



## Joy Comes in the Morning

**Sermon Text:** Psalm 30

**Study Texts:** James 1:2-12

**Sermon Recap:** Psalm 30 is a Psalm of thanksgiving. In it, David expresses thanksgiving to the Lord, particularly because of the Lord's favor in the midst of trials. We see in Psalm 30 that difficult seasons are used by the LORD for our good and His glory. David points us to the reality of a sovereign and good God Who can be trusted regardless of the season or situation we find ourselves in. As God's children, through Jesus Christ, we can rest in the fact that God's "favor is for a lifetime."

**Sermon Connection:** In the New Testament, James, the half-brother of Jesus, addresses God's people on how to walk through trials with thanksgiving. In James 1:2-12, we get a behind-the-scenes look at the purposes of God in our trials. We are often tempted to view trials as pointless, and therefore we walk through them begrudgingly. James, however, points us to the reality that they are purposeful. Therefore, we must walk through them with gratitude.

### Lesson Plan

**Lesson Goal:** To see our trials as purposeful opportunities to enjoy and trust Christ

#### **Lesson Points:**

**Point 1: Trials Create Growth in God's likeness.** (vv. 2-4)

**Point 2: Trials Challenge Us to Trust God's Wisdom.** (vv. 5-8)

**Point 3: Trials Cause Us to Rely on God's Resources.** (vv. 9-12)

**The Context:** The book of James is written to "*the twelve tribes in the Dispersion*" (James 1:1). Who are these people, and how can James' instruction to them help us today? Well, the twelve tribes in the Dispersion were Jewish Christians who had been dispersed out of their land in to the surrounding regions of Mesopotamia, the Mediterranean, Asia Minor, and Europe. They were being horribly mistreated by their Jewish relatives and Gentile neighbors. Many of them were homeless, unemployed, robbed of their possessions, being falsely accused of crimes, and experienced less standing than slaves. What's more fascinating than their incredibly awful situation, is James' instruction to them to: "*Count it all joy...*" That's where we find ourselves in this lesson: A people with inconceivable trials and a command to have joy in the midst of them.

**Opening Question:** How do unbelievers you know attempt to make it through painful circumstances? How do you?

**Transition Statement:** As believers, we submit to the authority of God's Word in our lives. The beauty of God's Word is that it speaks to us in the challenging and confusing moments of life when things just don't make sense. James 1:2-12 give us a framework for understanding the, "Why is this happening to me?" moments of life...

**Point 1 - Trials Create Growth in Godliness.** (vv. 2-4)

- What does James *not* mean by his command to, "*Count it all joy...when you meet trials...*"? What does he mean?
- What do trials create?
- What does steadfastness produce in us as we patiently endure trials? What does it mean to be perfect and complete?

**Transition Statement:** When we faithfully endure trials, we grow in godliness *and* are further equipped to face more trials...

**Point 2 - Trials Challenge Us to Trust God's Wisdom.** (vv. 5-8)

- What are some common things we are tempted to think and pray when trials come into our life?
- What does James encourage us to ask for? How does God respond to this request? How does this encourage you?
- How are we instructed to ask for wisdom in the midst of trials? Why is this important?

**Point 3 - Trials Cause Us to Rely on God's Resources.** (vv. 9-12)

In this section, James is speaking to Christians who happen to be poor because of their faith and Christians who happen to be wealthy. He encourages the poor to boast in their advantage (v. 9), and the rich to boast in their hardships (v. 10).

- Considering the context of "purposeful trials", what advantage do poor Christians have?
- Why would James encourage wealthy Christians to boast in their hardships?
- How does knowing and considering our final reward (v. 12) help us endure trials with joy?

**The Big Picture**

Our trials are not pointless. They are purposeful opportunities to enjoy and trust Christ. God desires to grow His children in godliness, challenge us to trust His wisdom, and cause us to rely on His resources. We know that, regardless of what comes our way, "*...for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose*" (Romans 8:28). Ultimately, we cannot lose as followers of Jesus because of the victory that

He has won on our behalf. *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us.”* (Romans 8:35, 37)

### **Application Questions**

- What qualifies as a trial? What about a temptation? What’s the difference?
- Why is it crucial to believe in God’s sovereignty as we endure trials and persevere in the faith?
- If someone no longer has any interest in being a Christian due to a trial, what should we conclude about that person’s faith? How would you counsel that person?
- What are some ways that painful circumstances and unanswered prayers can actually strengthen your faith?
- How does James 1:2-12 help us shepherd our children through challenging and confusing seasons of life?