"WAITING ON JESUS"
James 5:7-12

One of the hardest things for a Christian to learn is how to wait on the Lord. We live in a world that wants everything immediately. We want fast food, quick answers, immediate results, and lightning quick service at the restaurant. We want what we want and when we want it. After the election results, I'm sure many believers thought, *"I'm just wish Jesus would come."*

God's timetable doesn't operate according to our preferences or our schedules. Sometimes God makes us wait not because . . .

- **He has forgotten us**
- **He doesn't care about us**
- **He lacks the power to intervene**

He makes us wait *because He's accomplishing His sovereign purpose* in the world (2 Peter 3:8-9). He makes us wait because *He's purifying our heart and*

soul. He makes us wait because *He's building our faith*. This is the situation James addressed in his letter to scattered Jewish Christians who were being kicked around like a soccer ball.

Times were tough for them. Suffering and injustice were prevalent. James reminded them *and us* that the Christian life is not simply about how we begin our journey, but also about how we faithfully endure until the end. David Jeremiah wrote…

> **Future events have present implications we cannot ignore. When we know that Christ is coming again to this earth, we cannot go on being the same people.**

The imminent return of Christ should motivate us to live with a *sense of urgency* and with an *eternal perspective*. Our present circumstances, as bad as they might be, do not represent the end of our story. Jesus saved us and shaped us to face hardship, to remain faithful, and to trust Him even when we cannot grasp what He's doing. The question we must answer today is a relevant one . . .

"How should believers live as we wait for Jesus to come?" James drilled down and unearthed the core truth. *Until Jesus com*es believers must . . .

LIVE EXPECTANTLY AND ENDURE FAITHFULLY.

James lays out four practical steps to help us:

1. ANTICIPATE THE COMING OF CHRIST

Three times James reminds us of the coming of the Lord (James 5:7–9). We cannot and should not expect our present lives to be easy and comfortable!

> **John 16:33**… "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."
>
> **2 Timothy 3:12**… Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

God is actively placing signs before us—*disasters of epic proportion, spiritual deception, moral depravity, persecution of believers, and global conflict* to name a few. These are what Jesus described as birth pangs

they indicate that something big is about to happen. Jesus taught us to pray—***"Thy kingdom come"***—and one glorious day it will.

James 5:7-8… Therefore be patient, brethren, *until the coming of the Lord*. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. 8 You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, *for the coming of the Lord is near*.

"Therefore be patient"— aorist, active, imperative. Our Lord expects us to endure difficult people patiently. We must not lose faith or give up (Gal.6:9).

"Until the coming of the Lord"— This glorious truth appears in more than 300 verses in the New Testament. We are living between our Lord's first coming and His second coming. The Scriptures indicate that during this time frame things are going to get worse and worse, not better and better. Rest assured. Our mighty King is coming personally, gloriously, and powerfully. He's coming to judge the world and usher in His eternal kingdom! The sure

hope of Christ's return is an amazing blessing to those who are undergoing trials and persecution . . .

> **2 Corinthians 4:17**… For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,

Just as a farmer waits patiently through the entire growing season for his crop, so also believers are to wait patiently for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Strengthen your hearts." (Aorist, active, imperative). This is a word that pictures resoluteness, firm courage, and a commitment to stay the course no matter how severe the trial. Trouble is temporary. It will end when Jesus returns.

"For the coming of the Lord is near"— James focused on the nearness of our Lord's coming. Listen, we are living in the last stage of redemptive history. The imminency of the Lord's return highlights our need for constant alertness.

"How should believers live as we wait for Jesus to come?" James drilled down and unearthed the core truth. *Until Jesus com*es believers must . . .

LIVE EXPECTANTLY AND ENDURE FAITHFULLY.

To do this we must *anticipate the coming of Christ*. Secondly, we must . . .

2. STAY CONNECTED TO OTHER BELIEVERS

James 5:9… **Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, *the Judge is standing right at the door*.**

Here is a sobering reality. The Lord Jesus Christ is coming to *"judge the living and the dead"* (2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Pet. 4:5; Acts 10:42).

"Do not complain, brethren, against one another"— Present, active, imperative. While we're waiting for our Lord to return, we must not grumble or complain against our brothers and sisters in Christ. If we're going to endure difficult people, we've got stick together!

> **Hebrews 10:23–25**… Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; **24** and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, **25** not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another;* and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

"So that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door"— Christ, the divine Judge, is depicted as ready to throw open the door and burst onto the judgment scene. Here again is a reference to the imminence of our Lord's return:

> **Revelation 22:12**… "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

The Lord Jesus Christ is coming to judge the world.

"How should believers live as we wait for Jesus to come?" *Until Jesus com*es believers must . . .

LIVE EXPECTANTLY AND ENDURE FAITHFULLY.

To do this we must *anticipate the coming of Christ*. Secondly, we must *stay connected to other believers*. Thirdly, we must . . .

3. FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF WINNERS

James 5:10… As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and *is* merciful.

"As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord"— *Take* is a verb (aorist, active, imperative). The rejection and persecution of God's spokesmen is a familiar and tragic theme in world history. Consider Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, John the Baptist, Stephen, Paul, Peter, etc. These role models were committed to the Lord and His Word even when it cost them dearly.

"We count those blessed who endured"— *Endured* translates a verb which refers to patiently enduring

difficult circumstances. The earlier word, *patience,* refers to enduring difficult people. Those who will receive the greatest blessing in the life to come are those who have endured the greatest suffering in the present world. The hope of blessing now and in future glory should motivate us to endure difficult people and difficult circumstances.

"You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings"— Job was an excellent example of patient endurance while suffering. He endured unimaginable, unexplained suffering—the fierce attacks of Satan, the loss of his children, his wealth, his health, his reputation, and, worst of all, his sense of God's presence. The key point is that in all his trials Job maintained his integrity!

"That the Lord is full of compassion and *is* merciful"— It is not uncommon for those in the midst of severe trials to question whether God really cares about them. But in all their trials, believers can take comfort in the indisputable truth concerning the character of God. He is always full of compassion

and He is merciful, *no matter what we're going through!*

"How should believers live as we wait for Jesus to come?" *Until Jesus com*es believers must . . .

LIVE EXPECTANTLY AND ENDURE FAITHFULLY.

To do this we must *anticipate the coming of Christ*. Secondly, we must *stay connected to other believers*. Thirdly, we must *follow the example of winners*. Finally, we must . . .

4. SPEAK THE TRUTH WITH COURAGE

James 5:12… But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.

What does *"swearing and speaking oaths"* have to do with believers living in the last days and waiting for the Lord to return? If you have ever been under the gun spiritually, you know the answer. It's easy to say things you do not mean and even to make bargains with God when you are going through

difficult times and you're dealing with difficult people.[1] The pressure to compromise is powerful.

"But above all, my brethren, do not swear"—Present, active, imperative. (Matthew 5:33-37). The Lord Jesus expects the believer to be a person of integrity who is committed to radical truthfulness even the face of danger. Peter failed in this area . . .

> **Mark 14:66–71**… As Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came, **67** and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Nazarene." **68** But he denied *it,* saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are talking about." And he went out onto the porch. **69** The servant-girl saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, "This is *one* of them!" **70** But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, "Surely you are *one* of them, for you are a Galilean too." **71** But he began to curse (he put himself under a curse) and swear (he made an

[1] Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 381.

> oath), "I do not know this man you are talking about!"

As we wait for the Lord Jesus to come, we need to know that our words matter to Him. In fact, they will serve as evidence when He judges us at the end of the age . . .

> **Matthew 12:36**… But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment."

Make a commitment today that you will speak the truth with courage even if your life is on the line!

CONCLUSION

"How should believers live as we wait for Jesus to come?" *Until Jesus come*s we must . . .

LIVE EXPECTANTLY AND ENDURE FAITHFULLY.

To do this we must *anticipate the coming of Christ*, *stay connected to other believers*, *follow the example of winners*, *speak the truth with courage*.

It's not going to be easy for believers as we wait for our Lord to come. We *will* have to deal with difficult people, and we *will* face difficult circumstances.

The Lord is coming and He will make everything right!

—PRAY—

"COME JESUS COME"