

PATIENCE IN SUFFERING

We live in what theologians call the “_____ but not ____.”

It’s easy to get caught up in the day-to-day and overlook the fact that we are a part of a larger, cosmic narrative.

Doomsday Predictions: F. Kenton Beshore said that the end of the world would be in 2021 at the absolute latest. Jeane Dixon was convinced that Armageddon would take place in 2020, which was a slight adjustment from her original conviction that it would be on February 4, 1962. Self-proclaimed Christian numerologist David Meade said the world would end on September 23, 2015, then again on October 15, 2017, then again on April 23, 2018.

One of these days, a Doomsday Prediction will be _____.

The New Testament authors seemed to believe that Jesus would return in their lifetimes.

1 Peter 4.7: The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.

1 Thessalonians 5: 2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

1 Corinthians 7: 29 This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, 30 and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, 31 and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

What does it look like to live a life expecting the end, a life focused on what really matters? That’s the backdrop for James 5.

James 5: 7 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. 8 You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. 9 Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. 10 As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 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. 12 But above all, my brothers, do not swear,

either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.

BE _____.

We’re bad at this. A majority of Americans admit to honking their horns almost immediately after the light turns green. 72% of Americans will push an already lit elevator button, trying to get the doors to close faster. _____% of Americans will consume hot food or drink, knowing it will burn their mouths.

Dr. Paul Brand: “People in [technologically advanced] societies live at a greater comfort level—but seem far less equipped to handle suffering, and far more traumatized by suffering when it comes.”

Don’t think like a _____; think like a farmer.

One key to patience is realizing that so much of this world is outside your _____.

Question Set 1

DO NOT _____.

James 5.9: Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door.

Many men can endure a lot of pain, trouble, and suffering, but it’s easy to complain.

When Christians suffer for the Gospel’s sake, the Spirit moves in powerful ways to bring more people to Jesus. So, if we want revival, should we pray for _____ and suffering?

G. Michael Hopf: “Hard times create strong men, strong men create good times, good times create weak men, and weak men create hard times.”

One antidote to grumbling is remembering that although our time is unique, the challenges we face are not novel. We can look back at history and be humbled.

C.S. Lewis: “‘How are we to live in an atomic age?’ I am tempted to reply: ‘Why, as you would have lived in the sixteenth century when the plague visited London almost every year, or as you would have lived in a Viking age when raiders from Scandinavia might land and cut your throat any night; or indeed, as you are already living in an age of cancer, an age of syphilis, an age of paralysis, an age of air raids,

an age of railway accidents, an age of motor accidents. In other words, do not let us begin by exaggerating the novelty of our situation.”

REMAIN _____.

James 5.11: 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.

Matthew 7: 24 “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. 26 And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

Where is your foundation? Storms will come either way. Remaining steadfast is dependent upon building your house on the rock.

William H. McRaven: “Once again, we had learned an important lesson: the power of one person to unite the group, the power of one person to inspire those around him, to give them hope.”

Question Set 2