

Apply The Word

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Message Info

Title:

Persevere in Fellowship

Speaker:

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Scriptures:

James 1:2-5

Theme: Persevere in faith so you can be steadfast in love for one another.

Introduction: Christian maturity is God-centered, and it is revealed especially in our response to trials. When we are suffering or struggling, there are always alternatives before us; and the path of trusting the Lord may seem to be more difficult. But Christian maturity comes through our trust in the Lord, as we are steadfast in trusting him no matter what comes. As we recognize that he is with us and that he is good, we look to him alone for all we need.

Here are 3 aspects of persevering in faith for the long haul:

1. Faith is always the target

Trials are times in our lives when our trust in the Lord is being tested. Who do you trust? Who gets to interpret life for you?

James calls us to "count it all joy when we encounter trials of various kinds." That is not a natural perspective, but a supernatural one.

To do that, we need to gladly affirm 3 truths: a) God is sovereign; b) God is good; and c) we glorify him by trusting him during trials.

Faith gladly affirms that God: a) exists; and b) is good (Heb 11:6). Faith compels us to turn to the Lord again and again in our trials.

2. Steadfastness is the means

Steadfastness is doing something hard for a long time; and in relation to faith, it is trusting the Lord faithfully through an extended season of trial.

Steadfastness comes through our dependence upon the Lord. It is displayed when we are enduring something bad and yet we remain true to the Lord.

Many times this is displayed in how we handle our responsibilities from the Lord. Do we step into the difficult aspects of loving and leading others, or do we shrink in self-pity?

This is not about gritting our teeth and hanging on. It's about crying out to God for his grace again and again, trusting that he will be faithful to provide.

3. Love is the fruit

Wisdom is living skillfully in God's world, living according to how he designed the world to be. It understands the givenness of things and works with the grain.

After discussing steadfastness in faith, James turns to the topic of wisdom. He does so because when we are in trials, wisdom is often our greatest need.

This also applies to fellowship. The Lord has given us his people so that we do not walk through trials alone. We need to view our conversations as opportunities to stir up faith.

As we are steadfast in trusting the Lord, we will love one another, and in that way we demonstrate to the world that we are Jesus' disciples (John 13:34-35).

Questions:

1. Are you steadfast in faith under the burdens of the responsibilities the Lord has given you?

2. What do you wish could be changed in your life? How do you interact with the Lord and others about that struggle?

3. How have you seen the Lord build steadfastness in your life? How would you like to grow in it?