



James 1:12 Blessed? Yes!

March 15, 2015

Text: James 1:12

*Jas 1:12 KJV **Blessed** is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

Initial Thoughts:

- Like James 1:2, this is one of the most encouraging passages in James, and maybe in the New Testament.
- As most of you know, the history of the Christian church is not one of constant prosperity, but rather one of consistent trial, especially when we force ourselves to think globally and outside the confines of our Western context.
- Therefore, these words have been VERY timely for MANY believers for hundreds of years.
- Recall that the context of James is a church in the midst of rising persecution. He therefore exhorts those under his pastoral care (likely in Judea) to remain holy and obedient regardless of external pressures.
- Precious friends, this is a constant theme throughout Scripture! God calls us to love and obey Him regardless of **circumstances!**
- And as we'll see, God describes this call as "blessed!"
- We said last week that, "The church is to be a "countercultural" community, which reverses the values of the world." (ESV Study Bible)
- May I submit that our view of the best blessing should also be countercultural? ☺
- **This countercultural call has and will constantly push the church into conflict with the world. That is how it is and how it is supposed to be. We are salt. We are light. We are an army.**
- So when the world comes after the church, we are to remain steadfast, with joy, wisdom, and generosity. (Lessons from Jam 1:1-11)

A Problem Many have, but Struggle to Admit

1. First, let me say that this is not a criticism per se; it's a recognition of our **modern** reality.
2. We are, as American believers, physically and materially blessed, and we should praise Him for such mercy and grace!
3. However, some of the costs we've paid in the midst of our many blessings are apathy, greed, discontentment, fear of loss, and at times, a luke-warmness in the face of societal pressure.
4. This is not due to anything God has done; this is because of our **sin**. Jesus warned of this in His day as well...

Luk 12:15-20 ESV And he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." (16) And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, (17) and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' (18) And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. (19) And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' (20) But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?'

Mat 13:20-22 ESV As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and

immediately receives it with joy, (21) yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. (22) As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

Rev 3:15-19 ESV "I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! (16) So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. (17) For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. (18) I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. (19) Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.

5. Our (as in the Western church in the post-modern era) consistent problems with covetousness and **comfort** can warp our sense of verses like this. Therefore, I thought it prudent to revisit how blessings are consistently described in the New Testament, and work through the rest of the verse next week.

Blessed? Yes!

"Blessed is the man...(Jam 1:12)

- The word for "blessed" in James 1:12 in Greek is "*makarios*."
 - It is the word used for *blessed* in all the Scriptures I reference below, and means "to be fortunate, well-off, or happy."
 - Wow! Given our context (under trials or temptations) James is saying that when the church can stand in the midst of all that, we should be happy! We are "well-off!" We are fortunate!
 - Oh saints blessed of our Father, *all around us we are losing the truth war, the culture war, the family war, the money war, the fight for holiness, just about every narrative, and the war that rages over eternal souls.*
 - How much of this failure is due to our (The Church) predilection of avoiding trials as opposed to standing strong under them?
 - And how much strength would we recover if, even during trials, we saw ourselves as blessed?
1. *Mat 5:2-12 ESV And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: (3) "**Blessed** are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (4) "**Blessed** are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. (5) "**Blessed** are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. (6) "**Blessed** are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. (7) "**Blessed** are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. (8) "**Blessed** are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (9) "**Blessed** are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. (10) "**Blessed** are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (11) "**Blessed** are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. (12) Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*
 - Jesus took the time to describe the **best** blessings!
 - Look carefully here. Can you see contrast between what we are taught in culture and what our Lord taught?
 - Think through any situation you are currently going through in light of these blessings!
 2. *Joh 13:13-17 ESV You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. (14) If I then, your*

*Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. (15) For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. (16) Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. (17) If you know these things, **blessed** are you if you do them.*

- We are blessed when we serve one another!
 - This is the **opposite** of seeking one's own and a huge reason why we don't always "feel" blessed!
3. *Act 20:35 ESV In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more **blessed** to give than to receive.'*
- We are blessed (happy, well-off, and fortunate) when we walk in **generosity**! Stinginess makes you mad and sad!
4. *Rom 4:7 ESV "**Blessed** are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;*
- Amen! Just being **saved** puts you in the "blessed" category! May we rejoice in joy of our salvation each day!
 - And (although unpopular) this is why the doctrine of sin should be unfolded and kept before us. It helps us continually understand the MAGNITUDE and WONDER of His grace!
5. *Jas 1:25 ESV But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be **blessed** in his doing.*
- We are *makarios* when we are obedient to Scripture!
 - This is such a different mindset that thinking obedience somehow lessens blessings!
6. *1Pe 3:14 ESV But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be **blessed**. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled,*
- It's not that we want this, but it is a distinct possibility! After all, our journey with Him does include **cross**-carrying! ☺
 - **So, dear friends, be encouraged. When you take a stand for righteousness; when you do so in love without a judgmental spirit; and when that stand on Scripture brings suffering...YOU ARE BLESSED.**
7. *1Pe 4:14 ESV If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are **blessed**, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.*
- Ha! Amen! Remember this when you pray for "the Anointing!" ☺
8. *Rev 1:3 ESV **Blessed** is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.*
- "For the time is near," and it is. If not the Second Coming, then our own going to be with Him. What is twenty years, thirty years, fifty years, or seventy years? It's near.
 - Therefore let us walk in the blessing of "reading, hearing, and keeping" the Word of God.
9. *Rev 14:12-13 ESV Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. (13) And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: **Blessed** are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "**Blessed** indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!"*

- A rest is coming! Amen!

10. Rev 16:15 ESV "Behold, I am coming like a thief! **Blessed** is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!"

- Stay awake and be blessed!
- Watch for His coming! Live like He is coming!

Closing Exhortations:

Rev 19:9 ESV The angel said to me, "Write this: **Blessed** are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

Rev 22:7 ESV "Behold, I am coming soon. **Blessed** is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

Rev 22:14 ESV **Blessed** are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.

Hallelujah! Let us focus a bit more on this glorious day that yet approaches, where we will walk in the presence of Jesus in white robes. Let us again receive strength and encouragement from the first and best truths of the Gospel and therefore remain steadfast and obedient. May Christ alone be forever praised, for He alone is the truest and best Blessing...

Tit 2:11-15 ESV For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our **blessed** hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

Amen.