrate the difference a confidence in Christ's return changes our outlook. Let us look at song from the strife riven 1960's.

"A Change Is Gonna Come" By Sam Cooke

Sam Cooke was the son of a minister. He was a popular artist and this was the first and only time he used his platform to speak about what was happening in our country in the 50's and 60's. This song, though not a commercial success, is highly acclaimed. It was very popular in the Civil Rights movement. Sam Cooke only performed it publicly one time before his death at 33 years of age.

I was born by the river in a little tent
Oh, and just like the river I've been running ever

since

It's been a long, a long time coming
But I know a change gon' come, oh yes it will

It's been too hard living, but I'm afraid to die
'Cause I don't know what's up there beyond the
sky

It's been a long, a long time coming
But I know a change gon' come, oh yes it will

I go to the movies and I go down town
Somebody keep telling me don't hang around

It's been a long, a long time coming
But I know a change gon' come, oh yes it will

Then I go to my brother
And I say, "Brother, help me please."
But he winds up knockin' me
Back down on my knees

There been times that I thought I couldn't last for
long
But now I think I'm able to carry on

It's been a long, a long time coming
But I know a change gon' come, oh yes it will.

I was tempted to break down and interpret this song. There is always a danger in analyzing creative works of art and assuming some kind of insight into another person's context and purpose. It certainly is a song of lament. It is a song that to a certain extent is a song of hope. For me, a hope for change is not sufficient. So, I rewrote the lyrics based on the sure hope of the Lord's Coming is Near.

"The Lord Is Gonna Come"

By Don McMahon

1. God was born in a manger in Bethlehem town;
The day's gonna come, when He returns wearing
his crown

He's a been long, a long time coming
But the Lord is gonna come, oh yes he will

2. It's been so hard living, but I'm not 'fraid to die
'Cause I do know what's up there, beyond the sky

He's been a long, a long time coming
But the Lord is gonna come, oh yes he will, Oh yes
He will.

3. Jesus told us be ready for his return
For a new heaven and a new earth we yearn

He's been a long, a long time coming
But the Lord, the Lord is gonna come, oh yes he
will

4. Then I go to my brother
And I say, "Brother, help me please."
And he winds up, joining me
Praying on my knees

Ohhh, There been times that I thought
I couldn't last for long
But now I know, I'm able to, carry on

He's been long, a long time coming
But the Lord's gonna come, the Lord's gonna
come, oh yes He will.
(Sing and play)

CONCLUSION:

Destination makes all the difference! Look for
insight with this illustration:

"We were," writes a Christian traveler, "on a little
steamer on the Volga, [the longest river in Europe]
.... A young Russian officer was on board with his
wife. They had plenty of money; they seemed
perfectly well; the scenery around was beautiful
and the weather was fine; but, for all that, the
officer looked sad and was silent. Every day, as we

went on and on, he was more and more unhappy, and I soon found out the reason.

He was going from home and friends, far off into Siberia. Each mile of progress brought him nearer to the cold, bleak wilderness where he was to spend many long years of banishment." And it is just so in the journey of life. If a man feels that each day he grows older only brings him nearer to a dark, unknown future, his heart cannot be really happy, even if all around seems gay.

"A little while afterwards I had to return to Moscow with another Russian officer. We travelled in a miserable plight, hurried over rough roads in a cart with only straw to sit on, and a few apples to eat. The scenery was dull, the weather was bitterly cold, but that officer was exulting in buoyancy and delight.

He was hastening to the emperor to bear the news of a great victory, and to be decorated with an honorable reward." Even so, again, it is on life's journey. The man who feels sure he is getting nearer the heavenly King each day he lives, and that he will be welcomed as a "faithful servant" of that Master who has won a victory over the enemies of God and man — this man will be happy in his heart, even in days of trial and toil, 'mid darkness, want, and sorrow."

A Christian is on a journey to the King of kings and a heavenly reward. The Apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:57 (NIV84) But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Yes, my brothers and sisters, destination makes all the difference in this life. First, check your ticket and verify where you are heading. Second, live into that destination because the Coming of the Lord is at hand. Truly, the Lord is gonna come.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.