**Can You Count It All Joy?**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**James 1:2-8**

**Sunday Morning**

**January 8, 2023**

**James 1:2-8**

2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Saints, the word count is a financial term, and it means “to evaluate.” When James says to “count it all joy,” he encourages his readers to evaluate the way they look at trials.

James calls believers to develop a new and improved attitude that considers trials from God’s perspective. James wants believers to know to expect “trials of various kinds” in the Christian life.

We should be prepared and not caught off guard when a sudden trial comes upon us. Trials are part of the Christian experience. Jesus told His disciples, “In this world you will have trouble”

**Philippians 1:12-14 (New Modern Translation)**

12 But I want you to know, brothers, that the things which happened to me have resulted in advancing the gospel, 13 so that my imprisonments in Christ have become known throughout the entire palace guard and to all the rest. 14 And a great many of the brothers in the Lord, having become confident because of my incarcerations, have dared to speak the word without fear.

Saints, Paul had always wanted to go to Rome to preach the gospel. However, he expected to go as a PREACHER, not a PRISONER.

**Acts 19:21-22**

21 When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome."

**Romans 1:15**

“So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.”

Afflictions and unforeseen events had taken place with Paul. He had an illegal arrest in the temple in Jerusalem; he was a prisoner in Caesarea for two years; appealed to Caesar; shipwreck on way to Rome; three months of waiting on Island of Malta; under house arrest.

**1. Paul was not discouraged, because he knew afflictions were part of the life of a Christian!**

Saints, Paul wrote the majority of the New Testament letters to the Saints in those regions. In his epistles Paul would always mention his trials and tribulations.

His testimonies were to Glorify God and to encourage the Body of Christ to persevere at all costs for God’s Glory!

**2 Timothy 2:8-13 (New Modern Translation)**

8 Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David, according to my gospel, 9 in which I suffer trouble like a criminal, even with chains. But the word of God is not bound.

10 Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. 11 This is a faithful saying: If we die with Him, we shall also live with Him. 12 If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. 13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.

**1 Thessalonians 3:3-5 (New Modern Translation)**

1 Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone. 2 We sent Timothy, who is our brother and minister of God and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish and comfort you with regard to your faith,

3 so that no one would be shaken by these afflictions. For you know that we are appointed to this. 4 Indeed, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it came to pass, as you well know.

5 For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to inquire about your faith, lest by some means the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor might have been in vain.

**Philippians 1:28-30 (New Modern Translation)**

28 Do not be frightened by your adversaries. This is a sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and this from God. 29 For to you it was granted on behalf of Christ not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, 30 having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.

**Philippians 3:7-11 (New Modern Translation)**

7 But what things were gain to me, I have counted these things to be loss for the sake of Christ. 8 Yes, certainly, I count everything as loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have forfeited the loss of all things and count them as rubbish that I may gain Christ,

9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ,[a] the righteousness which is of God on the basis of faith, 10 to know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if somehow I might make it to the resurrection of the dead.

**2. Paul’s experiences contradict the “Prosperity Gospel” preached in the church recently!**

**Acts 20:22-24 (New Modern Translation)**

22 “Now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what shall befall me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. 24 But none of these things deter me. Nor do I count my life of value to myself, so that I may joyfully finish my course and the ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

**2 Corinthians 11:23-28 (New Modern Translation)**

23 Are they servants of Christ? I speak as a fool. I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.

24 Five times I received from the Jews forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brothers;

27 in weariness and painfulness, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, and in cold and nakedness. 28 Beside the external things, the care of all the churches pressures me daily.

**3. Every affliction we suffer is an investment that God is making in us!**

Saints, even when we afflict ourselves God makes a way through His Word to help bring us out through our trials and tribulations, because he has His investment which is you and I a way of escape for the Perseverance of the Saints!

**Psalm 32:1-7**

1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit. 3 When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long.

4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah 5 I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah

6 For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You In a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him. 7 You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance.

**4. If the Lord did not permit troubles in our lives, that would be the worst form of rejection!**

Saints, Job said it best!

**Job 14:1-4**

1 "Man who is born of woman Is of few days and full of trouble. 2 He comes forth like a flower and fades away; He flees like a shadow and does not continue. 3 And do You open Your eyes on such a one, And bring me to judgment with Yourself? 4 Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? No one!

Paul understood his past failures as a persecutor of the faith. But once he became saved he said it best:

**Philippians 3:12-15**

12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

**5. Some Christians forever stay in kindergarten, where the tests are easier to endure!**

**Hebrews 12:5-13 (New Modern Translation)**

5 And you have forgotten the exhortation addressed to you as sons: “My son, do not despise the discipline from the Lord, nor grow weary when you are rebuked by Him; 6 for whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and scourges every son whom He receives.”

7 Endure discipline; God is dealing with you as with sons. For what son is there whom a father does not discipline? 8 If you are without discipline, of which everyone has partaken, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers, and they corrected us, and we gave them reverence. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live?

10 For they indeed disciplined us for a short time according to their own judgment, but He does so for our profit, that we may partake of His holiness. 11 Now no discipline seems to be joyful at the time, but grievous. Yet afterward it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness in those who have been trained by it.

12 Therefore lift up your tired hands, and strengthen your weak knees. 13 Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame go out of joint, but rather be healed.

**6. God will use afflictions to bring us out into “a place of abundant fruitfulness.”**

**Psalm 66:8-12 (New Modern Translation)**

8 Oh, bless our God, you people, and make the voice of His praise to be heard, 9 who keeps our soul among the living, and does not allow our feet to slip. 10 For You, O God, have proved us; You have refined us, as silver is refined.

11 You brought us into the net; You placed distress on our backs. 12 You have allowed people to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; but You brought us out into a well-watered place.

**7. God needs His seasoned veterans like Paul to show His faithfulness to their generation**

Saints, never think that you’re too old and not useful for the Kingdom of God. King David wanted to be used all the way to the very end of his life!

**Psalm 71:15-19 (New Modern Translation)**

15 My mouth will declare Your righteousness and Your salvation all the day, for I cannot know their numbers. 16 I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of Your righteousness, of Yours only.

17 O God, You have taught me from my youth; and until now I have proclaimed Your wondrous works. 18 Now also when I am old and gray, O God, do not forsake me, until I have proclaimed Your strength to this generation, and Your power to everyone who is to come.

19 Your righteousness, O God, reaches to the heights; You have done great deeds; God, who is like You? 20 You who have shown me great distresses and troubles will revive me again, and will bring me up again from the depths of the earth. 21 You will increase my greatness, and You will encircle and comfort me.

**In Closing:**

**How We Act During Our Afflictions Has Everything to Do with The Results!**

**1. We Waste Afflictions by Whining, Murmuring & Complaining in The Present.**

This is the reason every test Israel experienced in the wilderness was wasted on them.

**2. We Waste Afflictions When We Don’t Remember Deliverances in The Past**

When David stood before Goliath, he rehearsed his past victories with the bear and the lion.

**3. We Waste Afflictions When We Don’t See God’s Purposes in The Future.**

God brings us through so we can teach others, sharing God’s faithfulness with them.

**4. God Is Preparing You to Be a Veteran of Spiritual Warfare!**

**Philippians 1:6**

“being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ…”

**Let’s Pray**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**