

“Count It All Joy”

James 1:1-4

Introduction:

1. **James 1:1** – Book written to all Christians.
2. There is a Spanish Proverb that says – “There is no home without a hush.”
 - a. Sooner or later every home knows heartache and trial and sorry. Individuals also. But God’s word says that these tears can be turned into joy.
3. There are only three kinds of people in this world today: 1) those in the middle of a trial; 2) those just coming out of a trial, 3) and people who are about to go into a trial.
4. Trials & Temptations come to all. This is not a sign you that something is wrong with you.
 - a. And how do we know? Because they came to Jesus. **Heb. 4:15**, “For we have not a high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted [tried, or tested] like we are, yet without sin.”

I. FACT of Trials

1. Not “*if*” but “*when*” you fall.
 - a. A Christian should expect trials, oppressions, misunderstanding and rejection.
 - b. If anybody tries to teach that the Christian life is all sunlight and roses, they’re teaching from an empty head and from a closed Bible.
2. The Bible doesn’t say you “might” fall into temptation, it says you will.
 - a. – Job was a blameless upright man who feared God and turned away from evil. yet, in one day Job lost everything from family, to finances, to fortune, to fitness, to friends.
 - b. – Daniel was a man totally committed to God, who prayed three times a day to the Lord. All he got for his praying was a free trip to the lion’s den.
 - c. – Joseph was a man of unquestioned integrity, decency, loyalty, and purity, who was thrown into prison for a crime he didn’t commit, without even a trial.
 - d. – Paul, the greatest Christian – (2 Cor. 11:23-27)
3. “*Divers*” temptation -
 - a. This is the Greek word we get “polka-dot” from. Life is “dotted” with trials.
 - b. The word means multi-colored, and multi-sized. Trials come in all shapes, sizes, and colors.
 - c. They may be affliction, sorrow, sickness, physical trials, financial trials, psychological trials, spiritual trials.

II. FORM of Trials

1. There are various kinds of temptations. Greek word for both “**trials**” and “**temptations**.” (Sometimes Greek is more precise than English, 4 Greek words of love, one English word.) Here we have two English words – Trials and Temptations (**vs. 13**) – but the same Greek word. We must look at the context.
2. A trial is a test sent by God. The temptation is a test sent by Satan.
 - a. Trials are give by God to help us learn how to “steadfast”, Temptations are given by Satan to cause us to stumble.
 - b. Now God, with his test is aiming at your maturity, Satan, with his test, is aiming at your misery.

3. **1 Peter 4:12** “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to test you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.”
4. Now to be tempted, or tried, is not a sin. Jesus was tempted, but he didn’t sin. Temptation is an enticement, an allurement, an inducement to commit sin. These come from Satan, not for God. God does present “temptation” to people – **James 1:13.**

III. FALLING into Trials

1. **Luke 10** - In the story of the “Good Samaritan” -
 - a. This man was walking along the road from Jerusalem, and he “**fell among thieves.**” He wasn’t looking for thieves; he wasn’t wanting to be robbed; but these thieves were waiting in hiding and they ambushed him.
 - b. The man fell “suddenly,” “seriously” “savagely”
2. Your next phone call may be the greatest trial of your life. Someone on the other end will tell you something that you are not prepared for. You will “fall” into these things.

IV. FACING of Trials

1. “**Count it all joy**” . . . **v.2**
 - a. James was not sado-masochist who delighted in being hurt. He was not saying you ought to enjoy trials, or that trials are here for a joy.
 - b. He knew “no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but grievous.” **Heb. 12:11.**
 - c. This does not mean to “grin and bear it”, but to become an “overcomer”
2. James is not talking about relishing pain and sorrow - “**Christ, who for the joy set before him, endured the cross.**” Christ did not relish the cross. But he looked to its end, its accomplishment.
3. To “**count it**” is a word that literally means to lead, or look ahead.
 - a. We are to “look forward” to what will be accomplished when we have overcome!
 - b. Christ looked ahead of the cross and saw the lives that would be changed, the homes that would be saved, the good work that would be done in his name, and how all this would glorify the Father.

V. FRUIT of Trials

1. **Verse 3** - “**knowing**” that the “**trying**” or testing of your faith.
 - a. This is somewhat like a test in school. Some pass and some fail.
 - 1) Illustration. Boy got a “0”, I don’t think I deserve this, ‘Neither do I, but it’s the lowest grade I could give.’
 - 2) Does our **faith** pass, or fail – when it is tested?
 - b. The purpose of a test is two-fold. Tests reveals the “strength” of your knowledge; and it measures the “weakness” of your knowledge.

2. You may think because you come to church every Sunday, sing praises, give money, take notes, and walk piously, that your faith is strong. But only trouble will tell. You see, faith not only must stand the test of **time**, it must stand the test of **trouble**.
 - a. **Prov. 24:10** says “If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small.” Or we could paraphrase it this way, “If your faith fails you when trouble comes, your faith was weak.”
 - b. Some one made the statement, “You can tell how great a Christian is by what it takes to stop him.”

3. This “testing” is also the word that refers to the refining of Gold. Gold is sent through scorching fire. But it has nothing to fear from the fire, because the fire simply burns off all the impurities and all the dross.

4. The Fruit of Trials – **vs. 3**
 - a. **Patience** - endurance
 - 1) Not needlework, 500 piece puzzle, - bear up under trial, under pressure
 - 2) Illustration: A man had a Grandfather clock and he felt sorry for the clock because it had a weight on it. that weight in that box was always pulling down, the clock was asked to bear a heavy load. The man said, “Oh clock you have been holding this weight so long I am going to remove it and let you rest.” He took it off and the Grandfather Clock said, “Don’t take that weight from me, that is what keeps me going.” The trials and tests of life are there for your endurance, to keep you going, trusting, praying, and to keep you leaning upon God.
 - b. **Perfect** - maturity
 - 1) “**Perfect**” here doesn’t mean “sinless” – a “perfect rose” not sinless. but one complete in all its beauty.
 - 2) The scripture speaks of “**the captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering.**” Christ not not “made” sinless, he always was “sinless.” But he came to complete his task, to finish it, to bring it to fulfillment, completion.
 - 3) “**Teleious**” - complete, mature. For example, an oak tree is the “teleious” of an acorn. It is the completion, perfection of an acorn. “A might oak and a little acorn. So when you are feeling discouraged and a little blue take a look at a might oak and see what a nut can do.”

Conclusion:

1. **I Cor. 10:13** - whether a Trial or Enticement from Satan to sin, here is a promise for you – First: if “**temptation**” came from God, we’d have an excuse for sin. Because God is all powerful. But “**temptation**” is not from God - **James 1:13**.
Second: men try to find excuse for their sin: There are basically 3 excuses we give: Notice the three “**BUTS**” in this verse:
 - a. “My temptation is different, **unique**” - “. . . such as is common to man”
 - b. “My trial / temptation is **too strong!**” – “. . . not tempted above that you’re able . . .”
 - c. “My trial/ temptation - **no way out!**” – “. . . make a way to escape . . .”

[These illustrations can be used along the way in the sermon.]

2. Illustration: A man watched a beautiful butterfly trying to emerge from a cocoon. He watched as this transformation was taking place, and thinking he would help, took his razor sharp pen knife and slit the side of this silk cocoon. The butterfly just flopped out and fell over and lay there and feebly beat its wings a couple of times and died! God had a plan for that butterfly it was meant to struggle against that cocoon and to push and push and develop its circulation in its wings, and to strengthen itself from the struggle and to prepare it for flight. But without the struggling, it could not fly.
3. Illustration: William Cowper - a great hymn writer. But before his conversion there was a time when he was very discouraged. There is a story that is told, almost funny. He became so discouraged he planned to commit suicide. He got an old gun, pointed it at himself, but he couldn't get it to fire. He got a rope and tied himself to the chandelier and tried to hang himself and the rope broke. He decided to take poison and he did, but he got well. He finally considered to jump from the London bridge into the Thames River. He got a friend to drive him there one evening in his horse and buggy. But in the thick London fog they couldn't find the River, and finally ended up back home. Went upstairs, read his Bible. and eventually wrote the hymn: "God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform. He plants his footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm. Ye fearful saints fresh courage take, the Clouds ye so much dread are big with mercy and shall break blessings on your head."
4. Illustration: I read about a young Christian who was trying to get into the peach growing business. He had worked hard, invested everything he had in a peach orchard, which had blossomed beautifully. But then a frost came, and it destroyed his entire crop. He didn't go to church the next Sunday, nor the next, nor the next.
 - a. So the preacher went to see him to find out why. The young fellow said, "Preacher, I'm not coming to church any more. Do you think I can worship God who cares so little for me that he would let a frost kill all of my peaches?"
 - b. The preacher replied kindly and wisely, "Son, God love you better than he loves your peaches. You see, God understands that while peaches can grow without frost, Christians cannot grow without trials. God is not in the business of growing peaches; He's in the business of growing Christians."