



Patience in Trials

Small Group Work Sheet
October 9, 2011

Part 1 - Ice Breaker

- If you are comfortable, share the hardest trial you faced in life.

Part 2 - Sermon Review

- Is there something you would like to do before Jesus returns? What is faulty with that thinking?
- Remembering James 1:2-4, what are good things God accomplishes in our life through trials?
- How does focusing on the return of Christ help us make it through trials?
- What does the word *parousia* mean? How does it help us make it through trials?
- What does it mean when we say the Lord's return is *near*?
- What would you say to those who believe Jesus is not coming back. He said he would return 2,000 years ago and many thought he would return in their lifetime, but he is still gone! (See 2 Peter 3:8-10 for help with the answer.)
- As we wait for the return of Christ, what do farmers teach us about waiting?
- What do the prophets teach us about holding steady in our trials?
- What does Job teach us about patience in our tough circumstances?
- When we say God is "many-bowelled," what does that mean? How does it help us make it through hard times?

Part 3 - Digging Deeper - The Danger of Grumbling in Our Trials

Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. James 5:9 (ESV)

While James is comforting in the other verses of this passage, he is challenging in this one. When we go through trials, it is tempting to become a bitter complainer. It is easy to grumble to others, and even easier to grumble to ourselves. Even when we limit our grumbling to our own thoughts those thoughts still sour our interactions with everyone else.

James gives these Christians a simple but powerful motive to cease their grumbling. They will be judged by Jesus for their grumbling. Grumbling is slander in the heart. Grumbling

is sin and judgment for it, which for Christians is a loss of reward (Roman 14:10; 1 Cor 3:13-15), is not far away.

Have you ever said something at just the wrong time? You began talking about someone in a negative way and just as the words came across your lips the very person you slandered walked through the door. That is the mental picture James wants his brothers and sisters in Christ to have. Jesus, the judge, is at the door. He is just about ready to return. You don't want to be caught grumbling against the trials Jesus has allowed when he walks through the courtroom door.

A lack of grumbling and disputing among Christians is to be one of the witnesses to the world, that Christ is among us, that he has transformed us.

Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. Philippians 2:14–16 (ESV)

How often do you consider ways to lead friends to Jesus? Perhaps having them for dinner would help. Sometimes giving a gospel tract is a good idea. Another option is to invite them to church. Maybe one of the most effective ways to share the gospel with others is living with a patient and positive attitude when we go through our trials. The more we grumble in trials, the less attractive Jesus becomes.

Our attitude is one of the most powerful ways people will see how Christ can change their life.