

James 1:2-11

Title: The Treasure of Trials

Main Idea: Christians can face trials with joy.

Purpose: To encourage believers to persevere through trials.

Outline:

- I. We rejoice in trials by knowing there's a purpose (1:2-4).
 - A. We count it all joy to meet trials of various kinds (1:2).
 1. Trials come in all shapes and sizes. What are yours presently?
 2. "Joy...speaks of a state of being rather than an emotion...Joy may be defined as a settled contentment in every situation or 'an unnatural reaction of deep, steady and unadulterated thankful trust in God.'" (Blomberg & Kamell, *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary*, 48).
 3. "Joy is a delight of the mind, from the consideration of the present or assured approaching possession of a good" (*Webster's 1828 Dictionary*).
 4. Are you finding joy in your trial? Why or why not?
 5. On what grounds can we find joy in our trials?
 - B. Joy comes in knowing that testing of faith produces steadfastness/perseverance (1:3).
 1. We can know that trials have a purpose—that of fostering perseverance.
 2. Perseverance/steadfastness = "capacity for resolute continuance in a course of action" (Danker Lexicon).
 3. Trials serve to prove the genuineness of our faith. Consider Luke 8:5-8, 11-15; particularly, verse 13.
 - C. We must let steadfastness/perseverance have its "perfect work" (1:4).
 1. How can we allow steadfastness to have its "full effect" (literally, "perfect work").
 - Consider the role of prayer (1:5), rightly thinking about God and His character (1:13, 17), and receiving and obeying God's word (1:21-22).
 2. What are some indications that we're not allowing perseverance to work?
 - Consider a lack of joy (1:2); hence, depression, anxiety, or discouragement. Also, evidence of anger (1:20) or indecisiveness (1:6).
- II. We confidently ask "the giving God" for the wisdom we need (1:5-8).
 - A. Those who lack wisdom can ask "the giving God" (1:5).
 1. "Wisdom, generally speaking, is skill at life, particularly the ability to make sound judgments and speak the right words." (McCartney, *Baker Exegetical Commentary*, 88)
 2. Trials often leave us feeling inadequate and uncertain about what to do. Hence, we need wisdom—help to make the right decisions.
 - B. Those who ask must not doubt or waver (1:6-8).
 1. What is the nature of "doubting" and being "unstable" in this context? That is, what is being doubted or questioned?
 - See 1:13-17; 5:11—mainly God's character and goodness in the midst of trying circumstances.
 2. Consider how "letting perseverance have its perfect work" can serve to solidify one's faith during trials. (i.e. prayer, right thoughts, renewed belief and obedience)
- III. We maintain an eternal perspective (1:9-11).
 - A. The humble can boast in their exaltation (1:9).
 1. Amidst your trial, in what can you boast?
 2. Where do you have hope?
 - B. The rich can boast in their humiliation (1:10-11).
 1. Would James consider you rich?
 2. How have you been humbled?
 3. Are your "pursuits" in line with the kingdom of God?
 4. "God's people [are encouraged] to look towards the future when riches will mean little and being in God's plan will mean a great deal." (Quoted in Blomberg & Kamell, *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary*, 58).