

## ***“Have Patience Men”***

October 2012

Hymn                      “O God, you gave your servant John”                      VU 718

Scripture                      James 5:7-11 (Easy-to-read version)

Your life on earth was full of rich living. You pleased yourselves with everything you wanted. You made yourselves fat, like an animal ready for the day of slaughter. You showed no mercy to good people. They were not against you, but you killed them.

Brothers and sisters, be patient; the Lord will come. So be patient until that time. Look at the farmers. They have to be patient. They have to wait for their valuable crop to grow and produce a harvest. They wait patiently for the first rain and the last rain. You must be patient too. Never stop hoping. The Lord is coming soon. Brothers and sisters, don't complain against each other. If you don't stop complaining, you will be judged guilty. And the judge is ready to come!

Brothers and sisters, follow the example of the prophets who spoke for the Lord. They suffered many bad things, but they were patient. And we say that those who accepted their troubles with patience now have God's blessing. You have heard about Job's patience. You know that after all his troubles, the Lord helped him. This shows that the Lord is full of mercy and is kind.

Prayer                      Let us pray together – We're in a hurry God! It sounds as if James is preaching at us. We're busy doing what we think you want us to do. Do we have to pay attention to this? Listen to us, now. Amen.

Reflection                      We all know of the young person who prayed, “Lord, I want to learn to be patient, and I want to learn now.” In this passage James encourages us to wait on God and to be patient. He also gives us a warning against wanting everything right now. He cites as examples farmers, the prophets who spoke for God, and Job. Each of these has to wait for “good things” to happen and must bear up to worry and hardship as they wait.

Who is the author of the epistle of ‘James’? Most church scholars believe that this James was the brother of Jesus. As background, James did not become a strong follower of Jesus until after His resurrection. James eventually became the head of the church in Jerusalem. He preached that Gentiles did not have to become Jews before they could be saved. He died a martyr in the year 62 C.E.

Throughout the book of James, he calls for a constant Christian life, for a practical faith, for a faith that works. James makes us think in a practical way. Take money for example. Despite our complaints about taxes and budgets, money still flows. He asks us to consider whether we hoard for ourselves when others are in need and even dying because of insufficient food, or medicine, or love and care. Do we put more value on worldly things for ourselves than on the things of God?

Taking time as a second example, if we have enough money, we know we never have enough time. We fill our calendars with activities, we are reminded electronically of “essential” appointments, but are we missing God's will as we hurry about in all directions?

James' practicality is not too hard to understand. It may be too easy to understand. It is a challenge.

In closing, I am reminded of the signoff line from the CBC Radio One program 'Dead Dog Café' – "Stay calm. Be brave. Wait for the signs."

Discussion - When are you tempted to hoard rather than to give and wait on God?  
- In what areas of your life are you impatient?

Closing prayer Let us pray – O God, we pray that you would make us men who give freely of ourselves. Help us to wait patiently and to listen attentively for you to answer our prayers. In Jesus' name. Amen.