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James 5:7-12

The Meek Shall Inherit the Earth

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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

“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,” 1 Corinthians 15:58.

This week, things seem to be piling up. I think this passage is uniquely well timed for exactly this week in the life of our church. Here’s the big idea for this passage: *Hold on. Be patient. Just keep holding on. Keep holding on to Christ.*

For some of you, things have been piling up lately. Many of you had serious flooding in your basement last weekend. For some, hard things are happening in your life. Tragedy follows on tragedy. Hardship on hardship. Death follows death. For some, bills keep piling up. Some unexpected expense follows on some unexpected medical bill.

Sometimes, and now for many is just such a time, sometimes, it feels like you just barely get your head back out of the water with enough time to suck in a bunch of salt water from the next wave.

Often, because of the way that Christ redeems your days and your years, when you look back on the hard seasons of life you can see them through the lens of his gospel kindness. You can see the hard season through the goodness that Christ has brought into your life since then. It was hard, and you know it was hard, you haven’t forgotten, but through gospel gratitude, time has helped you to see it as all a part of God’s sovereign redemptive purpose.

But it’s hard to have perspective in the middle of it.

This is basically what James is doing in this passage. This follows on the same basic theme we looked at last week. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.* Last week, the fear of the Lord reminded us not to get distracted when things are going well. Apart from Christ, we will all stand to account for God’s broken law.

This week, the fear of the Lord reminds us to not let yourself get crushed by the hard things. The fear of the Lord reminds us to look up above the crashing waves to his sure promises.

As much as the fear of the Lord is a grim threat to the non-believer, it is a heavy ballast to the child of God to keep you from capsizing.

Christian, you need hope to live this life. You need a hope that is not rooted in how things seem to be going any given moment. You need hope that can see the leaven working in the lump. You need hope that can see the mustard seed growing. You need hope that can see the kingdom coming. You need hope that can see the better city, while yet a long way off.

The fear of the Lord believes God’s perspective even when it feels like our perspective is saying the opposite. Sometimes we don’t see our lives rightly because we are too close to it. If we could zoom out a ways, we would get a better perspective.

Sometimes when all you can see is your own sin it is easy to think that you’re not making any progress at all.

Or even with history. I talked about history a bit last week. It can be easy to give in to a pessimistic view of history when you’re only thinking in years or decades or even centuries. When you step back a way, you realize that Christ really has been building his church these last two thousand years. The church has been dying, and suffering, and blundering, and arguing, and coming up with new and clever heresies, and all the time, Christ has been building his church. The nations have one by one been streaming to Christ.

Wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord. And the fear of the Lord teaches us to believe Christ’s promises about his work, his church, and our lives, even when we can hardly get our heads above the waves.

This is the basic idea of this passage. This passage gives you the big idea right away. Verse 7, **“Be patient.”**

James gives us a call to patience here in four different aspects. Verses 7 and 8, patience in history – this is *hope*. Verse 9, patience in community – this is *mercy*. Verse 10 and 11, patience in suffering – this is *faith*. Verse 12, patience in your life circumstances – this is *integrity*.

The Text

I mentioned last week that this last major section is basically one point. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*. In verses 1 through 12, last week and this week, that is James’s big point. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. He presents this idea basically as his big conclusion to everything he’s been saying so far in the book. And he presents it in a common biblical form. He presents it as a “two ways to live scenario.”

I gave a few examples last week about other two-ways scenarios in the Bible. Deuteronomy 30, Psalm 1, Matthew 7. Basically, what each of those is saying, and what James is saying, is that there are two ways that you can do life. One way is the way of righteousness and wisdom that leads to life, and the other is the way of wickedness and foolishness that leads to death.

One thing that I didn’t mention last week that is worth noting, is that each of those scenarios, and this one too, are all presented as direct responses to the Word of God. Deuteronomy 30 follows Moses’ presentation of the Law of God. Psalm 1 is all about responding to the Word of God. Matthew 7 is about responding to Jesus’ teaching. James is no different here. The essential question for wisdom is this: “what will you do with the Word of God?” Will you hear, believe, and obey? And thus live. Or will you deceive yourself, thinking that bare affirmation with no real life-transformation is true faith? And thus walk the way of destruction.

Last week we looked at the way of folly and destruction.

This week we will see the way of life.

James presents a unique spin on these two ways to live. Here in James, the way of death can apparently feel like the way of life. Things are good. Life is easy and comfortable. But destruction and wrath are coming. God is not mocked. And on the other hand, the way of life can feel like death. Things are hard, difficulty follows on difficulty. Godly wisdom learns to see through these things. Not that they don’t matter, but that they aren’t final or ultimate.

This week James gives us four aspects of the way of life in difficult circumstances. Now, sometimes the way of life really does feel like life. It’s not uncommon that God blesses a faithful life with good things in this life. Career is stable, finances are secure, family is happy and healthy. That scenario certainly has its own difficulties and temptations, but if you can understand how to live faithfully on the death-scented path of life, it will be much easier to understand how to live faithfully on the life-scented path of life. The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away.

The *first aspect* that James puts in front of us is *hope* – patience in the unfolding of history.

Verses 7 and 8, **“Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.”**

Basically, what he’s saying is that even though you can’t see the kingdom of Christ coming, that doesn’t mean that it isn’t. The seed has been sown, and just because all you can see is dirt, that doesn’t mean that there won’t be a crop in a few months.

At the time, the greatest persecutors of the church were the Jews. And they continued to persecute the church up until the destruction of the Temple in the year 70 by the Romans. For them, James is saying that it won’t always be this bad. There is a day coming soon when the church will get some relief.

Christ is building his church, his kingdom is advancing, the leaven is leavening the lump. Every so often the church passes through dark seasons. And yet, the church keeps growing and getting stronger.

So, patience looks like hope. Just because things are bad now, it doesn't mean that they will always be. And sometimes the fruit comes precisely through the difficulty.

When we look at seasons of opposition and difficulty for the church, we shouldn't think of them like some final decline, but as passing storms. Yes, the flood comes, but the sun shines again.

This isn't just at the big-picture, cultural level. We should also think of this at the personal level. Sorrow, for the Christian, is never the last word. Sorrow is always a passing cloud in the life of the believer. Often, the cloud passes in this life. The sickness goes away. You find a way to pay the bill. The marriage is restored. You have joy again when you thought you could never stop mourning. Often, the cloud passes in this life. But even if it doesn't, for the Christian, death is the door to life. Even if you take your sorrows to the grave, through Christ's resurrection, that's where you'll leave them.

The first aspect of patience is hope.

The *second aspect* of patience is *mercy* – we've seen this several times in James.

Verse 9, **"Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door."**

Patience looks like mercy.

Have you ever been in that situation where everyone is a little bit hungry and tired, and maybe a little hot because you've been outside all afternoon. Then for some reason everyone seems to be a little bit prickly? Everyone just seems to have a little bit less patience and graciousness?

This is a fairly trivial example of what James is warning against.

There is a way that when things get a little bit tough, it puts some strain on relationships. This is why financial concerns tend to lead to marriage problems. Because you are stressed and worried and anxious, you start to grumble against one another.

This is what James is warning against. In this hard season, for them, in this persecution, don't grumble against each other. It will be extra difficult to not grumble against each other. So, church, in the middle of difficult seasons, especially difficult seasons for the church as a whole, be extra careful to not let yourself get nit-picky against each other.

This one sentence sums up everything that James has said about mercy so far. First there's the command – don't grumble at each other – be merciful. But then he packs in both major motivators that he has given for mercy.

First, "so that you may not be judged." Remember, chapter 3, "we all stumble in many ways." So, have enough humility to recognize that you don't want to live in a nit-picky church.

Then second, "the Judge is standing at the door." Or 'there is a God and you're not him.' Have enough humility to recognize that it just isn't your job to fix every little problem in other people's lives.

When persecution, or other difficulties in the life of the church kind of turns up the temperature and adds some pressure to the community, patience looks like mercy.

Then the *third aspect* of patience is *faith*. This is obviously very related to hope, yet it stands on its own. James gives us two examples to consider "the prophets" and Job.

Look at verses 10 and 11. **"As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful."**

Here, James gives two examples of steadfastness that we should imitate.

First are the prophets, and you can think of them as faith that builds.

And second is Job, and you can think of him as faith that endures.

Really, this verse is something of an echo of Hebrews 11, the so-called hall of faith. There are two sides to this faith. There is the building the kingdom faith like the prophets. And there is the enduring hardship faith, like Job.

Both of these see present realities through the lens of God's promises. The prophets see what will be, and what God has called them to build, and they lay down their lives working to build it. They never see the full results, but they usually see the power of God along the way.

Elijah is an outlaw, but he still does the work. Jeremiah is thrown in a well, but he still preaches. The prophets see the coming kingdom of Christ, and they labor to build it, knowing full well that the fullness is a long way off.

And Job endures. Job sees what is true about God, and refuses to let go of God's righteousness and God's mercy. In spite of all the evidence, he believes that God is just and kind. And so he endures.

And both of these are the same faith.

I want you to notice this. Turn to Hebrews 11. You'll want to see this yourself. Most of Hebrews 11 is a survey of biblical history, that then culminates with this sweeping paragraph. Listen to how this book describes faith lived out. Hebrews 11 starting in verse 32.

And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Notice the two sides – there's the faith that builds and the faith that endures. And both, at bottom, are the same. Both look at Jesus and say, he is Lord, he is the Christ, all authority belongs to him. His word is good. His word is true.

He is building his church. He is redeeming a people out of every tribe and nation and language. He alone lived a perfect life for my righteousness. He alone died for the sins of the world. In him is bound up all power for redemption, sanctification, and for the restoration of all things.

If he says that he is building his church, then I will spend all *my* strength, and all *his* strength that he gives me, to build with him. He cannot fail.

If he says that my sins have been washed away by his blood. If he says that I have been adopted in him as a son or daughter of God, then I won't let this misery or mistreatment pull me away from Christ. He cannot fail.

There is a better kingdom coming. Christ is king, and I'll live today for that kingdom.

In the face of opposition, faith builds.

In the face of suffering, faith endures.

Three aspects of patience so far: hope, mercy, and faith. Then the *fourth aspect* that James gives us is *integrity*.

Verse 12, **"But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation."**

This is a prohibition against two things – first, needing to wrap all of your answers in trivial oaths to get people to believe you, and second, using manipulative oaths to trick people. Both of these point toward integrity.

For the first, Christians, even under persecution and in the face of hard times, should be the kind of people who can be relied on to tell the truth. If you say yes, people should believe it. If you say no, people should believe

it. If you have to wrap your word in all kinds of silly oaths, always saying, “I swear,” then you are the kind of person that other people basically don’t trust.

Then second, I talked about this last week, there is a way of using oaths to trick people into thinking you mean one thing when you mean another. Jesus pointed this out in Matthew 23, when he called out the Pharisees’ practice of saying that an oath on the altar was not binding, but an oath on the offering was binding. Basically, this amounts to holding your fingers crossed behind your back.

Patience in the face of hardship looks like integrity. Even when things are bad, you are not willing to cut corners, or bend the truth, or trick people to make things go a little better for yourself. Often, in the face of hard times, we are more tempted to be a little shady, to bend the truth. This is impatience.

One note. Some people, most famously the Mennonites, have taken this verse, and Jesus’s teaching on oaths in the Sermon on the Mount to an extreme to outlaw any and all oaths and vows.

This is unnecessary and contradicts other parts of Scripture. There’s a difference between lawful and unlawful oaths. Unlawful oaths are oaths sworn on unworthy things, and oaths taken for trivial and frivolous things.

Basically, a solemn and sober oath taken in the name of the Lord is not sinful.

For one, the third commandment, “you shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain,” is about how to take a lawful oath – not in vain.

Then, throughout the New Testament, we see the Apostle Paul taking oaths in the Lord’s name. Romans 1:9, **“For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you...”** To call God to witness is a form of an oath.

Or Galatians 1:20, **“In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!”** Again, an oath meant to underline the seriousness of Paul’s gospel.

There are many other examples.¹

God himself takes an oath on himself, Hebrews 6:13 says, **“For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself.”**

All that to say, James isn’t here saying that all oaths are bad, but only trivial and manipulative oaths on unworthy things, like heaven or earth. So, don’t regret your wedding vows, or taking an oath to testify in court, those are entirely appropriate.

Those are the four aspects of patience that James lays out for us: hope, mercy, faith, and integrity. Now, we need to be clear. None of this is just an abstract, floating patience as some kind of generic moral ideal. All of this is patience “until the coming of the Lord.” So, all this patience is oriented toward Jesus Christ, and rests on Jesus Christ.

And this is a part of the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5, “Love, joy, peace, *patience*, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” Patience flows out of the Holy Spirit’s work in you. Because the Holy Spirit has convicted you of your need for a savior, has made you see the sufficiency of Christ for your sin, has assured you of the love of God for you in Christ, you are able to walk in patience.

Doctrine: Gospel Triumph

The doctrine we need to reflect on a bit this week is the doctrine of gospel triumph – the sure advance of Christ’s kingdom.

Christian patience isn’t a reality-denying patience in spite of the truth. It’s not a pious optimism in the face of despair. In other words, it isn’t *unreasonable*. It’s a patience from faith, but it’s a patience founded on the *certainty* of faith. Christian patience is an entirely reasonable response to the facts as presented in the promises of God.

¹ Romans 1:9, 9:1, 2 Cor. 1:23, Gal. 1:20, Phil. 1:8, 1 Thess. 2:5, 10, Acts 18:18, 21:23-26.

What do I mean? Christians have the power to be patient because we know that in the end the gospel triumphs. We don't just pull up a mystical patience totally disconnected to reality. With the eyes of faith we see the kingdom coming, we see the kingdom triumphing and have patience for seeing it.

Let me sketch this out in three dimensions.

First, the Bible teaches us that the gospel triumphs in history.

Genesis 12:3, to Abraham, **"In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."** The blessing from the seed of Abraham – that's Christ – will be as widespread as the curse in Adam.

Psalms 46:10, **"Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"** World missions will eventually succeed.

Isaiah 9:6-7, **"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this."** The kingdom of the Son will increase and bring peace with it, now to the end of the world.

Habbakuk 2:14, **"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea."**

The gospel is destined to saturate the world with the glory of God and the peace and blessing of Christ.

Next, the Bible teaches us that the gospel triumphs in the church.

Matthew 16:18, **"you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."** Christ is building the church, and he is unstoppable.

Ephesians 5:25-27, **"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish."** On the cross, Christ purchased the splendor, purity, and holiness of the church.

The gospel is destined to build and purify the church. The best days of the church are not in some pristine past. The best days of the church are yet future.

Third, the Bible teaches us that the gospel triumphs in your life.

Romans 8:28-30, **"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified."**

God didn't just predestine to save you by the gospel. He predestined to conform you to the image of his Son. You have been justified. You will be sanctified. You will be glorified. One day, all sin will be past tense. You will have a *last* sin.

2 Corinthians 4:17, **"For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison."** Through your current hardship, the gospel is triumphing in your life, preparing you for a future you can't even begin to imagine.

Philippians 1:6, **"And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."** He is working in you. The gospel will triumph in you. He will finish what he started. Eventually God's work of sanctification in you will be complete.

You can have patience now – patience in history, patience in the church, patience even in your own life – not because of some unreasoning pious optimism, but because God has promised that his gospel will triumph.

Application

Ok, application, what do we do with this? At a high level, it's not that complicated. Do what James says here. Have patience – cultivate hope, cultivate mercy, cultivate faith, cultivate integrity.

I want to drill down on something I said earlier, that I think will help give some touch points to see how this passage meets our lives.

Earlier when I was talking about faith as an aspect of patience, I said that “In the face of opposition, faith builds.” I want to expand on that a bit. I think there is something there that touches on one of the deep miseries of our age.

Faith sees all the labors of our life as intimately bound up with the progress of the kingdom and the triumph of the gospel

Earlier in the series I made a big deal out of how James addresses the despair and meaninglessness in our world. This is one of the major ways that he does so, by connecting our work (in every sphere we work in) to the ultimate gospel triumph.

Secularism can't avoid despair and meaninglessness simply because meaninglessness is the first principle of secularism – nothing is intentional, there is no will outside the universe that could mean anything by anything.

But we can set ourselves up for lives of despair and meaninglessness if we cut off our life here and now from all these gospel promises. If gospel triumph is something sealed off in heaven, or reserved for after the close of history, and not something that is promised for the course of this world in this history, then we end up living lives somewhat tangential to meaning.

Twentieth century theologian Francis Schaeffer described this as a two-story way of living. Where there is meaning in the universe, but it's all upstairs. And we live the vast majority of our lives here in the downstairs. So, work, and family, and culture, and politics, and history are all downstairs concerns. They have a certain kind of meaning, but none that really touches the really meaningful things upstairs.

But, if the gospel triumphs in history, then work, and family, and culture, and politics, and history all matter. Faith builds in the face of opposition because Christ is building his church. Faith builds in the face of opposition because the kingdom of God really is coming on earth as it is in heaven.

So, this has two basic components. Faith builds in light of gospel triumph in the normal things, and in the non-normal things.

For the normal things, faith builds in your family, your work, and your own sanctification.

Faith sees the gospel triumphing in your family, so faith builds in your family. In your marriage, faith says, through the gospel of Jesus Christ, this will be better, healthier, stronger, in five years, in ten years, in 30 years – and therefore, faith builds in your marriage in hope.

One of the many Proverbs on discipline and childrearing hits this in a really helpful angle. Proverbs 19:18 says, **“Discipline your son, for there is hope; do not set your heart on putting him to death.”**

That is such a helpful perspective. “Discipline your son, for there is hope.” In other words, don't give up. Discipline him again. He can still change. Because of the gospel of Jesus Christ, there is still hope, so don't give up on discipline.

Discipline for your child says two things, “I love you,” and “I believe in you.”

You could apply that to the rest of your family. Work on your marriage, for there is hope. Keep trying to get into a rhythm of family worship, for there is hope. Christian, through the Spirit of Christ, the gospel can triumph in your family. There is hope.

This applies to your own sanctification too. Fight sin in your life, because there is still hope.

Work is the same way. When God created man he said, **“be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.”** That's what work is. Your work is intimately wrapped up with gospel triumph. Christ is redeeming a new humanity to get back to work. Your work is a part of how the glory of the Lord will cover the earth.

And if we don't see this, of course we're going to shuffle along with a sense meaninglessness in life. Your work matters because this world matters. This is the world that Christ is redeeming. This is the world that God sent his Son to save.

So, there are more or less *normal* aspects of faith building in the light of gospel triumph. For most, these normal aspects more or less just require a mindset shift. Stop seeing your work or your family as something tangential to the kingdom of God.

But then there are also things we could call non-normal. And these are the things that require a little extra courage and sacrifice to do. And there's a whole range here, everything from moving overseas to plant churches to serving on the music team.

For some, living in light of gospel triumph will push you to sell everything and move overseas as a missionary.

You are captured by the vision. The gospel will triumph, Christ's kingdom will advance. All authority has been given to Christ, and all nations will come streaming to Christ.

This was the perspective of William Carey, the great pioneer missionary to India. After his first convert, he wrote this in a letter reflecting on that conversion:

"The work, to which God has set His hands, will infallibly prosper. Christ has begun to besiege this ancient and strong fortress, and will assuredly carry it... He *must* reign, till Satan has not an inch of territory... [this convert] was only one, but a continent was coming behind him. The divine grace which changed one Indian's heart, could obviously change a hundred thousand... We only [lack] men and money to fill this country with the knowledge of Christ. We are neither working at uncertainty nor afraid of the result... we are certain to take the fortress, if we can but persuade ourselves to sit down long enough before it. We shall reap if we faint not."²

William Carey believed in gospel triumph. In one single convert he could see a continent.

Some of you men, in light of gospel triumph, should be thinking about serving the church as an elder. Maybe not in the immediate future, but what do you need to be doing now to prepare for that in five to ten years?

Or some of you should be thinking about taking some seminary classes, getting some formal theological training. Perhaps preparing for a call into full time pastoral ministry.

But it doesn't have to be ministry related. In light of gospel triumph, some of you should be thinking about starting a business. If Christ wins, then you are free to take risks. To step out with a little courage, to make sacrifices, to build something.

For some, probably for many, you feel an urge to do something, to build something, but you have no idea what. That's ok. For now, simply build yourself and your family. Learn, read, study, try things. Study theology. Study history. Learn to pray. Contribute everywhere and anywhere you can. Volunteer to serve in ways that stretch you. Become the kind of person who is ready and able to take a bold step when the time comes.

"Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord."

"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."

Look to Christ. He is your hope. He is your patience. In him, hope, and patience, and zealous kingdom labor are the most reasonable things in the world.

Be patient. The Lord is at hand. The kingdom is coming. Have hope when you can't see it. Have mercy when you don't feel it. Have faith when you don't understand it. And have integrity when you're tempted to set it aside.

² William Carey, *Letter to Samuel Pearce*, quoted in Iain Murray, *Puritan Hope*, 150-51.

Lord's Supper

Today we will be celebrating the Lord's Supper.

The Supper is a means of grace that helps us grow in patience. The Supper gives us everything we need to grow in patience. The Supper points in three directions: past, present, and future. The Supper, in the broken bread and the juice, reminds us of Christ's sacrifice for us to give us peace with God. And like the elements nourish our bodies in the present, were reminded of the Spirit of Christ that nourishes us even now. And as we take the cup, we look forward to the day that we feast with Christ in his kingdom with resurrected bodies.

This is where we draw our patience. You have been reconciled to God through the blood of Christ. Whatever you are in now, Christ is with you, now. And whatever you are going through or working on, fix your eyes on Christ and his surely coming kingdom.