

# FAITH DURING AFFLICTION

*James 5:1-12*

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Faith in God is a choice not a feeling. It is a decision to rely on God based on what he has revealed to us about himself through nature and in the bible. We can harbor doubts about God during distress and still exercise faith in him. We simply need to take him at his word and act accordingly despite our feelings.

We can become discouraged when things don't work out our way. But keep the faith because the testing of your faith builds perseverance and hope. Rather than looking at affliction as a curse we should see it as a blessing. Because it helps our faith grow. When it comes affliction does not last forever.

**2 Corinthians 4:8-9** *In every way we're troubled but not crushed, frustrated but not in despair, persecuted but not abandoned, struck down but not destroyed.*

## **Warning to Rich Oppressors - James 5:1-6**

Paul speaks about the rich and heaping up treasure for the last days, talking about their Naira and Kobo, gold and silver that they acquired for the last days. It is interesting knowing how the rich people have to worry about the security of their money and properties. How safe are the banks? What if the bank goes bankrupt, will NDIC pay. What if earth quake happens, property destroy, insurance will come to the rescue.

In reference to what happened in Jerusalem **Luke 21:6** *"These things which you see—the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down."*

This does not mean we should not have money and properties. But when you think twice, make life easy for yourself and others.

James said, *Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on you.* He foretells the desolations that could come upon rich bad people. The different stores of grain, rice, beans, yam, wine, oil etc, which you had pile up in stores and your un-used clothes in your wardrobes termites will eat them.

### *Savings for Tomorrow ?*



The rotten food items in your stores, your termite eaten clothes in your wardrobe your dilapidated and termite eaten naira notes show that you amass things you don't need why not help the poor.

You gather these things because you love them not that you need them, in other words this is greed for wealth. There is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. When the things begin to go bad, no how you will bring them out.

Jesus said **(Luke 12:15)** *“Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”* Lay up treasure in heaven where mot and termite will not eat them, not on earth.

The sight of the things going bad is enough to cause High Blood lack of sleep, high body temperature. They will begin to trouble the body. In those days we use to hear that BP is a big man's sickness. This sickness will become cankerworm eating their flesh.

James is saying that instead of helping the poor, and thus honouring God with your substance, you have, through the principle of covetousness, kept all to yourselves. At the end instead of the treasure of good things you think you are laying up; you have laid up treasure of fire for yourself. Treasure for the last days, good but when is the last day? The day and hour no one knows not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. **Matthew 24:36.**

#### ***Oppressors take note:***

***Hiring of the labourers*** — The law says: Do not cheat or rob your neighbour. The wages of him that you hired shall not remain in your hand over night till the morning. Every day's labour should be paid for as soon as the day ended. **Leviticus 19:13**

**Deuteronomy 24:15** Pay them their wages each day before sunset, because they are poor, they rely on it. Otherwise, they may cry to the LORD against you, and you will be guilty of sin.

**Malachi 3:5** I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against you sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, they do not fear me.

Like the rich man in Lazarus story, ***you who lives in pleasure*** — In our cars you see LE (luxury Edition), XLE (Extra Luxury Edition) and we choose the one we want for comfort. Inside our private jets are gold plated, everybody like good thing. You have lived luxuriously feeding yourselves without fear, pampering the flesh with all kinds of cream and perfume. Brethren avoid bleaching the skin for the sake of tomorrow.

By your action of oppressing and defrauding people you have condemned and killed innocent men, who cannot take you to court even if they do they have no one to plead their cause so they cannot get justice. **James 2:6** Says, But you have dishonoured the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts.

**James 2:9** *but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. Those who engage in these act God will destroy as enemies of truth and righteousness.*

### ***Be patience in Suffering. James 5:7-11***

**Be patient**— Waiting is hard when you are suffering, but if you have sown the seed of salvation, be patient allow it to grow. The farmer waits patiently for rain after sowing his seed, when God send in the rain in due season, bumper harvest is sure.

When you are sick, if it is food you want to eat, eat. If water you want to drink, if it medicines you want to swallow go ahead but ask God to send in the rain in due time.

As James seems to be talking about the coming judgment on the wicked oppressors. When the poor have no hope of justice, waiting upon the Lord is the best option. Then set the timer of your temper to run for a long time and focus on the final lap in the race of life. Be patient.

**Matthew 5:12** Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

To be patient demands an attitude which shows long-suffering in the face of affliction and injustice. Believers should show this stamina without complaining, or retaliating. The truth is that we need not complain during our suffering and trials but wait on the Lord who said vengeance is mine.

However, our natural human tendency is to complain and grumble at the first sign of difficulties. Being able to find strength in God and remember His perfect will helps us to starve off those attitudes. This is where it is important to focus of God instead of on the problems. Christians should be ready to endure affliction without complaint and to remain committed in their obedience to God. Find the strength to stand firm in the Lord, the Lord is coming soon for your rescue.

**Grudge not**, so says the scriptures— *Do not* grumble, do not murmur. This have brought calamities to the children of Israel during their journey to the promised land. **Num 14:29**, In this wilderness your bodies will fall (you will die) —every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. Miriam also acquired leprosy for murmuring against Moses. Num 12:1-10. The judge is not far from you.

Grudge is an ill will, once conceived does not go away easily, be careful about it.

“When the teacher left the classroom, he gave authority to class monitor to write the names of noise makers when the teacher comes back punishment will be given to those who disturbed the class in his absence”. Christ is coming soon noise makers beware. The judge is at the door.

The children of God should be on guard for Christ’s return. In so doing, good behavior and mutual living together are very essential.

**The prophets** also endured persecution—The prophets who had spoken to their forefathers by the authority of God, were persecuted by the very people to whom they delivered the Divine message, but they suffered affliction and persecution with patience, commending their cause to him who judges righteously, therefore, let us imitate their example.

You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful. **Job 1:20-22** Naked I come and naked I go the Lord gave and the Lord has taken blessed be the name of the Lord. This is faith at work during affliction.

Jeremiah also suffered in the hands of his audience, he was put in the stocks, thrown into prison, Lowered into miry dungeon. **Jeremiah 20:2, 32:2, 28:6**

The elders did not attend to me, the ministers preached against me, the deacons are selective, the sister did not share food for me, these are local accusation but take it easy put God in control, it shall be well with everybody. **Matthew 5:11-12** *"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.*

**Job was** — Stripped of all his worldly possessions, deprived of all his children, tortured in body with sore disease, tempted by the devil, harassed by his wife, and falsely accused by his friends, yet he held fast his integrity, and waited for divine intervention, and he did not charge God foolishly.

James concludes this segment by saying:

**In all things - swear not** —whether in affliction or difficulty or in joyous mood. But let your yes be yes and you no be no. Do not pretend to say *yes* with your *lips*, and annul it in your *heart* let the *yes* or the *no* which you *express* stand, lest you *fall into condemnation*.

### **Conclusion:**

Take time not to defraud and oppress people, avoid the very appearance of it. God does not forbid us to use lawful pleasures, but sinful pleasure, is a provoking sin.

Let us serve our God, with patient and perseverance as those who believe that the end will be favorable to us.....Therefore, brethren let us key into **Rom. 12:12** *Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, continue steadfastly in prayer. The Lord will surely come to our aid.*

**May God bless these words in our hearts in Jesus Name, Amen!**