

Growing In Faith And Trust

First Sunday In Lent
February 21, 2021 -- 11:00 AM

S WE GATHER

What a crazy way to start a letter! The apostle James wrote a letter about everyday Christian life to his fellow believers and starts out with the seemingly naïve statement: "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds."

Trials aren't fun things. He's referring to matters that make life difficult – that cause a person to wonder whether God really knows what's going on or not. He's talking about being ridiculed and even persecuted for professing faith in Jesus Christ, about being scared to even talk about Jesus anywhere, about being called to make difficult decisions that are consistent with living one's life as a disciple of Jesus. Add to this list the temptations that come and threaten to bring spiritual ugliness and pain.

Pure joy. Right. But maybe we'd better listen in on God's conversation with us through James.

INVOCATION – We Call Upon God

COMMITMENT OF CHURCH COUNCIL AND ELDERS

GOD WILL STRENGTHEN YOU, MAKE YOU STRONG, AND SUPPORT YOU!

P: My brothers and sisters, be very happy when you are tested in different ways.

You know that such testing of your faith produces endurance. Endure until your testing is over. Then you will be mature and complete, and you won't need anything. (*James 1:2-4; God's WORD translation*)

C: **Let us keep our minds clear, and be alert. Our opponent the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion as he looks for someone to devour.**

P: Be firm in the faith and resist him, knowing that other believers throughout the world are going through the same kind of suffering.
(*1 Peter 4:8-9; God's WORD translation*)

C: **Let us put on all the armor God supplies. Then we will be able to take a stand during these evil days.** (*from Ephesians 6:13; God's WORD translation*)

WE SING

"My Hope Is In You"

April Geesbreght

"Amen (Because He Lives)"

Ed Cash/Gaithers, & others

CONFESSION OF FAITH – APOSTLES' CREED (*words on screen*)

GOD SPEAKS TO US IN HIS WORD

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Genesis 22:1-18

The testing of Abraham's faith seems agonizingly unfair. But look for God's blessing to ultimately stand!

¹Some time later God tested Abraham; He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied.

²Then God said "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."

³Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about.

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⁴On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. ⁵He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."

⁶Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, ⁷Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?"

"Yes, my son?" Abraham replied.

"The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

⁸Abraham answered, "God Himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together.

⁹When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, "Abraham, Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

¹²"Do not lay a hand on the boy." He said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from Me your son, your only son."

¹³Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided."

¹⁵The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time, ¹⁶and said, "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

EPISTLE READING

James 1:12-18

Through trials and temptations the Lord stands strong for us, giving us His good and perfect gifts!

¹²Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him.

¹³When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone; ¹⁴but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. ¹⁵Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

¹⁶Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. ¹⁷Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. ¹⁸He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all He created.

GOSPEL LESSON

Mark 1:9-15

Following His Baptism, Jesus, the Son of God, endures the temptation of the evil one.

⁹At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰As Jesus was coming up out of the water, He saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on Him like a dove. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven: "You are My Son, whom I love; with You I am well pleased."

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¹²At once the Spirit sent Him out into the desert, ¹³and He was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended Him.

¹⁴After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵"The time has come," He said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

KIDS' TIME

DCE Liz Peters

MESSAGE

"Rethinking Temptation"

Pastor Doug Slavens

WE CONFESS OUR SINS

P: Merciful God,

C: I confess to You my weakness. I often fail to trust what You have spoken or to obey Your commands. Sometimes when I think I'm strong enough to stand on what is right, I give in to my fear of what other people might think of me. I struggle with the pressure of the world around me to reject Your Word and Your ways. I struggle with my own tendency to settle for temporary pleasure. Dear Father, Forgive my sins for Jesus' sake. Be the strength for my weakness. Teach me about trusting in You. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Silent time for personal reflection and for self-examination

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

WE GIVE

WE CELEBRATE THE LORD'S SUPPER

PREPARATION & JESUS' WORDS OF INSTITUTION

DISTRIBUTION OF OUR LORD'S SUPPER

SONG BY *ONE IN SPIRIT*

Blessings

Laura Story

COMMUNION BLESSING

WE PRAY

LORD'S PRAYER

WE SING

I Will Follow

Tomlin Ingram Morgan

THE CLOSING BLESSING