

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2014: *The Book of James*
Lesson 11 “Getting Ready for the Harvest”

Read for this week’s study

James 5:7–12; Rom. 13:11; 1 Cor. 3:13; Luke 7:39–50; Col. 4:6.

Memory Text

“You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand” (James 5:8, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Waiting for “Rain”
- III. How Near is “Near”?
- IV. Grumbling, Groaning, and Growing
- V. Models of Patient Endurance
- VI. Transparent as the Sunlight
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Moderator: Zdravko Stefanović

ENDURANCE IN SUFFERING (JAMES 5:7-12)

A. Introduction

1. Universality of suffering
2. First-century Christians
3. Example of Christ and James

B. Our Lord is Coming (5:7-9)

1. How can the same end-time judgment be bad news to the oppressor and good news to “brothers and sisters” in Christ Jesus?
2. James uses the metaphor of a farmer’s patient waiting for rain or for the harvest. Did you grow up on a farm? Do you have a story to share that could enlighten us on this topic?
3. If James wrote his book today, would he use another metaphor? Which one do you think he would use?
4. To be patient and to stand firm are parallel expressions in verse 8. Do outbursts of emotions betray one’s lack of firmness?

5. How does grumbling against a brother or sister bring condemnation on the grumbler?

C. Role Models of Patience (5:10-12)

1. Were all of God's prophets patient in the face of opposition and suffering? Do any examples come to mind?
2. "Saints" of old today are called "blessed". Do you think they felt "blessed" when they were going through the "fire"? Is suffering mandatory to reach the status of sainthood?
3. This passage has the only mention of Job's name in the New Testament. Outside of the Bible, there is a document titled **The Testament of Job** which is filled with praises to this man's perseverance. Describe Job's attitude during his suffering. Would you describe him as patient or as perseverant?
4. The Lord is full of compassion and grace. What difference does this statement make whenever we feel grief and sorrow?
5. When people suffer they may easily become ill-tempered. In the midst of adversity, how can we guard our tongues from using offensive words?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

But so often we are trying to settle people on all the other matters. If you settle people on the Sabbath, the sanctuary, the state of the dead, tithe, and health, without settling them on the truth about God they might keep the Sabbath as Jesus' enemies did. They might pay tithe as His enemies did. They might read the Bible as His enemies did. We could be developing in this "campaign to win a million Adventists", we could, forbid the thought, develop a million enemies who faithfully keep the Sabbath, practice health reform, pay tithe, and read their Bibles. Now that is a horrible thought. But if we are not clear on the picture of God we might do well not to be in such a hurry. Have you read Ellen White's comment?

"The Lord is not now working to bring many into the truth, because there are so many unconverted in the church."

It would seem to defeat the purpose of God if He were to empower us to go out and misrepresent Him. He won't do it. But as soon as we are settled into the truth, so the Holy Spirit could give us power of influence and persuasion to tell the truth about God it would make sense for Him to do so.

I do not believe the latter rain or the Holy Spirit will fall until God's people are really settled into the truth. The same Spirit that will settle them into the truth will then give them persuasiveness and influence to spread this everlasting good news about God to the whole world and then the end will come. Which raises the question, "What is Christ waiting for now?"

It's nothing artificial. He is waiting for a group to be like Job, and to be able to pass through the time of trouble. Caused by whom?

COMMENT: Satan.

And the theologians? Think of all the people that caused Job trouble and nobody could shake Him. And of course behind it all is the adversary. And of what is he trying to persuade these people? Of his age-old misrepresentation of God. In the end all theology goes back to the picture of God. And the Good News is that He is like this, and that He is not like that. And that's why I believe our whole mission as a church is to picture God as He really is. But if we just go and say He is like this, this and this, without evidence, why would anybody believe us? We have to go with the evidence which is where, but in the sixty-six? Remember the man who was reading in the chariot and he couldn't understand Isaiah? We have to be like Philip who got in with him and explained. We need to be able to help people understand this. And I think one of the most helpful things is to help people keep reading on and not getting bogged down in details. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Revelation, recorded August, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/79MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/80MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

In that light, what is the mark of loyalty to the other side? It must not be something superficial. But Ellen White does say the Sabbath is the central issue in the last great conflict. So how is the Sabbath tied in? Well, it must be that the Sabbath bespeaks the truth and the evidence that God has revealed at such great cost. And my thoughtful, wholehearted, even pleasurable observance of the seventh-day Sabbath represents my acceptance of, my conviction about, and my joy in the truth that has been revealed. But how can you tell which people in church are keeping the Sabbath that way? So we do have to let the wheat and the tares grow together. You see, tares can “keep” the seventh-day Sabbath.

And, by the way, some wheat might keep Friday, or Sunday possibly? Well, let's next time work on the mark of the beast and the seal, and Babylon, the wine, which would be the devil's lies about God, wouldn't you agree? And let's see, what was the other one? We have the dragon, the beast, the image, the seal of God and the mark of the beast. Would these all fit in? I think they can and in which case it's not nearly so complicated, or so denominationally offensive to discuss them. We've picked on one church in this regard and because we've named that one church, we fail to see it could be in our own ranks, you see. A person in church on Sabbath could have the mark of the beast, possibly? I mean the one that's inside, the one that really counts where God reads it. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Three Angels' Messages, number 4, recorded October, 1981, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/4MM3ANGELSM>

Are we so settled into this truth about our God that we cannot be moved? Are we still easily swayed to and fro by every wind of doctrine? Remember Ephesians 4:14, 15, the next verse on the list:

We are no longer to be children, tossed by the waves and whirled about by every fresh gust of teaching, dupes of crafty rogues and their deceitful schemes. No, let us speak the truth in love; so shall we fully grow up into Christ. (NEB)

We should ask ourselves, are we still such children in the faith, babes in the truth, that we need emergency measures to be reverent toward our God and to do what is right? If we still need those measures, we are still babes. So Paul also wrote Hebrews 5:13, 14; 16:1. And I like to say Paul wrote this. The language sounds more like Luke sometimes, but that great physician and that great minister worked together until the end:

Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. [Melchizedek, the king of peace and righteousness. That's what God wants.] But solid food is for the mature [*King James*, 'perfect'], who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity. (NIV)

What are the elementary teachings about Christ? What are the rudiments of our beliefs, as some versions have it? Well, let us ask ourselves. Do we still need the law in order to love God and love each other, and not hate and desire to murder our enemies? Would we murder them if there was no law to say we must not do it? If it's the law that keeps you from murdering your mother-in-law, then you are still very much a child and not ready for the awful time of trouble.

Let me ask it another way. Which moves you more, the thunders of Sinai or the still small voice of truth? Satan is going to bring great thunder and fire from heaven in the sight of men, miracles and wonders. If that is what moves us, then we are very vulnerable. We're still babes in the truth. God has used those methods with babes, but He waits for us to grow up. **The one thing that the devil cannot come with is the still small voice of truth, for it is not with him. We must be ready to recognize that as the supreme authority.**

Do you obey because God has told you to and He has the power to reward and destroy? That's the obedience of a little child. Do you obey because God has told you to and you love Him and want to please Him? That's the only reason why you don't murder your enemies. It upsets Him. You do want to please Him. That's sweet, but still the faith of a little child. Or do you do what is right, because it is right? Do we offer God the intelligent, agreeing obedience of free, grown-up children of our Heavenly Father? That is what pleases Him most. Then we are ready for the days to come. Are we still preoccupied with our own salvation, with what God has done for me—and you too, to be sure?

Or do we see the plan of salvation in the larger view, the great controversy view, the involvement of the whole universe and the most important truth of all? **The reason why Christ died, above all else, is the truth—the demonstration of the truth about our Heavenly Father that establishes this universe safe and free for all eternity. It is the way we are saved too, that’s true, but there was a far larger purpose in the plan of salvation than just to save you and me.**

Do you still demand vengeance on your enemies—tit for tat, an eye for an eye? Of course, you wouldn’t call it that. You would call it justice. Do you demand that your enemies suffer all that they deserve in the final fires of the end, or you will not be satisfied? “Now,” you say, “that isn’t a bad thing. It is just that *you* have not become so *just* that your sense of justice must be satisfied.” You demand that wicked people get precisely what they deserve or you will not be satisfied. You would not revere a God who would be so soft as to do anything else.

Or, are you ready to join our Heavenly Father as He cries, as He watches His rebellious children reap the consequences of their own rebellious choice? God does not turn His back on His sinful children. He watches them as they die. He is not torturing them to death. He leaves them to reap the consequences. If you still desire vengeance, though you may call it justice, you are acting like a little child.

Now there is a time in life when it’s appropriate to be a child, to believe what we are told, and even to do what we are told. But since the enemy of God and man is still abroad in the land, while we are still children, we need much protection. We need the emergency measures to help us believe and do what is right. God has been willing to give them to us and we thank Him for them. But in the last days, there will be no protection. Satan will even twist all the emergency measures that God has used to support his own position, and to put God in a very bad light. In those days we will need to be really grown-up.

I wouldn’t want to be misunderstood. Is it not significant to note that perhaps the greatest distress that came to Job came from the bad theology of his well-meaning, but mistaken friends? Could it come this way in the last days? Caring theologians, who did not know God but had a very legal view of things, caused Job great distress. But he would not be deceived, even by them.

In the last days, our experience will be very much like that of Job. If we do not have the larger, whole Bible, all sixty-six books, great controversy, universe-wide understanding of God and the great controversy and the plan of salvation, we will be no help to ourselves.

We will be no help to anyone else. We will be very vulnerable when Satan seeks to deceive us that God is an arbitrary, vengeful Deity. It seems to me that a great deal of current Christian theology is preoccupied with our legal standing with our God. Is that why God still waits and waits until we grow up into a much larger understanding of the truth? For without that larger

understanding of the truth, we will never survive the time of trouble. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, session 18, “God Waits For His Children to Grow Up” recorded June, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/18MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

All who consecrate soul, body, and spirit to God will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical and mental power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and every perfection of the divine nature comes to their assistance in the work of saving souls. Through co-operation with Christ they are complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence. {DA 827.3}

The soul that is indolent falls an easy prey to temptation; but in the life that has a noble aim, an absorbing purpose, evil finds little foothold. The faith of him who is constantly advancing does not weaken; for above, beneath, beyond, he recognizes Infinite Love, working out all things to accomplish His good purpose. God’s true servants work with a determination that will not fail because the throne of grace is their constant dependence. {PK 660.2}

God has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts. He provides opportunities and opens channels of working. If His people are watching the indications of His providence, and are ready to co-operate with Him, they will see mighty results. {PK 660.3}

The object of the Christian life is fruit bearing—the reproduction of Christ’s character in the believer, that it may be reproduced in others. {COL 67.1}

As you receive the Spirit of Christ—the Spirit of unselfish love and labor for others—you will grow and bring forth fruit. The graces of the Spirit will ripen in your character. Your faith will increase, your convictions deepen, your love be made perfect. More and more you will reflect the likeness of Christ in all that is pure, noble, and lovely. {COL 67.3}

Often when we pray for the graces of the Spirit, God works to answer our prayers by placing us in circumstances to develop these fruits; but we do not understand His purpose, and wonder, and are dismayed. Yet none can develop these graces except through the process of growth and fruit bearing. Our part is to receive God’s word and to hold it fast, yielding ourselves fully to its control, and its purpose in us will be accomplished. {COL 61.2}

The long night of gloom is trying, but the morning is deferred in mercy, because if the Master should come, so many would be found unready. God’s unwillingness to have His people perish, has been the reason of so long delay.—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 194. (1868) {Ev 694.2}

Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved—just as soon as God’s people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are now upon the land, to give us warning, that we may know what is coming (MS 173, 1902). {4BC 1161.6}

Truth is stronger than error, and right will prevail over wrong. {PK 659.2}

Faith strengthens through continual exercise. {OHC 134.2}

The fervent prayer of the righteous is never lost. The answer may not come according as we expected, but it will come, because God’s word is pledged. {OHC 134.3}

Wait for the Lord, not in fretful anxiety, but in undaunted faith and unshaken trust. {OHC 134.5}

Trial is part of the education given in the school of Christ, to purify God’s children from the dross of earthliness. It is because God is leading His children that trying experiences come to them. Trials and obstacles are His chosen methods of discipline, and His appointed conditions of success. He who reads the hearts of men knows their weaknesses better than they themselves can know them. He sees that some have qualifications which, if rightly directed, could be used in the advancement of His work. In His providence He brings these souls into different positions and varied circumstances, that they may discover the defects that are concealed from their own knowledge. He gives them opportunity to overcome these defects and to fit themselves for service. Often He permits the fires of affliction to burn, that they may be purified. {AA 524.2}

God’s care for His heritage is unceasing. He suffers no affliction to come upon His children but such as is essential for their present and eternal good. {AA 524.3}

Your compassionate Redeemer is watching you in love and sympathy, ready to hear your prayers, and render you the assistance which you need in your life-work. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faith and charity are the elements of the Christian character. These precious graces are the fruits of the Spirit. They are the Christian’s crown and shield. . . . Nothing can give more perfect content and satisfaction. {SD 32.4}

Ever since his fall, Satan has worked by means of deception. As he has misrepresented God, so, through his agents, he misrepresents the children of God. {MB 31.2}

They hated Him without a cause. Yet He stood calmly before His enemies, declaring that reproach is a part of the Christian’s legacy, counseling His followers how to meet the arrows of malice, bidding them not to faint under persecution. {MB 32.1}

While slander may blacken the reputation, it cannot stain the character. That is in God's keeping. So long as we do not consent to sin, there is no power, whether human or satanic, that can bring a stain upon the soul. A man whose heart is stayed upon God is just the same in the hour of his most afflicting trials and most discouraging surroundings as when he was in prosperity, when the light and favor of God seemed to be upon him. His words, his motives, his actions, may be misrepresented and falsified, but he does not mind it, because he has greater interests at stake. Like Moses, he endures as "seeing Him who is invisible" (Hebrews 11:27); looking "not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen" (2 Corinthians 4:18). {MB 32.2}

He invites us to take our trials to His sympathy, our sorrows to His love, our wounds to His healing, our weakness to His strength, our emptiness to His fullness. Never has one been disappointed who came unto Him. "They looked unto Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed." Psalm 34:5. {MB 84.4}

The soul that turns to God for its help, its support, its power, by daily, earnest prayer, will have noble aspirations, clear perceptions of truth and duty, lofty purposes of action, and a continual hungering and thirsting after righteousness. By maintaining a connection with God, we shall be enabled to diffuse to others, through our association with them, the light, the peace, the serenity, that rule in our hearts. The strength acquired in prayer to God, united with persevering effort in training the mind in thoughtfulness and care-taking, prepares one for daily duties and keeps the spirit in peace under all circumstances. {MB 85.2}

Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. "The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." James 5:11. His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Psalm 147:3. The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son. {SC 100.1}

A kind, courteous Christian is the most powerful argument that can be produced in favor of Christianity. {GW 122.1}