



James 1:12 Pt 2: Remaining Steadfast Under Trial

March 22, 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:

1. Interestingly, the word for trial (temptation, KJV) here is the Greek peirasmos, which literally means “a putting to proof, an experiment; a trial with a beneficial purpose and effect.”
2. This is why either trial or temptation works here: both are tests!
3. Some trials are lustful and fleshly (temptations to rebel against God’s Word) and some test our faith (temptations to deny Christ or recant), but they are both trials nevertheless!
4. This is why it is pronounced a great blessing when we can stand! It brings honor to our Lord when we love Him who was at all points tempted enough to resist sin until the shedding of blood.
 - a. *Heb 4:15 ESV* For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. (tempted is peirazō in Greek, same root, to test, try, or prove)
 - b. *Heb 12:3-4 ESV* Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. (4) In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.
5. Indeed, the very heritage of the Christian church is one of tests, trials, and temptations.

From the Beginning of Christ’s ministry...

Mat 4:1-11 ESV Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (2) And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. (3) And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." (4) But he answered, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (5) Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple (6) and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you,' and "On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" (7) Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" (8) Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. (9) And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." (10) Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" (11) Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

To the testing of the Apostles...

Act 5:17-18 ESV But the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy (18) they arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison.

Act 5:27-33 ESV And when they had brought them, they set them before the council.

And the high priest questioned them, (28) saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." (29) But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. (30) The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. (31) God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. (32) And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." (33) When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. Act 5:40-42 ESV and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. (41) Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. (42) And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

Even to the early church...consider the much beloved story of Polycarp from Foxes Book of Martyrs:

Polycarp, the venerable bishop of Smyrna, hearing that persons were seeking for him, escaped, but was discovered by a child. After feasting the guards who apprehended him, he desired an hour in prayer, which being allowed, he prayed with such fervency, that his guards repented that they had been instrumental in taking him. He was, however, carried before the proconsul, condemned, and burnt in the market place.

The proconsul then urged him, saying, "Swear, and I will release thee;--reproach Christ."

Polycarp answered, "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never once wronged me; how then shall I blaspheme my King, Who hath saved me?" At the stake to which he was only tied, but not nailed as usual, as he assured them he should stand immovable, the flames, on their kindling the fagots, encircled his body, like an arch, without touching him; and the executioner, on seeing this, was ordered to pierce him with a sword, when so great a quantity of blood flowed out as extinguished the fire. But his body, at the instigation of the enemies of the Gospel, especially Jews, was ordered to be consumed in the pile, and the request of his friends, who wished to give it Christian burial, rejected. They nevertheless collected his bones and as much of his remains as possible, and caused them to be decently interred.

Remaining Steadfast Under Trial: A Few Suggestions

1. Accept that trials ARE **coming!**
 - a. *Joh 16:32-33 ESV Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. (33) I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."*
 - b. *Luk 9:23-26 ESV And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. (24) For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. (25) For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? (26) For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.*
 - c. *Act 14:21-22 ESV When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many*

disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, (22) strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

d. *2Ti 3:12 ESV* Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted...

2. Take comfort in our Lord's **identification** with our struggles!

a. *Heb 4:15 ESV* For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. (tempted is peirazō in Greek, same root, to test, try, or prove)

b. He knows, He's been there, and He was victorious. We too can walk in victory.

c. *1Co 15:56-58 ESV* The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. (57) But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (58) Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

3. Embrace the blessing: trials are designed to make us **stronger**!

a. First, review last week's message! 😊

b. Also consider our context: "*Jas 1:2-4 ESV* Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, (3) for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. (4) And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

c. Then consider the **refining** nature of trial and testing (or proving)...something God often uses to grow and mature His people.

• *Isa 48:10-12 ESV* Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. (11) For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another. (12) "Listen to me, O Jacob, and Israel, whom I called! I am he; I am the first, and I am the last.

• *1Pe 1:6-7 ESV* In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, (7) so that the tested genuineness of your faith--more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire--may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

4. **Watch** and **Pray**!

a. *Mat 26:41 ESV* Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

b. Now, when you are watching and praying, and actually see a fleshly test coming that you can actually avoid, what should you do? See # 4...

5. **Flee**!

a. When it is a "lust of the flesh" type of trial or temptation, run!

• *1Co 6:18 ESV* Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

• *2Ti 2:22 ESV* So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

• I've believed for years that Christians overestimate their ability to be around sin and not yield. There is no shame in removing oneself from a tempting situation if at all possible.

b. Find the way of **escape**; there is one!

- *1Co 10:13 ESV* No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.
6. Allow the **church** to help you!
 - a. *Gal 6:1-3 ESV* Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. (2) Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. (3) For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.
 - b. *Rom 15:1-2 ESV* We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. (2) Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.
 - c. *1Th 5:14 ESV* And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.
 - d. **Don't run from the church! Part of what we do is help one another remain steadfast! If you want to fall fast, unplug from the Body of Christ!**
 7. Don't be afraid to **fast!**
 - a. Sometimes, you just have to break the flesh down!
 - b. *Mat 4:1-2 ESV* Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (2) And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.
 - c. The purpose of fasting is not to impress the Father but to afflict the flesh. It is used to bring our bodies back under the control of the Spirit, receive strength during times of prayer, and get back in position to both hear and be used by God for His glory.
 - d. *1Co 9:27 ESV* But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

 Precious friends, whether your time of proving is in the areas of flesh or faith, stand strong. We are called to resist sin and the devil and submit to God. We are called to fight the good fight of faith. We are called to confess and believe even in the midst of adversity. We are called to declare that Jesus is Lord even when external forces threaten our security.

This IS the testimony of the church. This IS what we do.

Remain steadfast, dear friends; for His glory.

Amen.