



Faith and Patience

James 5:7-11 |

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SUMMARY

Kent Hughes help us understand what James is talking about by zeroing in on what James means when he says, "be patient."

"James' Spirit-directed wisdom for his afflicted brothers and sisters was given in the form of a command: "Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming" (v. 7a). **This is not passive resignation, but rather patient, expectant waiting on the Lord.**

To make sure they understand exactly what he means, James provides a rich example: "See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the fall and spring rains" (v. 7b). The "fall" (literally early) rains come in late October and early November in Palestine. Farmers still eagerly await these because they aid planting and make seed germination possible. Heavy rains come in December through February. And finally the spring rains come in April and May. These rains represent a process apart from which there can be no harvest. **All farmers must patiently submit to this process.** *To fight against it, to bite their nails, to insist they must have fruit in the middle of the process is futile.*

In submitting to God's process, they will inevitably undergo stressful times when it appears the rains will never come. But **these times can be spiritually beneficial** to them as they call upon their faithful God. "The soul would have no rainbow if the eye had no tears." So they wait in positive confidence that the process will take place and that there will be a harvest/ Second Coming. During this time they grow spiritually, the fullness of time grows, and Jesus will come. The key is to submit expectantly to his hidden timetable, trusting wholeheartedly in his goodness."

Think again of that farmer in James' metaphor. Farmers "patiently submit" to the process that God decides. Take a walk today or tomorrow and pay close attention to the weather. Notice the clouds, the wind, the temperature. Spend some time, as a group/as individuals, thanking God for his control over the "weather" in your own circumstances and ask him for a willingness to submit expectantly and trust wholeheartedly in his goodness.

Take some time as a group to read James 5:7-11. Then ask these questions:

1. What stood out to you as you read today?
2. What point does James seem to be making?
3. How does this portion of Scripture connect to what came before? How does it connect to what comes after?
4. What didn't make sense? What do you still wonder about?
5. What is hardest about trusting God's goodness wholeheartedly?