Purpose in Chaos
James 1:2-4

Sermon Outline

A. Trials; Organized Chaos (vs. 2):

1. **Consider** – We must once and for all allow joy to guide us when we experience trials. Joy must be the chief or principal ingredient.

2. **Joy** – When God allows us to be in a trial our inner attitude should be one of gladness – ‘a dancing heart.’ (Hebrews 12:3, 5-6, 11). The attitude of joy must lead the way through trials.
   
   a) The Christian is to be joyful in trial not because of trial. There was a great need in the early days of the church for teaching along these lines because of the successive waves of persecution.\(^1\)
   
   b) “Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Mt. 5:11–12 par. Lk. 6:22–23).”\(^2\)

3. **Consider it joy** – Joy should direct us in trials because God works our trials for good (Romans 8:28).

4. **Brethren** – James is speaking to people who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and share the same faith. A community of believers who share the same faith.

5. **Encounter; fall into** – These are trials that come to a believer and can have harmful consequences.

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6. **Encounter; fall into** – These are not trials a believer walked into or are a result of a believer's actions. These are trials come against a believer like in the case of Job.

7. The author assumes that this is a context for the Christian life, that testing comes in a variety of forms, **and that one does not seek the situation but rather stumbles into it (Lk. 10:30)**. All of these details fit with the Jewish Christian belief about testing.

8. **Various** – Various trials means greater than the normal amount of diverse trials.

9. **Trials** - These are trials where a believer is tested by God to expose the level of their faith. These tests prove the quality of the believer’s faith. These trials are forces that are beyond the believer's control and can cause physical damage. **Examples – Job, Joseph, Daniel (ravenous lions – at work and the den) and Peter (because Christ had to die Peter’s and the disciple’s faith was exposed).**

a) It is important to note that James did *not* say that a believer should be joyous for the trials but in the trials. The verb translated “face” might more literally be expressed as “fall into,” *peripesēte*, much as the poor man “fell among robbers” (Luke 10:30). 3[3]

b) *Paul told his converts that “we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22).* 4[4]

c) “**Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you**” (1 Peter 4:12). 5[5]

d) “**We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope**” (Rom. 5:3–4) 6[6]

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10. **Trials** – Trials in this passage is a strategic process for God’s purposes.

**B. Faith Tested (vs. 3):**

1. **Knowing** – Believers will continuously come to a complete understanding of the full realization of the purpose of their trials.

2. **Knowing** – As a believer grows spiritually, as a result of remaining teachable in trials, the Holy Spirit reveals the purpose of their trials. As a result the believer gains a full complete knowledge of why God is allowed experience Satan’s attacks.

3. **The testing** – Believers testing proves, in the midst of affections, their genuine faith in Christ. Gold’s authenticity is exposed in fire (1 Peter 1:7).

4. **Your faith** – Faith represents an intense conviction in the divine truths of God’s Word which causes a believer to remain steadfastly confident in the power of God to fulfill His Word.
   
   a) **Faith is always tested.** When God called Abraham to live by faith, He tested him in order to increase his faith. God always tests us to bring out the best; Satan tempts us to bring out the worst. The testing of our faith proves that we are truly born again.\(^7\)

5. **Your faith** – This is the total surrender that God will fulfill His promises.

6. **Produces** - Faith works to continuously bring about a progressive process that leads to complete success.

7. **Produces** - This kind of faith is a working developmental process that leads to perfection.

8. **Endurance; perseverance** – To persevere is to never give up like a marathon runner who steadily runs until he or she reaches the finish line.

   a) In classical Greek it "means above all perseverance in the face of hostile forces" and in the LXX "nerving oneself....to hold fast to God and not to

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mistake his power and faithfulness." Thus Dibelius is correct when he points out that it is active, a heroic endurance." This is the virtue of the much-tested Abraham, and above all of Job, whom James will later cite, probably referring to traditions now recorded in the Test. The Christian church valued this virtue, for only those with such a tested character knew that they would stand to the end.

9. Endurance; perseverance – To persevere is to demonstrate a steady character, shaped by a believer's faith, so that in the midst of trials the believer does not give up because they trust God to fulfill His promises.

   a) True faith, like pure gold, endures, no matter how hot the fire. True faith therefore develops, or more literally “works” (katergazetai), perseverance or staying power. The noun “perseverance” (hypomonēn; cf. the verbal form in James 1:12) means steadfastness or endurance in the face of difficulties (cf. 5:11). 8

10. Endurance; perseverance – To persevere is to demonstrate a steady character that is controlled by a believer's deep conviction and total surrender to God’s Word patiently waiting for God to fulfill His promises (Isaiah 39:28-31).

   a) With Satan constantly seeking to destroy us (1 Peter 5:8-11; Revelations 12:10) endurance is a requirement in the Christian faith.

C. Perfected (vs. 4):

1. Let endurance; Perseverance – We must allow the character development that leads to a believer's faith being steady, despite obstacles, to have a completed maturation process.

   a) Immature people are always impatient; mature people are patient and persistent. Impatience and unbelief usually go together, just as faith and patience do. “Be ... followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Heb. 6:12). “For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise” (Heb. 10:36). “He that believeth shall not make haste” (Isa. 28:16). 9

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2. **Let endurance; Perseverance** – To completely learn what it takes to never give up or give in as a believer patiently waits on God to remove or stop the trial.

   a) **Noah is the perfect man of Jewish tradition:** "Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God (Gen. 6:9). He was a man who kept God's law or, in other words, was "of a stable integrity not contaminated by divergent motives or conflicts between thoughts and deeds.

3. **Have** – The perfecting work is continuous, so a believer must cling to the process.

4. **Perfect** – The end result of endurance is the purpose for of all trials. To complete the process is to be full grown as a believer causing a believer to become blameless.

5. **Perfect** – To finish the race without surrendering to the emotional or physical pain because of a believer’s complete surrender to God’s Word; example Joseph or Daniel.

6. **Perfect** – Perfect means no matter trial we can still do 'all things through Christ.'

7. **Results** - The results are due to cumulative efforts directed by faith due to steadfast confidence in the Word of God and it is this that produces endurance.

8. **Perfect** – The purpose of trials meet their conclusion when we completely endure the process. This is the goal of all trials.

9. **And complete** - For a believer to be complete is when the believer has developed a sound character (1 Thessalonians 5:23) causing them to be blameless.

10. **Complete** – To be complete is to know what to do in trials and be faithful to complete the process.

11. **Complete** – To be complete is a believer who remains sober no matter the pain with sound character.

12. **Lacking** – The believer is continually without any character flaws as it was with Paul who at one point did not do what he wanted to do (Romans 7:14-25) but would later in Galatians 2:20 and Colossians 3:1-4 he says that his life is dominated and controlled by the Holy Spirit so much so that he no longer lives Christ nature became his (2 Peter 1:3-4).

13. **Nothing** – Nothing here means that the believer does not lack not one attribute that is exemplary of Christ character.