SEA CHANGE CHURCH

THE CURRENT

Storm Proof: A Study in James · S2E6

Homesick for Heaven

A 7-Day Study

"Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful."

James 5:7–11 ESV

Pastor Harry Wilson · November 15, 2026

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE

"You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand."

James 5:8

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

Each week, The Current walks through a piece of Sunday's passage: a short verse study, encouragement, journal questions, and a daily prayer.

Take one day at a time. There's no need to rush.

DAY 1

Patient Like the Farmer

> JAMES 5:7–8 ESV
>
> *"Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand."*

VERSE STUDY

James ends his letter the way he began it. In the first chapter he wrote, "Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life" (James 1:12). Now, in the closing chapter, he returns to perseverance and ties it to the return of Jesus. The theology of the end times can sound like a subject for specialists, but for James it is deeply practical: keeping our eyes on the coming King is one of the things that helps us endure.

James uses the word patience four times in these few verses, which is a real challenge in an age of expedience and constant stimulation. His first readers were Jewish believers scattered from home, facing persecution, poverty, famine and rising social and religious tension. Many of them were likely asking the question still asked today: when is God going to do something about all this suffering, and why does he allow it at all?

Scripture's answer is that God has done something, is doing something, and will do something. He has acted in the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, who took on the powers of sin and death. He is acting now as the Holy Spirit moves among his people to guide, heal and help. And he will act when the King returns and, as Revelation promises, wipes away every tear (Revelation 21:4).

The farmer cannot rush the harvest or force the rains to come, and neither can we force the timing of God's coming to heal the world. But just as the seasons are sure to turn (San Diego aside, as the message joked), the return of Jesus is sure. And because his return is guaranteed, suffering has an expiration date, and the tyranny of sin is not eternal. Christ's return initiates death's departure.

TAKE HEART

Whatever is hard right now is not the final word. The farmer waits with confidence because the rains have always come. We can wait with even greater confidence, because the One who promised to return has never broken a promise. Our waiting is not wasted. It is full of hope.

JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. Where are we most impatient with God right now, wanting him to fix something on our own timeline?

2. How might the certainty of Christ's return change the way we carry a present hardship?

DAILY PRAYER

Before we pray, let us spend a few quiet minutes with today's verse: read it slowly once more, or simply sit in silence and let it settle. Then, when we are ready, let us pray this over the day ahead:

"I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning. O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities."

Psalm 130:5–8

ACTION CHALLENGE

Name one ongoing hardship, our own or someone else's, and bring it to God each day this week in a short prayer that ends, "Come, Lord Jesus."

NOTES

DAY 2

Maranatha

> REVELATION 22:20 ESV
>
> *"He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"*

VERSE STUDY

"Establish your hearts," James says (James 5:8). The Greek word, stērizō, means to strengthen, to put a support in place, to set something firmly. James calls us to brace our hearts on the reality that Jesus is coming back. That reality is not a minor note in the New Testament. References to the return of Christ run through it again and again.

For the early church, including the Jerusalem church where James was a leader, this hope was so central that it was carried by a single Aramaic word: maranatha. It can be read as a prayer, "Come, O Lord," or as a declaration, "Our Lord is coming." Paul closes 1 Corinthians with it (rendered "Our Lord, come!" in 1 Corinthians 16:22), and the Bible's final prayer, at the end of Revelation, says the same thing: "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" Believers kept it on their lips as an urgent prayer and as a way of reminding one another that the King was on his way.

Today many of us talk about this far less. Some circles talk about little else, but much of the wider evangelical church rarely mentions it, and many of us are a little uncomfortable with the subject. That is understandable. We have careers to build, children to raise and ordinary lives to live, all of them good things. Yet when those things fill our whole field of vision, the return of the King slips out of view.

Losing sight of it costs us something. The hope of Christ's return gave the early church remarkable endurance through persecution, poverty and discrimination, and the fact that the church still gathers today is in part the fruit of that endurance. When real hardship comes, this hope is a source of strength we cannot afford to leave untouched. As modern believers, we may need to learn to draw from it anew.

TAKE HEART

Maranatha is a prayer anyone can pray, in any season. In grief, it says "Come, Lord." In joy, it says "Our Lord is coming." Either way, it plants our feet on the promise that the story ends with Jesus, and that he is not far off.

JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. Is the return of Jesus something we think about and anticipate, or something we rarely consider?

2. What feelings does the idea of his return stir up in us, and where do those feelings come from?

DAILY PRAYER

Before we pray, let us spend a few quiet minutes with today's verse: read it slowly once more, or simply sit in silence and let it settle. Then, when we are ready, let us pray this over the day ahead:

"Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, now and for ever. Amen."

Book of Common Prayer, Collect for the First Sunday of Advent

ACTION CHALLENGE

Adopt "Maranatha, come, Lord Jesus" as a short breath prayer this week. Pray it each morning, and again whenever the news or a conversation brings suffering to mind.

NOTES

DAY 3

Homesick for Heaven

> HEBREWS 11:13–16 ESV
>
> *"These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city."*

VERSE STUDY

One of the great challenges of our culture is that we are often more interested in a kingdom of comfort than in the Kingdom of God. Overnight shipping, grocery delivery, ride apps and AI promise to remove every inconvenience. The quiet message underneath is that convenience satisfies, comfort fulfills, and an easy life is the same thing as a good life. It is not.

Meanwhile, suffering remains unrelenting. It is not hard to see once we look up from our own concerns, whether across the world or in our own neighborhoods. When we encounter injustice, we ache for God's justice. When we encounter illness, we ache for his healing. When we encounter loneliness, we ache for his presence. Every one of those aches will be answered when the King comes. As the notes put it, when we begin to pay attention to the unyielding prevalence of pain, perhaps we will once again mutter, Maranatha.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer knew that ache. In 1939 the German pastor was safely in America with an academic future open to him, and he chose to return to Nazi Germany to stand with his fellow believers in resistance. He was imprisoned, and in his final days he led worship for his fellow prisoners. He wrote that no one who has truly believed in God's kingdom has "not been homesick from that hour." Being homesick for heaven did not make him passive. It gave him hope and great endurance.

Hebrews says the same of the faithful who went before us. They acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth, and they desired a better country. The caution for us is not to become so comfortable here that we are never homesick for heaven. Whoever clings to this world gains this world, and this world is passing away. Whoever clings to Jesus gains Jesus, and with him, everything.

TAKE HEART

Homesickness is not a defect in our faith. It is evidence of it. The longing we feel when the world is broken is a sign that we were made for a better country, and God is not ashamed to be called our God. He has prepared a city for his people.

JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. Where has comfort quietly taken the place in our hearts that longing for God's kingdom should hold?
2. Which ache in the world around us most stirs a longing for Christ's return?

DAILY PRAYER

Before we pray, let us spend a few quiet minutes with today's verse: read it slowly once more, or simply sit in silence and let it settle. Then, when we are ready, let us pray this over the day ahead:

"How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts! My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God. For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly. O LORD of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in you!"

Psalm 84:1–2, 10–12

ACTION CHALLENGE

Look closely this week at one place of suffering nearby (a neighbor, a local need, a story in the news), pray for it by name each day, and take one small step to help.

DAY 4

The Welcoming Committee

> LUKE 12:36–38 ESV
>
> *"and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants!"*

VERSE STUDY

There is no shortage of interest in predicting when Jesus will return. Scripture never calls us to predict his coming, but it does call us to prepare for it. Jesus said that no one knows the day or the hour, "not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Mark 13:32). Yet he told everyone, "Stay awake" (Mark 13:37).

One way to put it: we are not the planning committee. Scheduling the return of Christ is not our job. We are the welcoming committee. Our part is hopeful anticipation, paying attention so that we recognize him when he comes, and living lives worthy of his arrival.

Jesus pictured servants waiting up for their master to come home from a wedding feast, ready to open the door the moment he knocks, whether in the second watch of the night or the third. Then comes a stunning reversal. The master "will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them." The returning King invites his servants to rest while he serves them.

It is one of the most beautiful pictures of the return of Jesus anywhere in Scripture. The one who once knelt to wash his disciples' feet (John 13:5) will come again to tend, feed and care for his people. And notice the word Jesus uses for those who stay awake: blessed. It is the same word James uses for those who remain steadfast (James 5:11).

TAKE HEART

Watching for Jesus is not anxious sentry duty. We are waiting for someone who loves us and who, when he arrives, will serve us at his own table. Every small act of readiness today is preparation for that welcome.

JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. What would it look like for us to live this week as the welcoming committee rather than the planning committee?
2. What in our lives tends to lull us to sleep spiritually, and how can we stay awake?

DAILY PRAYER

Before we pray, let us spend a few quiet minutes with today's verse: read it slowly once more, or simply sit in silence and let it settle. Then, when we are ready, let us pray this over the day ahead:

"O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips, when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night; for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me."

Psalm 63:1–8

ACTION CHALLENGE

Choose one practice of readiness for this week, such as a set time of prayer, an apology that is overdue, or a neglected act of service, and do it as though expecting the Master's knock.

NOTES

DAY 5

Treasure That Corrodes

> JAMES 5:2–4 ESV
>
> *"Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts."*

VERSE STUDY

Just before his words on patience, James opens this chapter with one of the strongest warnings in all of Scripture: "Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you" (James 5:1). It sounds like the opposite of blessing, and it would be easy to skip. But the hard parts of the Bible are the word of God too.

Read closely, the passage is not an indictment of having money. James names specific sins, and all of them belong in the picture. Treasure was hoarded until it rotted and corroded unused. Wages were kept back by fraud from the laborers who mowed the fields, and their cries reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. Lives were spent in luxury and self-indulgence. And the righteous were condemned and murdered. In a world with little middle class, riches often came straight out of the pockets of the poor. God's law had long required that a poor hired worker be paid the same day, before sunset, so that he would not have to cry out to the LORD (Deuteronomy 24:15).

It is tempting to assume this warning is for someone else. Yet by global standards, as the message pointed out, many ordinary households in our part of the world rank among the wealthiest on earth, even when the cost of living makes it hard to feel that way. The sin is not a full fridge. It is a full fridge while knowing a neighbor is hungry, and holding back anyway. Wealth offers no advantage in eternity, and it can lure us into building a kingdom here that leaves no room to long for the kingdom to come.

The message told a story from the memoir of Eugene Peterson, the pastor behind The Message. As a seminary student he befriended a janitor named Willie, a painter, who asked to paint his portrait. The finished painting showed Peterson sick and worn out: how Willie expected him to look after twenty years as a pastor, once the compassion and mercy had drained away. Rather than rejecting it, Peterson kept the portrait and returned to it often as a warning of what he could become if he did not guard his heart. That is a wise way to read the hard passages, not by brushing them off but by asking where God might be speaking to us.

TAKE HEART

Jesus said it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God, then added, "What is impossible with man is possible with God" (Luke 18:27). In the very next chapter Zacchaeus, wealthy through corruption, meets Jesus, gives half his goods to the poor and promises to restore fourfold whatever he took by fraud. "Today salvation has come to this house," Jesus says. No heart is too tightly closed for God to open.

JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. Where might we be holding back good from someone when it is in our power to give it?
2. What would generosity look like for us in this particular season, given what we actually have?

DAILY PRAYER

Before we pray, let us spend a few quiet minutes with today's verse: read it slowly once more, or simply sit in silence and let it settle. Then, when we are ready, let us pray this over the day ahead:

"Almighty God, whose loving hand hath given us all that we possess: Grant us grace that we may honor thee with our substance, and, remembering the account which we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of thy bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Book of Common Prayer, Prayers and Thanksgivings 38, For the Right Use of God's Gifts

ACTION CHALLENGE

Take an honest look at this month's spending and giving. Then choose one specific act of generosity toward someone in need, and carry it out before the week ends.

DAY 6

Steadfast Like Job

> JAMES 5:10–11 ESV
>
> *"As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful."*

VERSE STUDY

James offers two examples of patience in suffering: the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord, and Job. Then he says something surprising: "we consider those blessed who remained steadfast." In James's eyes, the blessed person is the one who stays steadfast in the midst of suffering, patient in trial, enduring while waiting for the King.

That redefines blessing. In our culture, blessing is often equated with finances. God does provide for his people, and provision can be a gift from his hand. But for James, the truly blessed are not measured by their bank accounts. They are the ones who draw so near to Jesus that no trial or persecution can shake them. As the notes say, endurance is a symptom of blessing. So the better question is not how much we have, but how we endure. Can hardship be met with hope, or does it leave us hopeless?

Job lost nearly everything: his possessions, his livestock, even his children (Job 1:18-19). What he did not lose was his dependence on God. Few of us read his story and conclude, "What a blessed man." James does. And James points to how the story ends: "you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful." The Lord restored the fortunes of Job and "blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning" (Job 42:10, 12).

Job's restoration is a preview of what God promises his people. Everyone who suffers, everyone who is ill, oppressed, grieving or poor, is held by this promise: God will restore in the end. So we establish our hearts, hold on to hope and stay awake. He is coming back for his people, and he is making all things new (Revelation 21:5).

TAKE HEART

Steadfastness is not the absence of struggle. Job questioned and lamented, and still James holds him up as an example. Endurance can look like simply refusing to let go of God, and the Lord we hold on to is, in James's words, compassionate and merciful.

JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. How do we usually respond when hardship comes: with hope, or by falling apart?

2. Who in our lives has shown us what steadfast faith looks like, and what did we learn from watching them?

DAILY PRAYER

Before we pray, let us spend a few quiet minutes with today's verse: read it slowly once more, or simply sit in silence and let it settle. Then, when we are ready, let us pray this over the day ahead:

"I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the LORD."

Psalm 40:1–3

ACTION CHALLENGE

Reach out this week to someone in a hard season with a meal, a note or a prayer, and remind them that the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

NOTES

DAY 7

While We Wait

> JAMES 5:9 ESV
>
> *"Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door."*

VERSE STUDY

Between the farmer and the prophets, James slips in a warning about how we treat one another while we wait. The image is vivid. The same Lord whose coming we long for is near enough to be standing at the door, near enough to hear how we speak about one another.

Drawing the whole chapter together, the message named three practical ways James calls us to live as we await Christ's return. Endure patiently: hold on through hardship, knowing he is coming back. Give generously: refuse to hoard, and lay up treasure in heaven rather than on earth (Matthew 6:19-20). Speak carefully: no grumbling, slander or gossip against one another, a theme James presses throughout the letter (James 3:9-10) and one this series explored two weeks ago.

Speaking carefully matters because waiting can make us irritable. When the wait is long and life is hard, it is easy to turn on the people closest to us. Paul's instruction fits: "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up" (Ephesians 4:29). A community that speaks with grace is a community ready to welcome its King.

Perhaps the point is not mainly that we arrive at some destination. The King brings the destination to us, and that is the kingdom of heaven. Until then, we endure patiently, being the best parents, neighbors and friends we can be, and we keep praying one of the oldest prayers of the church: Maranatha. Come, Lord Jesus.

TAKE HEART

Jesus is standing at the door, and for those who love him, he comes to restore. The Lord is compassionate and merciful. In light of that, waiting is not something to grit our teeth through. It is a season to live faithfully, with patience, open hands and gracious words.

JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. Of the three challenges James gives, which is hardest for us right now: enduring patiently, giving generously, or speaking carefully?
2. Where have grumbling or careless words crept into our relationships, and what would speaking carefully look like there?

DAILY PRAYER

Before we pray, let us spend a few quiet minutes with today's verse: read it slowly once more, or simply sit in silence and let it settle. Then, when we are ready, let us pray this over the day ahead:

“Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.”

Book of Common Prayer, Collect for Proper 28

ACTION CHALLENGE

Pick whichever of the three practices feels hardest and choose one concrete step for this week. If it is speaking carefully, try going one full day without complaining about anyone, and notice what changes.

NOTES

MEMORY VERSE

“You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.”

James 5:8

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