



SERIES: FEBRUARY – MARCH FAITH IN REAL LIFE

SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD

Saturday, 03/26/2022

Scripture: James 5:10-11

TITLE: Where Is God?

What characteristics or traits come to mind when I say the name of God? When God is talked about, what pictures or stories come to mind? In my experience, it depends on the group you're with, and the season you're enduring.

But what traits of God come to mind when you're in a prolonged season of trials? Well, James provides the answer, and it may sound foreign to us today. What did James say? James writes this in James 5:10-11, (CSB).

Brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the Lord's name as an example of suffering and patience. See, we count as blessed those who have endured. You have heard of Job's endurance and have seen the outcome that the Lord brought about—the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

If you've been with us since we began this series, this may sound a bit like James 1. This series is called Faith in Real Life. It's all about putting our faith into practice because, as James would describe, saving faith works. And our faith doesn't go on vacation when trials hit. In fact, our faith is developed in the trials for great accomplishments later.

James says suffering and endurance are part of the package of faith. The prophets experienced this continually. From Moses to Isaiah to Jonah to John the Baptist, they all experienced suffering for their faith, but they endured. Not perfectly, but they did endure.

Their endurance resulted in being blessed.

Then James says consider Job. Job was tested to the max, and he endured. Job was tested to prove his faith was authentic. He was tested to defeat Satan's attempt at destroying that faith. He was tested to strengthen his faith. And he was tested to experience blessing.

You see, where there is testing, no matter how extreme, difficult, or long, God is compassionate and merciful.

You see, for me, when the trials come and don't seem to leave, I want to believe in God's compassion and mercy, but I typically feel alone and rejected. I feel like I've done something wrong. James says that is not necessarily the case. Jesus said there is a cost to discipleship. The cost is hardship and rejection...from the world but not by God. God will never leave us nor forsake us.

What troubles we experience are likely diminished by God. It could always be worse. What we have is by the grace of God; we certainly could have less. The trials are but a moment. Eternity with Christ is forever. It's like Psalm 30:5 says, "Weeping may stay overnight, but there is joy in the morning."

So here's my challenge for you today: Endure with God in focus. As I admitted, when trials appear and last, I wonder, "where is God?" Today I am reminded that God is there and He cares. His mercy and compassion are overwhelming in all seasons, especially the hard times.

So don't lose heart. Don't give up. God is watching over you and walking with you each step of the way. So keep focus on God and endure in His power.

When we do this, friend, we will win the day.