

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

James 05:07-09

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thanks to the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. We will continue to read James Chapter 5, and today, we will read verses 7-9.

In Chapter 5, James first speaks harsh words to the rich people in the church, warning them not to defraud others and not to only know how to hoard wealth, otherwise at the time of judgment, their wealth will testify against them. Jesus also tells us not to store up treasures on earth, but to store up treasures in heaven. The purpose of earthly wealth is to allow us to make friends, so that when wealth becomes useless, they can receive us into everlasting habitations. Then, James turns to the saints in tribulation, encouraging them to be patient and wait for the Lord's return.

Verse 7: "Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain."

In James's view, the Christian life is full of trials, and the entire theme of the Book of James is to endure trials. In James 1:2-4, James tells us, "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing." Then in 1:12, he promises, "Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."

Now James returns to his central concern, telling the saints to be patient. To what extent should they be patient? Until the coming of the Lord. Over the past 2,000 years, tens of thousands of saints in the church have lived out their lives without

seeing the Lord's return; instead, they have lived lives of patience. Now, looking at the situation, even though it seems to be the end times, if the Lord delays, we too must learn the lesson of patience throughout our lives.

James helps us understand how to learn the lesson of patience. The first condition for patience to succeed is to be full of hope. James tells us, "See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth." The farmer works hard to cultivate the land for the precious fruit. After plowing and sowing, he waits patiently; this is patience filled with hope.

Jesus Christ Himself also spoke about the parable of the sower; therefore, Christ is the first farmer. He sows Himself as the seed of life into the hearts of the disciples, and the disciples become the crop of Christ. After Christ's resurrection and ascension, the disciples continued Christ's ministry, becoming farmers who plow and sow, sowing the word of Christ's life into people's hearts. They established the church and worked diligently as farmers within the church.

This ministry of plowing and sowing has been passed down from generation to generation, and now it is in our hands. We too are diligent farmers within the church. However, from another perspective, we ourselves are also Christ's crop. The farmer waits in hope for the harvest of the crop, and this waiting process is precisely the lesson of patience. The first condition for patience is hope. If there is no hope for a harvest, who would plow? Without the hope of a harvest, who would sow?

However, merely plowing and sowing with hope does not guarantee a harvest. In the Promised Land, the main river is the Jordan River, but its water volume is insufficient for irrigation. Therefore, the water needed for the crops in the Promised Land mainly comes from rain. Thus, farmers plow and sow in hope, but they must also wait in faith for the early and latter rain. Here we see that the second condition for patience is faith.

The farmer must first plow and sow, and then wait in faith for the early and latter rain. It is impossible to wait until the rain comes to plow and sow, as it would be too late. Plow and sow in hope, wait in faith for the early and latter rain, and after

the rain comes, the crops will grow healthily. However, there is still a period before the harvest.

Verse 8: "You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand."

In the promised land, the crops have a harvest every year; but as the Lord's crop, after the spring and autumn rains, there will only be one harvest, which is on the day of the Lord's coming. This great harvest of the universe is recorded in Revelation 14:14-16, "Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, 'Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.' So, He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped."

And this one harvest is also what is mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." This describes the general situation of the saints being caught up when the Lord returns. Because the harvest of the Lord's crop is at the time of the Lord's return, the vast majority of saints spend their entire lives patiently waiting, thus needing even more to be strengthened in faith and to believe in faith that the day of the Lord's coming is near.

Throughout the ages, the overcomers in the church have been saints who hope for the Lord's coming. Although objectively speaking, the church is not yet ready, the bride is not yet adorned, and the Lord cannot come yet. But from a subjective perspective, as long as they faithfully complete their race, when they rest from their earthly labors, they can enter into rest. For them, time stops, and when they wake up again, they will be caught up to the presence of the Lord. To be able to wait patiently for a lifetime is a lesson of faith. The second condition for patience is faith.

Verse 9: "Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!"

When the Lord delays, and the saints live church life together, they plow together, sow together, and wait in hope together. They also experience the blessing of the spring and autumn rains together and wait in faith together. These are all lessons of patience learned together. During this long process, James particularly reminds the saints not to grumble against each other. Grumbling is a sign of a lack of love, which brings out the third condition of patience: love. Brothers and sisters, loving one another is the new commandment Jesus gave to the church.

Because human love is conditional and limited, when human love is exhausted, grumbling begins. Only when the saints are filled with God's love can they love one another with God's love. God's love is eternal, continuous, and only in God's love can all things be endured, believed, hoped, and patiently borne. In this eternal love, there will be no grumbling, and no loss due to judgment.

James goes on to remind us, "Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!" When Christ returns, He is the Judge. According to 2 Corinthians 5:10, when Christ returns, the saints will be caught up, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." We will all be caught up to the judgment seat of Christ and judged by Christ according to what we have done after being saved by grace.

In these three verses, James reminds the saints to be patient until the Lord's coming. If we can be patient in hope, patient in faith, and patient in love, when the Lord comes, we will give an account to the Lord. During the long process of patience, we undergo various trials and bear the fruit of patience, and we will receive the crown of life.

Of course, during our patience, the enemy will also tempt us. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear

it." God is full of grace and mercy; even the temptations from Satan must pass through God's measured hand. The temptations we face are surely those we can bear, and during this process, God will provide a way of escape so that we can endure it.

Dear brothers and sisters, in our days as sojourners on earth, we face trials from God and temptations from Satan. These are lessons for us to learn patience. We are like diligent and hardworking farmers, plowing and sowing in hope, waiting for the blessing of the early and latter rain in faith, and finally reaping the fruit of patience in love. This enables us to stand confidently before the judgment seat of Christ, receiving praise, glory, and honor.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You. After being saved by grace, You placed us in the church to learn the lesson of patience with all the saints. Grant me a group of pure-hearted brothers and sisters who love the Lord, so that we can labor together, serve together, and learn the lesson of patience together. Bless the church I am in with an abundance of brothers and sisters loving one another, waiting in faith together, and hoping for the Lord's return together. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I pray.