

Rev. Janet R. Doyle

Elmer Presbyterian Church

8th Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday, July 19, 2026

Scripture: Psalm 86: 11-15; James 5: 1-12

Sermon: Take Time To Be Patient

A man was teaching his son how to push the gas-powered lawnmower around the yard. As he was teaching him how to turn the mower around at the end of the lawn, his wife called to him to ask a question. As the husband turned to answer the question, the son pushed the lawnmower right through the flower bed at the edge of the lawn, leaving a two-foot-wide path leveled to the ground!

When the father turned back around and saw what had happened, he began to lose control. The father had put a lot of time and effort into making those flower beds the envy of the neighborhood. As he began to raise his voice to his son, his wife walked quickly over to him, put her hand on his shoulder and said, "Honey, please remember.. we're raising children, not flowers!"

We need to remember what really is important in life. Where are our priorities? In this story of the father, the son and the flowers, the son was the priority. He was what was important.

James, in our scripture lesson today, is reminding the people of their priorities in life. The things of this world will pass away. James is addressing the first part of Chapter 5 to the wealthy unbelievers that aren't present but whom the people are looking toward and admiring. James states that their riches are corrupted, and their garments are moth-eaten. The silver and gold are corroded. James is teaching that those with riches have treated the workers in their fields wrongly. The believers to whom James wrote were in grave danger of violating Christ's law of neighbor love by catering to the wealthy who visited their meeting places and were deceived into thinking that the wealthy as a class were better people, deserving special honor and they were discriminating against the workers. James rebuked the wealthy for the way they had gained the wealth and how they were handling it.

James is saying the wealthy are to be pitied not envied because of how they have treated others and how they have hoarded their wealth and not paid the workers for their labor.

The wealthy had wasted God's good gifts and were not good stewards of what God had given them to use for His glory and honor, not for their glory. They were selfishly guarding it for their own security and pleasure. Not more than 10 years after James wrote this letter, Jerusalem fell to the Romans, and all this accumulated wealth was taken.

Jesus had warned against this when he said, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also."
(Matthew 6: 19-21)

God's judgment would see to it that selfishness is not rewarded. To lay up treasures in heaven means to use all that we have as stewards of God's wealth. We may possess many things, but we do not own them. God is the Owner of everything, including our home, and our church building, and we are his stewards.

When we yield to His will and use what He gives us to serve Him, then things become treasures and we are investing in eternity, and we have responsibilities toward our Master as His stewards. We must be faithful to use what God gives us to His glory and for the good of others.

Our society is a society of "stuff" and from the amount of things that we see at yard sales and when we move we realize how much "stuff" we have. We have yard sales and then we buy more stuff to fill in the holes. We think our treasures are in things.

James is reminding us to value people and not things, to value serving God and not things because the things will be eaten and destroyed but our relationship with God can remain strong.

What good is a \$500,000 house if there is no love in it? Or an expensive diamond ring if there is no love in the giver or receiver? James did not condemn riches or wealthy people; he condemned the wrong use of riches, and wealthy people who use their wealth as a weapon and not as a tool with which to build a good foundation or to use for the good.

This passage is like the Parable that Jesus told of the workers in the vineyard found in Matthew 20. The landowner hired workers in the morning and then hired workers two more times during the day but paid those who started last first and paid them the same as those who started in the morning agreeing to the same amount. This parable teaches us about God's grace and how God is in charge of the last being first. Anyone is welcome into the Kingdom at any time in their life. God cares about each person whether they are a landowner or a worker in the field.

It is possible to be "poor in this world" (2:5) and yet rich in the next world and it is also possible to be "rich in this world" and poor in the next world. (1 Tim 6:17)

It all depends on the Spiritual condition of the heart.

Another area that James talks about in this passage is patience. This can also affect how we relate to people. "Therefore be patient, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You should also be patient."

It is so easy to lose our patience with people. Most times we are a people that want things to happen according to our planning. Many times we see examples of impatience nowadays, instead of patience.

Patience/Patient: Possessing or demonstrating quiet, uncomplaining endurance under distress or annoyance longsuffering. Tolerant- tender, capable of tranquilly awaiting results of outcome, persevering.

People say that patience is a virtue. Patience is one of the Fruit of the Spirit that we are to possess as Christians. Many times we have to consciously remind ourselves to be patient in this life. It takes a lot of self-control to be patient. To be patient with our children, grandchildren, neighbors, family and friends, to be patient on the roads we drive on, and to be patient with others when they aren't responding the way we want them to. We need to be patient with ourselves and what we are capable of doing at the moment. Patient with our future and not rushing ahead of where God wants us to be. Being patient to see and know the will of God for our lives.

It is so easy to let things bother us because we don't want to wait. We need to put ourselves in the other person's place. We need to think of the other person and how they may feel about the situation. It goes back to thinking about what is important in life and how we let things bother us that

don't really need to cause us impatience. We always need to be thinking of how God wants us to live and how we are to treat people as we proclaim our belief in Jesus.

At times we are in such a hurry that we become impatient with others and with God as well. There is a book by Warren Wiersbe called God Isn't In A Hurry: Learning to Slow Down and Live and it is so true. Many times we put our time and energy on the wrong emphasis, and we are running from one event to another with no time to breath. We end up getting through the day, but have we enjoyed it and how have we treated others along the way. Have we taken time for people? Have we been patient with children and others? What have we valued along the journey of the day?

James compares patience to that of a farmer waiting for the fruit of the earth and waiting for the rain to water the crop. A farmer has to have great patience. Farming is a demanding and difficult profession because you have to have great faith and hope and patience to keep doing it year after year waiting for the harvest time.

James pictured the Christian as a "spiritual farmer" looking for a spiritual harvest. Our hearts are the soil, and the seed is the Word of God. When the going is tough, God is producing a harvest in our lives. He wants the "Fruit of the Spirit" to grow through the trials and troubles. Instead of growing impatient with God and with ourselves, we must yield to the Lord and permit the fruit to grow.

We can enjoy this kind of a harvest only if our "heart is established in the coming of the Lord." A heart that is not established in the Word of God and prayer cannot bear fruit.

James is telling his readers to be patient for the coming of the Lord. This is the hope of Christians that Christ will come again, and this is promised to us by Jesus. After Jesus died the believers thought that Jesus was coming back in their lifetime and people kept waiting and waiting. James is telling them to wait with patience so when the Lord does come back He finds you valuing the things of eternity and not the things of this world. God isn't in a hurry, and we don't know when Jesus will come again but we do know that He will. That He promised.

Keep in mind that a farmer does not stand around doing nothing. He is constantly at work as he looks toward the harvest.

James also mentions the prophets who are an example to us of endurance during suffering and showing the power of patience. The prophets encourage us by reminding us that God cares for us when we go through suffering for His sake. Many of the prophets had to endure great trials and sufferings. Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel had their share of hardships, but the Lord delivered them. And even those who were not delivered, who died for the faith, received a special eternal reward.

Why is it that those who speak in the name of the Lord often must endure suffering and trials?

It is so their lives might back up their messages. The impact of a faithful godly life carries much power. We need to remind ourselves that our patience in times of suffering is a testimony that we have “established our heart for the coming of the Lord.”

Wherever we are, whatever we are doing, and whatever we are going through, if we show Godly patience we are showing the power of the Lord and the Lord will add his blessing.

Let us remind ourselves that the Lord has a gracious purpose in all of this difficulty in life and that He will work out His purposes. He will make everything beautiful in His time.

We are children of God and privileged to be a part of God’s wonderful plan. So may we put value on the right areas of our life, seeking the Lord for patience every day, and may we have our hearts treasure the things of God and not the world.