



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

James 5: 1-11

Fall 2021

"The Patience of Job"

TRANSCRIPT

Good morning. Our passage this morning really connects well with the memory verse we have about trials, because that's really what James deals with again here in Chapter 5, 1 through 11,

<sup>5</sup> Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. <sup>2</sup> Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. <sup>3</sup> Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure! <sup>4</sup> Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, *and* which has been withheld by you, cries out *against you*; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. <sup>5</sup> You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. <sup>6</sup> You have condemned and put to death the righteous *man*; he does not resist you.

<sup>7</sup> Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. <sup>8</sup> You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. <sup>9</sup> Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. <sup>10</sup> As an example, brethren, of

suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. <sup>11</sup> We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and *is* merciful.

James 5: 1-11

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word and bless our time of studying it together.

*(Message)* We have an expression that you may have heard ... I'm sure you have. It's used of people who earn our respect by enduring well the trials of life. They're said to have "the patience of Job". That expression is taken from the King James Version of our passage, in James 5, verse 11, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job." These have suffered like Job. His suffering is proverbial. He lost his children, he lost his wealth, he lost his health. You know the story. He didn't suffer quietly. He sat among the ashes and defended his innocence. Still he didn't curse God and he stayed firm in his faith, and ultimately was vindicated and rewarded.

James cites his example to encourage poor Christians. They were being oppressed by the rich who were defrauding them of their wages—and even killing some. James had damning words for the rich. But for the Christians, his counsel was different; his counsel was patience—which has its challenges. It's hard to be patient when suffering injustice and, to use Isaiah's words, the rich are "grinding the face of the poor." (Is 3:15). Patience, Christian patience, is not wimpy; it's not passive; it's active. It's based on faith that, 'this life is not all that there is.'

A far better world is coming, and we are to live for that. That is our hope. It is real. And that hope, as James indicates here, is very practical for our lives. Know that that's the encouragement that James gives: The LORD knows; He is coming; He will right all wrongs; He will reward the patient Christian, as He did Job. And He will judge the oppressors.

Well that's how James begins the chapter, "Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you." (vs1). The rich here are not the Christian rich who had become worldly. These are non-Christians.

The church has been blessed greatly by rich men and women that God has given to them: Like Philemon is one who ministered greatly to Paul. Lydia was one in Philippi. I think she was a wealthy woman who helped the apostle and his men as they ministered in Philippi and through Europe. And others that the LORD has blessed us greatly with, blessed the first century with. Joseph of Arimathea put his reputation, really his life, on the line—a rich man that buried the body of Christ in his tomb. So we can praise the rich individuals that God has place within the church.

These are not those: Not rich believers who have become worldly. But non-Christians, those who owned large estates—and they employed the poor; and they treated them unjustly.

James' words here, really, rival any masterpiece—like Michelangelo's *The Last Judgment* in the Sistine Chapel, with Christ coming on a cloud; His hand is raised; His face is angry; and people in terror who are being carried off to hell. "Weep and howl," James says. He doesn't call them to repentance; he simply announces the fact that judgment is coming. Calvin wrote, "All that he says tends only to despair." In fact, James was not writing directly to these rich people. So it's doubtful they read his words of doom here. His main concern is not the oppressors, it's believers who were oppressed, who were suffering. So this is more a rhetorical device for the benefit of Christians: To encourage them with the promise of justice and to dissuade them from bitterness and rebellion.

Now, of course, repentance might result from this. A rich person might hear of it or be in a congregation where this was preached, and it could cause a change of heart and a turning to Christ. Jonah didn't go to Nineveh preaching repentance. He preached judgment. "Yet 40 days and Nineveh will be overthrown." It's a one point sermon. That's all he said. That's all he preached. But repentance occurred. And should an unbelieving rich man hear or read this, repentance might occur.

But they were guilty, and James charges them with crimes in verses 2 through 6. The first is hoarding their wealth. Here he exposes the false security of riches. And so while this is written to the unbelieving rich man, it has application to us in that we, too, can think our security is in the things we can amass. And perhaps we need to hold on to them a little more than we should and not be generous—not be as open-handed as God would have His people to be. So there's application here.

But this is to the rich unbeliever who puts his security in his riches. It will all become useless, and in fact, it will become proof, it will become a witness against him in judgment, "Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure!" (vs2-3).

James considers their wealth in three forms: food, clothing, and metals. They have hoarded all of this stuff for themselves. They can't use it all, and it just molds and rusts. That's a terrible sin. Calvin commented that God has not appointed gold for rust, nor garments for moth, but on the contrary, He has designed them as aids to human life. Now these things are for personal use, and there's nothing wrong with that, nothing wrong with using them and enjoying the blessings that God has given to a person.

But also, they are to aid others in need when that need is seen. Even clothes in those days were used as currency and payment. Costly clothing in the ancient world was often richly embroidered and decorated, and so probably, mostly, it was a symbol of wealth that they treasured, and prestige that they wanted to show—just as designer dresses and suits are today.

But James was saying that the moth-eaten clothes that were once gorgeous garments and signs of prestige would be evidence of their guilt, as wasteful and self-indulgent. The rust on their gold and silver would be proof of their miserliness and greed. Gold and silver don't actually rust. They do tarnish, and that may be James' meaning here. The tarnish on their treasure was an indication of how long it had been

idle, hoarded and not handled; not used for others who would be in great need of that. And so it would be proof of their selfish abuse of the riches that God had given to them.

And no doubt they worked hard for it. We could assume that, but ultimately, ultimately it all comes from God. One is ambitious and works hard for his or her wealth; has the insight to know how to invest; (and there are individuals who have that. They just know where to put their money, or where to put their effort, and they're wise about that.) But that mind, that perceptive mind is a gift from God. It's all a gift from God. And so he's saying that these things that God had given them were not used as they ultimately should have been used. They were used for selfish means.

And so, he goes on to say of these men that had far more than they could ever use, because they kept it and didn't help others. James says, their rags and their rust, "will consume your flesh like fire." (vs3).

James was referring here to 'the day of judgment.' At the end of the verse he wrote of the treasure that the rich had stored up "in the last days." Now there's some irony in that, or sarcasm in which he's saying, 'You stored it up. But what you don't realize is that you've stored it up for judgment—for a witness against you at the great assize.' Their gold and garments will be of no value then. Their prestige absolutely no help before the LORD God. Their guilt will consume them like rust on iron. They will suffer endless remorse for their selfishness. Now that's hell he's describing.

I'd be hard pressed to describe hell, just as I'd be hard pressed to describe heaven; we have images of it. And we have images of hell, which are basically fire and darkness, (which seem to contradict each other). But I don't doubt the literalness of that, but I think the main thing is, fire is *pain* and darkness is *fear*, and this is going to be the eternal state of these individuals.

But I think there's something also in this that is very much the meaning of hell—and that is remorse, that is guilt. And I say guilt, not just the objective fact that you're guilty before God, but they are going to bear the weight of their guilt, fully. A man sins and his heart becomes callous. Paul speaks of that; of how false teachers have become

callous about their sins, and so sin becomes easier and easier. They don't have the sensitivity to it that one did originally.

Well that day is going to come when that callous will be removed, and people will feel the full weight of guilt and what it's like, and there's no relief from it. Judas thought he'd get relief from his remorse by hanging himself—and it only got worse. That's hell. And that's what James warns him of. And that's the reason, he says, "to weep and howl," because of their miserliness.

But that's not the only reason. In fact, James is just getting started. The next crime of the rich that he lists is in verse 4: They defrauded the poor of their wages. They didn't pay them for the work that they had done—mowing their fields and harvesting their crops. James said the unpaid wage, "...cries out *against you*; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth."

It's like the LORD's words to Cain, "The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground." (Gen. 4:10). Or the effect that Israel's slavery in Egypt had on the LORD. He had seen it and He heard it. He heard their cry. The point is, God knows very well what men do. Their sin doesn't escape Him. It's like a voice crying into the ear of God. A sin is committed in secret; but it's heard in heaven. And these rich men had swindled the poor out of their wages. It was a serious sin.

Laborers in the New Testament, and you see this in the LORD's parables, were men who lived hand to mouth. They didn't have unemployment benefits. They were dependent on their daily earnings. But at the end of the day the land owners held back the wages. They probably did it under some legal technicality; but at the end of the day, the poor man was penniless—or given less than promised.

It's what Isaiah denounced when he spoke of the rich and powerful "grinding the faces of the poor." (Is 3:15). It's how these rich became richer. It's how Laban became rich off the back of Jacob; he cheated him—repeatedly. Jacob worked for him 20 years, worked for Laban for 20 years. And he reminded Laban of this and said, "...you changed my wages ten times." (Gen 31:41). He didn't change them up, he didn't give him raises ten times, just the opposite. He cheated him ten times in 20 years.

Now that's fallen human nature. We read that, we read the Bible. Some would dismiss it as an ancient book that's irrelevant. No, it's very relevant. You can read about Laban, you can read the words here of James, and it applies today just as vividly and accurately as it did then. It's fallen human nature that does that. It's unbelief, which leads to self-centeredness, living for the moment, not realizing the very things that James said in chapter 4 that we are just a vapor, "just a vapor". It happens everywhere, and in every generation.

A few generations ago, coal miners lived in company towns in remote places and had to buy from the company store; where prices were much higher than their wages. And that kept them in debt to the company.

But the poor had little recourse. They had no source of help; not a few generations ago, not long ago in James' day—the poor had no source of help, at least not on earth. But they had it in heaven.

And the One that is their help is called the LORD Sabaoth, *the LORD of hosts*. He has heard their complaint and He is able to fix things. "LORD Sabaoth" means, 'LORD of the armies': the armies of heaven; the armies of the angels; commander of the stars; and the armies of the earth. That's this vast meaning that is applied to this word, *Sabaoth, LORD of hosts*. And it's a way of saying, 'He is God Almighty'. He commands everything. And He hears, He knows, and He's angry. And the unbeliever gives no thought to that. No thought to that at all.

Unbelief is insanity. It leads to irrational thought and irrational behavior. Paul describes the unbeliever in chapter 1 of Romans, verse 21, "Their foolish heart was darkened." Their foolish heart was darkened; and so, not only are they foolish, they have a dark and foolish heart. God is not in their thoughts. They're detached from reality. So they live for self, they live by greed with no concern for the consequences—because they don't believe there are any consequences.

But 'greed is idolatry', Paul wrote in Colossians 3, verse 5. God hates idolatry and He will deal with it; and He will deal with these men in their injustice. When unbelievers wake up to that, wake up to the wrath and realize that it's over and they must pay for

their cheating, for enriching themselves by impoverishing the poor, then they will “weep and howl.”

In verse 5, James gets more personal and explains why they've made an idol of money and riches. It's the means of pleasure; that's how we gain pleasure. That's the third sin, self-indulgence. Verse 5, "You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter."

Luxury and pleasure. They lived a soft life at the expense of others. It is an ungodly life. The opposite life that God created us to live—which is a selfless life. Which is a life that's lived, first of all, to the glory of God and then to the benefit of others. I think a congregation that is vital, living, really responding to the Word of God, is a congregation that loves the LORD God chiefly above all things, wants to know more about Him, wants to hear the Word of God because they love Him. And as they increase in their love for Him, they'll increase in their love for one another and be a caring congregation; opening its hand to them or to others in need.

This is a problem of self-indulgence that he speaks of. It's living life the opposite of the way it should be lived. Living it the opposite of the way that my Hebrew professor, Dr. Bruce Waltke, defined righteousness—which is, “Disadvantaging self to advantage others.” The unbeliever does just the opposite of that. Others are for his advantage—and they will kill to have that advantage.

That's the fourth and final crime that James levels against the rich, given in verse 6, it's murder! "You have condemned and put to death the righteous *man*." Now this is judicial murder. The rich are powerful; and because of that they could have influence on the courts. They were able to secure the verdict that they wanted that was to their advantage against the poor man—and even have him put to death on occasion.

This is the very thing that the Law of Moses condemned, unjust judges. In Deuteronomy 25, Moses makes it very clear how a judge is to function and the way the law is to be applied. He states that judges were to be honest. They were to be



even-handed men, "...justify the righteous and condemn the wicked." (vs1). That seems so simple, so obvious: If a man is righteous, if he's innocent, justify him. He's innocent—declare him that. And if a person is guilty, declare them to be guilty.

But bribes and personal preference prevail over justice time and time again, so that the innocent were condemned, not the guilty. Lots of examples of that in life. Lots of examples of that in Scripture. Jezebel did that to Naboth so that Ahab could have his vineyard and turn it into a garden. The courts of Jerusalem murdered Christ, Stephen, James the apostle...and James, the LORD's brother who wrote these very harsh words against the rich and powerful. So eventually, they silenced him.

James says, "...he does not resist you." (vs6b). Well either the righteous man can't resist; maybe that's his meaning—he's helpless to resist. Or it's not that he's powerless, it's that he chooses not to resist, following the LORD's instruction not to resist evil—not to fight against it. James didn't when they took him and threw him down from the temple. He didn't resist.

Now these are the kinds of things that lead to reprisals, that lead to vengeance, even revolution. Like the French Revolution where, I think it was Alexander Hamilton, described the reports that he was getting about things happening in Paris as, 'The streets were flowing with blood, like rivers of blood.' Well, those things happen because of this kind of treatment.

But the example James gives is not that of resistance. It's not that of responding with violence. Just the opposite. He counsels, in verse 7, *patience*. "Therefore," he says, (that is, in light of the fact that God knows, and that he has set a day of judgment when justice will prevail), "be patient," he says, "brethren, until the coming of the Lord."

The word for *patience* is literally *long-tempered*. It's the opposite of being 'short-tempered'. It doesn't call for a passive attitude; that's not the point. It's self-restraint that it calls for. And self-restraint is very active. Self-restraint, particularly in a circumstance like this, takes discipline, takes great effort.

One of the older commentators, James Ropes noted that this word is rare in secular Greek. In other words, in Greek that was used outside of the Bible you rarely

found this word that's used here, "being patient." And it's rare because it is a virtue that is not natural to the natural man. The natural virtue is to strike out. It's vengeance! That's the natural man's response to injustice.

But James wrote to the brethren who have the Spirit of God, who have a new nature, a new heart, who have the Word of God, who have the wisdom of God—he counseled them to have patience, be long-tempered, "until the coming of the LORD." That is when Christ will judge the world, right all wrongs, and establish His kingdom. It will be a time of blessing for God's people. It will be a time of reward. That's the hope that we have—and that hope is to encourage us in the midst of these kinds of circumstances.

But James knew how hard that is. He's not unaware of the difficulties. He'd experienced this himself. He knew it's hard to be *patient*, especially when the faces of the poor, or anyone, is being "ground down" unjustly.

And so he gives support to his exhortation with an illustration from the farmer, from something these people would have been very well aware of. They were, many of them, (I think most of society in that age was agrarian and pastoral), and so they would understand this illustration of "The farmer...", who James says, "...waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains." (vs7).

The farmer labors for the crop. He looks forward to it. But he knows there is just so much he can do. There is an interval of time in which he can't labor, he can't work. He has to wait, and simply wait for the growth to occur from the earth. Now that takes patience. But it is encouraged by the knowledge that, eventually, the reward will come. The crop will come in. So the farmer waits for the early rains of October and November, and he gets that crop. And then later he waits for the late rains of April and May and the crop that comes from that. And the reward will come for the Christian. That's James' meaning, and it will be great, this reward.

And so, in verse 8, James repeats his exhortation. "You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near." So the promise of verse 7, of the Lord's

return, is reinforced here in verse 8 with the assurance that His coming is real and His coming is near.

What will be doom for the unbeliever, (the unbelieving rich man), and causes terror—"weeping and howling"; brings joy to the oppressed believer. It will be a day of relief. That's why it will be a day of joy. It will be a day of reward. That's why it will be a day of joy—and that's our hope.

John wrote something similar in Revelation 22, verse 12. It's the LORD's promise, "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me..." And to the faithful saint, that reward will be great, greater than we know, greater than we can imagine. James didn't know the date of the Lord's return. Jesus told His disciples that, no one knows "the day or hour" of it. (Mark 13:32). But we know that it is certain. Every generation has the hope of it. What James told them they needed to do was reinforce their faith in that hope. "Strengthen your hearts," he said. (vs8). In other words, 'Take matters in hand.' This is something you need to do, we all need to do, 'Take matters in hand.'

In other places, like 1 Thessalonians 3, verse 13, this is described as God's work—that He 'strengthens our hearts'. But there's no contradiction; this happens through the Word of God. As we study the Scriptures and respond to it in faith, our faith is strengthened by the LORD. He uses the Word of God to nourish us and strengthen us. So we strengthen our hearts by studying Scripture, thinking on the promises of the LORD—thinking on this promise that the Lord is coming. And reckoning that to be true—it's God's Word. In that way we grow.

And we grow in no other way, (now I should probably qualify that. God uses all kinds of experiences in life and individuals in life to help us grow), but essentially, our growth occurs through the Word of God. If you don't know God's Word, you're stunting your growth, you're disobeying the LORD. So, this is how we strengthen ourselves and grow. And they, and we, are to be looking to the future, confident of what the Lord has promised, confident that the Lord is coming. And what He says here, "He's near." So

we're to live our lives with that real hope, that Christ may return soon, in our lifetime. It's not presumptuous. It's the right way to apply this.

That hope and expectancy has a sanctifying influence. Paul, Peter, and John all speak of it like that. James said it, "produces patience." Believers are to be patient toward oppressors—but also toward friends and brothers and sisters in Christ.

James says that next in verse 9 "Do not complain, brethren, against one another..." Evidently that was happening in the church. They were being oppressed, but they couldn't lash out at the rich man. Either they knew that wasn't what they should do, or they just were incapable of doing that, and they gave vent to their frustrations on one another. James says, 'Stop! Don't do that!'

He wasn't unsympathetic, he knew circumstances were hard. But he wanted to protect them from difficult consequences. 'Don't complain', he said, so that you, yourselves, may not be judged. "Behold," he said, "the judge is standing right at the door." The door here may be the door into the judgment hall. And He's nearby. That's the point. The point is He's coming, and His "coming...is near." And that should give comfort.

But also caution; there's a warning in that; "...and His coming is near." Don't be caught doing what you shouldn't be doing. Don't be caught judging others or being angry with your brother or your sister. Be aware that the LORD is coming. And the fact that He's coming should be an encouragement to patience and to right behavior, because His reward is with Him. And also, He will judge us for what we do and say—and that should discourage bad behavior. Paul says, in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 10, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ."

And so how are we to live? Well, we're to live the way that Paul told the Philippians to live, in Philippians 2, verse 12, "...with fear and trembling." (12b). 'It's God who is at work in us, to will and to do according to His good pleasure', (vs13). But we are to be men and women who live "with fear and trembling"; a life of complete confidence

in the LORD; and a life of great caution—a careful, serious life. That's the life of the Christian.

Now, in verses 10 and 11, James returns to their circumstances to give further encouragement, this time with some godly examples of patience. Suffering, for God's people, is not unusual. The first example is the prophets. They spoke in the name of the LORD. They were privileged people. God honored them and used them. But that didn't keep them safe from harsh treatment. In fact, just the opposite. It made them lightning rods to the world. Their ministry of truth drew opposition. It drew persecution.

We can give a list of these, like Elijah; he's one example. He was threatened and pursued by Ahab and Jezebel. Jeremiah is another example. He was a reluctant but faithful prophet. A patriot who preached an unpopular message and suffered rejection by his countrymen. He was the weeping prophet, a sensitive man who was greatly abused. He was beaten, mocked, put in the stocks, thrown in the dungeon, dropped into a deep, dark, muddy cistern.

He suffered physically and emotionally, all over his long ministry that ended when he was taken down to Egypt against his will,—kidnapped. And that's really the last we hear of Jeremiah. It was a hard life. He cried out to the LORD in distress and asked, "Why?" He was no superman. These prophets and men of God were not 'super' individuals. They were like us. And he suffered, but he stayed faithful. Didn't drop out or lash out at others. He persevered to the end.

Now if that happened to the prophets what should we expect? We can expect the same. But they are models for us when we are mistreated. Constancy, endurance under trial is something that we all admire. James says that in verse 11, "We count those blessed who endure..." The prophets did that under great hardship and trials.

But others have done it. And the next example James gives is of a very specific one: It's Job. "You have heard of the *endurance* of Job," he said. (vs11b). Or, "ye have heard of the *patience* of Job." But the word that James uses here is different from the word that he used in verse 7 of *patience*. This word means *endurance*. Job didn't show a

great deal of patience in much of the book in that he was distressed by his situation, and he had, what one writer has called, "Impassioned outburst against his unhelpful friends." You see that all through the book.

What Job showed was perseverance. He never lost faith in God. He believed, even when he could not understand what was happening. We see that from the beginning. We see his endurance, his faithfulness to the LORD. After losing his home and family he cried, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD." (Job 1:21)

His reply to his wife, when she told him to curse God and die was, "Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity? In all this, Job did not sin with his lips." the Scriptures says. (Job 2:10).

To his friends, who gave him bad counsel, he said, "Though He slay me, I will hope in Him." (Job 13:15). And in chapter 19, verses 25 and 26, he confessed his faith in the statement, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last day He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh, I shall see God."

Job was grieved by his losses, and deeply troubled by all that happened to him. It didn't make sense, it didn't seem right, but he endured to the end. He never stopped trusting in the LORD. —And the LORD greatly blessed him.

That's what James said, 'You have heard of the LORD's dealings...that the Lord is full of compassion and *is* merciful.' (11b). Job learned that in the end. He learned it in God's time, which was the right time. His material possessions were restored to him. He was given a deeper understanding of God's purpose, and a better understanding of himself. He was able to say, "...my eye sees You; Therefore I retract and I repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:5-6).

The assurance that James gives is that, nothing is wasted on God's people when they endure, when they persevere in faith. They are benefited and blessed through it. And in the end these blessings come—and the blessings come to us in the experience of compassion and mercy from God.

And so they, these Christians, were not to rebel against their circumstances, not to complain and fight with the brethren, not to become angry and disappointed with God, but be patient, trust in Him, and endure to the end. There is an end, and there is blessing in the end. Christ is coming again, and His reward is with Him.

In the meantime, may God cultivate that virtue of patience and endurance in us. It's hard not to envy the wicked. Asaph wrote of that in Psalms 73, verse 4, "For there are no pains in their death, and their body is fat." They're rich, and they enjoy life. But then he went to the temple, and there he realized, Ah, "You have set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction", (vs18). Life's uncertain for them—and suddenly it ends.

But even in their brief moment on this globe—even though they, in that brief moment, have little pain and they enjoy the things of life, Isaiah tells us, 'There's no peace for them.' They have no real peace. "There is no peace for the wicked, God says." (Is 57:21). They're like the stormy sea—restless. They have no lasting fulfillment. Satisfaction in life is their constant quest—and they never quite get it.

One of the statements attached to Marie Antoinette, it's probably apocryphal, but nevertheless it makes a point. She was, you know, the last queen of France in the old regime who ended up under the guillotine. She supposedly said, "Nothing tastes." Eventually, even the best things, the nicest pastries or whatever, just become boring. And that's all you have.

Life doesn't consist of things. In the words of the Proverbs 16:8, "Better is a little with righteousness than great income with injustice." Money can buy a lot. You can't buy peace or righteousness.

Only Christ gives that. He came to give us the best. He said that, John 10:10, "I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly." He came to gain for us eternal life. Eternal life is knowing Him—knowing God. Think of that. Knowing the eternal, almighty God. We know Him, personally. And it's having forgiveness, completely. It's

being accepted by Him, having a relationship with Him. What a privilege that is, what a blessing that is! And some day we will be glorified like Him. We will be glorified like His Son. We'll be raised from the dead for the world to come—and that someday may be soon. That's the real hope of every believer in Jesus Christ.

So if you've not believed in Him, trust in Christ and His sacrifice. The moment you do, you're saved—and saved forever. May God help you to do that, help all of us to live with endurance and patience.

LORD, we do confess our sins. They are many, more than we can count, more than we even know. And yet, it's true, Your mercy is more, and we give You thanks and praise for that, that You sent Your Son to die in our place. He bore the penalty, He paid the debt, and we are free and just in Your eyes forever. Thank you for that, LORD. May that fact move us to live lives of obedience and service. We pray that in Christ's name.

Now the LORD bless you and keep you, the LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up His countenance on you and give you peace. In Christ's name. Amen.

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