

Text: James 1:9-18

Title: Persevering Faith

I. The Great Blessing of Perseverance (坚忍, 圣徒之坚忍)

II. The Real Danger in Perseverance

III. God's gift and resources for Perseverance

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ...

As we look at this section in the epistle (书信) of James it seems that he is dealing with four random topics

James contrasts the rich man vs. the poor man, then speaks of the blessed man, goes onto temptations (试探), and then speaks about every good gift that God gives to believers.

Although they seem random, yet, there is a connection because James' desire is to give instruction to believers on the proper way one is to look at living a life of faith.

Theme and purpose of book - (James is considered wisdom literature just like Proverbs)

Theme: Instruction for right living

Purpose for writing: Working faith – faith shown by fruit

From this book we are given direction for right thinking which then leads to right living - by extension ability to overcome temptations, to not succumb to (屈服于) them and fall away from God.

True believers cannot truly fall away from God as the Scriptures teach us the perseverance of the Saints (圣徒之坚忍).

Yet, we can allow ourselves to fall into situations where we can grieve God and grieve ourselves because we have given into temptations rather than to keep ourselves pure and unspotted from the world.

How are we to overcome when we face trials (试炼), temptations, weakness of the flesh, or when we have besetting sins?

Certainly, our desire is to be strong in the Lord, but what happens when we do not feel so strong?

The Christians reality is this... We are able to persevere in our faith because Christ is working in us and through us when we face trials in this life.

James gives us important instruction to help us in our trials

I. The Great Blessing of Perseverance (1:12)

James 1:12 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.

Here is the central thought in this section - happiness and blessing comes to one's heart when that one perseveres in the faith

Earlier James spoke of what perseverance does for you

James 1:4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

- **Perseverance must finish its work**

- **You may be mature and complete lacking nothing**

- **This is an imperative - vital, crucial, and essential work**

- **God desire is for you to mature in your faith and to possess a greater understanding of God and His truth**

Perseverance is defined as: patient endurance (忍耐), steadfastness (坚定), to be resolved, to be firm in your mind, or to have determination.

Our text declares happy or blessed is the man who endures temptation - does not give in or surrender to temptation - but over comes it!

This is to be steadfast in faith or to be determined to endure trials or sins and overcome them for Christ

- What does God want to produce in your life? Patience, endurance, and the ability to keep going when things are tough!

When you are resolved of heart and mind that leads to joy of heart and peace of soul.

When he has been approved

- Shows genuine faith - we are accepted by God through Christ

- We receive the crown of life (stephanos) - Wreath (花环) that the winner receives after winning in a competition

- Great excitement when you win a race or event and receive the trophy (奖杯, 战利品)

How much greater excitement when as Christians we receive the promise of life!!

Are you rejoicing in the experience of your relationship with Christ?

Last thing rejoice in - trials / blessing comes persevere and overcome

God makes it worth our while to be steadfast in the faith

1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Know the great blessing of Persevering faith!

Not only blessing, also know the...

II. The Real Danger in Perseverance (1:13-16)

As Christians in this world we face trials and temptations constantly

James tells us not think for a moment that God is testing you with sin or evil desires

- Do not blame God if you give in to your sin or allow the weaknesses of the flesh to get the better of you.
- It is very easy to say, well God has allowed this sin in my life, so it's His fault I keep committing it.

(16 - Do not be deceived!!)

It's not God's fault you sin - It's your fault you sin!!

Notice what James declares as the process by which surrendering one's self to sin happens and the consequences that follows

Verse 14 - tempted by own evil desire and drawn or lure away (dragged)

Enticed - trapped or caught in sin and becomes a desire that is acted upon

- leads to action because sin, when full grown, and preformed or accomplished leads to death

Sin is an act of rebellion against God!! He judges it!

Never take your sin lightly

Never take confessional box approach, because if that is what you think your heart is not right and you are not living for Christ!!

Do not linger where a certain sin is a weakness to you - destructive

I once read about an interesting method used by people in North Africa to catch monkeys. A hunter hollows out a gourd (葫芦) and makes a hole in its side just large enough for a monkey to insert his open hand. The gourd is then filled with nuts and tied to a tree. The curious monkey is attracted by the smell of the nuts and reaches inside and grasps them. The hole in the gourd is too small, however, for the animal to withdraw his fist as long as it is tightly closed around the nuts. Because he refuses to release his prize, the unsuspecting monkey falls easy prey to his captor. Unwilling to relax his grasp, he actually traps himself! Satan uses a similar method to ensnare us. He tempts us to grasp after more and more material possessions, which we think will bring us security. As long as we tenaciously hold on to them, we are enslaved. How relevant is the biblical warning,

"Do not love the world or the things in the world" (1 John 2:15). The apostle John also said that "the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever" (v.17).

Do not allow Satan to turn that which is good to that which is evil

Chocolate or any other good thing - too much / overindulge - become destructive addiction

Are you struggling with sins and temptations? Finding it difficult or seemingly impossible to over and get the victory?

Romans 7:18-25 ¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. ¹⁹ For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. ²⁰ Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. ²¹ I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. ²² For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. ²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ I thank God -- through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

Know the dangers that hinder persevering faith!

III. God's gift and resources for Perseverance (1:9-11; 17-18)

Every good gift and perfect Gift is from above - Comes down from our Father

God desires to give good and perfect gifts to men

He is unchanging in His desire and the endowment of this good and perfect gift

He does not change His mind or is fickle the way we are fickle

God of lights or creation - Knows His works and how to maintain it!

Vs 18 Shows the ultimate gift that the Lord has given to us

It was according to the good pleasure of His will to give us birth - spiritual birth - through His Word

- Word of life was granted to us and we were enabled to come to faith in the first place through the gospel

- Word of truth - that which has been planted in our hearts - saves us and enables us to live for Him

- First fruits - refers to the church / Christ

1 Corinthians 15:20-23 ²⁰ But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³ But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.

God gives the gift of spiritual life - Know Him by faith through His grace

In His gifts - Lord Gives Resources for Perseverance 1:9-11)

As we look at this section of the book - there is a contrast between the rich & poor man

How are we to understand this distinction?

Lowly brother

Glory in - an imperative - / boast / rejoice / glad in / glory in

Humble circumstances - humble material resources / has very little

Exaltation - Exalted, heavenly, speak of rank / lifted up- used to describe the heavenly realm

Rich man

In humiliation (谦卑) - not same imperative - idea is that he will made humble / His riches will not last / material resources are fleeting / Describes as passing away like a wild flower
Like the grass that withers and dies - so those who give themselves over to the love of money / if material things become the centre of one's life - fades away - even while going about his business

Why this contrast?

If I am to persist in the faith, I need the right resources! Not going to draw from material realm for fortitude (坚毅) of heart and soul - does not last and is only temporal

What are the resources God gives to you?

1. Starts with His Spirit in you

Acts 1:8 ⁸ "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

2. Grace

2 Corinthians 9:8 ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

3. Strength

Isaiah 40:31 ³¹ But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint. (但那等候耶和华的，必从新得力。他们必如鹰展翅上腾，他们奔跑却不困倦，行走却不疲乏。)

4. Desires to give wisdom to those who seek it 1:5

Gives grace to the humble and grants the means to overcome the devil

James 4:6-8 ⁶ But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." ⁷ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

These gifts are given for you to persevere in your faith / stand against the devil and his attacks. Holy as He is Holy

Canons of Dort THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS (多特信经-圣徒的坚忍)

ARTICLE 1

Those whom God, according to His purpose, calls to the communion of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and regenerates by the Holy Spirit, He also delivers from the dominion and slavery of sin, though in this life He does not deliver them altogether from the body of sin and from the infirmities of the flesh.

第一条按神旨意蒙召与他的儿子，我们的主耶稣基督有相交，并蒙圣灵重生的人，他也从今世罪恶的统治与奴役中拯救出来；虽然当他们还在世上的时候，不能救他们完全脱离罪身和肉体的软弱。(Translated by Dr. Charles Chao D. D.)

ARTICLE 2

Hence spring forth daily sins of infirmity and blemishes cleave even to the best works of the saints. These are to them a perpetual reason to humiliate them before God and to flee for refuge to Christ crucified; to mortify the flesh more and more by the spirit of prayer and by holy exercises of piety; and to press forward to the goal of perfection, until at length, delivered from this body of death, they shall reign with the Lamb of God in heaven.

第二条因此就生出每天所犯的软弱之罪，从此在圣徒最好的善行上附带着污点；要使他们时常在神面前谦卑，并飞奔到被钉十字架的基督那里避难；用祈祷的心以及圣洁敬虔的操练多多治死肉体，并向着完全的标竿努力前进，直到至终脱离肉身的死亡，他们就在天上与神的羔羊一同作王。(Translated by Dr. Charles Chao D. D.)

His resources are vast - could you exhaust them?

Would he ever declare - sorry, I don't have enough for you/ run out

2 Peter 1:3 ³ as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,

What is your need? Go to Him with expectation as the source of all you require for faith

Are you falling into sin? Overcome by temptation? Feel weak and living a fruitless life?

Know your Resources!

- We are able to persevere in our faith because Christ is working in us and through us when we face trials in this life.

Christ grants us life in Himself, so that now we are able to live a fruitful life of service with joy!

I. Christ has given Great Blessing of Persevering Faith

II. Christ aids us and gives victory to deal with the Real Danger in Perseverance

III. Christ that grants Gifts and resources for your perseverance

2 Corinthians 9:8 ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.