



Advent 3 -- December 13-14-15, 2025

Preacher: Pastor Scott Oelhafen

Our Christian Advent Prayer: Come LORD Jesus

1. Come with Your patience

2. Come with Your persevering presence

Sermon Text: James 5: 7-11

⁷Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. ⁸You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. ⁹Don't grumble against one other, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! ¹⁰Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

Dear brothers and sisters in God's family,

It's the holidays and you know what that word means, right? Holidays is a word adopted from the Latin language meaning: "Holy Days" and can include Advent, Christmas, and even New Years. And during these Holy Days, you may find yourself traveling in the car. Perhaps you have plans to drive the family out of town for a 6 hour tour. Maybe you're going to grandma & grandpa's house, to a favorite aunt or cousin. And just maybe, you're making this trip with the kids. You won't even back out of the driveway, and already, and I think you can predict their most popular question: "are we there yet?" The kids are so excited about reaching their destination, patience is one virtue they may forget to pack.

Well, our destination is Christmas. And we're not that far away. We're on the road, as Christians, with Mary & Joseph, traveling to a stable in a little town called Bethlehem. But, about this time of the year, we may feel like our donkeys are breaking down, and our camels just plain running out of gas. With all our preparations of setting up Christmas decorations, sending out greeting cards, and purchasing gifts, we may feel like those kids in the car: "are we there yet?" We may be short on patience and long on frustration during what's described as the "most wonderful time of the year."

Yes, we're on our way to Christmas. But, wait -- that's not quite right. We're not going anywhere. Christmas is coming to us. Christmas isn't about us coming to God. But, God certainly comes to us on Christmas in the form of a wrapped-up gift from heaven in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And like those kids in the car, we're excited about this destination too.

So we need to get ready. We need to spend this Advent season getting prepared. I'm not talking about last minute shopping or cleaning the house. As Christians, we

need to prepare our hearts for Christmas. How do we do that? It's simple and obvious: we pray. We turn our thoughts to God and ask that He prepares our hearts with His Word.

How has your prayer life been going this Advent season? What special prayers have you been using? If you're like most Christians, without even realizing it, you're using the perfect Advent prayer. You're using the Common Table prayer: *Come LORD Jesus be our guest and let these gifts to us be blest.* Usually, we think of this as just a "dinner prayer." But, it's more than that. The prophet James will help show us that this is **the Christian's Advent Prayer: Yes, Come LORD Jesus. come with Your patience and come with your persevering presence.**

The blue colors on the altar and my gown remind us that we're celebrating the church season called Advent. Advent is a word which means "coming." We actually celebrate three "comings" of Christ. We celebrate the coming of the Christ-child to Bethlehem 2000 years ago. At the same time we celebrate the coming of Christ daily into our hearts and lives through His Gospel. And finally, we look forward to the future 2nd coming of Christ back to earth on Judgement Day.

James, one of the leaders of the early Christian church, was concerned about these Advents or "comings" of Christ. God moved him to write this Biblical book to help us understand why we need to pray: **Come LORD Jesus.** Let's start with some background on this book.

James wrote to real people with real struggles. They were people who had known tough times. As a direct result of their Christian faith, they had to leave everything behind: their jobs, their families, their possessions, to escape massive persecutions in Jerusalem. And these struggling people, like us, needed solid spiritual encouragement.

James starts out by addressing them as "brothers and sisters." It's interesting that he uses these words "brothers and sisters" three times in our short reading. He's talking to family. We too are part of that extended family as spiritual brothers and sisters, fellow believers in Christ. Tradition records James as another biological son of Mary. That made James and Jesus Christ half-brothers. Here was a guy who may have spent many holidays with Jesus. If you think there's stress being in the same room being compared to a brother/sister, think how James must have felt with Jesus – and Jesus was perfect. So let's listen up, as our brother, James speaks to us firsthand, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit in 2025

'Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains.. James shows them why they need to pray: **Come LORD Jesus; come with Your patience.** He uses an example of patience they would be most familiar with, the example of a farmer – since most of them were farmers. Once a farmer plants his crops, he needs to be patient, and wait for God to make them grow. This farmer can't schedule the rainfall. He can't do a rain dance. His whole year and

future of his family are riding on the growth of these crops. All he can do is wait, and trust that God is in complete control.

Sometimes the LORD asks us to patiently WAIT. Wait in lines as we shop. Wait for friends and families to safely arrive in snowy weather. Wait for that medical test to come back from the lab. Wait in a nursing home in our 80s & 90s until it's our turn to enter heaven. Waiting is hard, isn't it? Why is that? Really, there's little reason to be patient anymore. Hungry? Pop a Hot Pocket into the microwave. Feel like a movie? Order one from your streaming service. Need to talk to someone? Cell phone. Need to go shopping? Go to the web and click: "buy it now." Problem is that these timesavers often ease us into assuming that we don't have to be patient anymore about anything. That's all wrong, it's sinful, and we know it. But, that doesn't stop us from rolling our eyes when life doesn't deliver what we want at the instant we want it. And that's when things get ugly as far as God is concerned. The moment we begin to act as if God is our pizza boy and He'd better deliver what we want in 30 minutes or less – that's the moment we've begun mocking the God who said He will not be mocked. Truth is, we've all been guilty of being impatient – from the preschooler who wants her toy to the senior who wants his dinner now.

That's why we need this loving, but firm reminder from James: **(v 9) *Don't grumble against each other, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door.*** James tells us flat out: don't complain because God, our loving judge commands us not to. Don't be so impatient that we tear others down because we feel impatient for the moment. How have we done? Held up to the mirror of God's Law, all of us, preacher included, have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We've grumbled and complained to our spouses, our parents, at work. How would we feel if, Judgement Day was right now, and Jesus came back to treat us as our sins deserved? None of us would stand innocent. We wouldn't have a prayer. We'd be doomed to hell.

Instead we pray: **Come LORD Jesus; come with your patience.** There's a popular Christmas song that starts out: "it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas." As we see the decorative trees in front of church and colorful lights in town, we're reminded that Christmas is near. We're reminded that "God cared enough to send His very best," the gift of His Son, born to suffer, die, and rise again to take away all our sins, including our sins of impatience and complaining. Free forgiveness is available right now for the asking, and God's well of love never runs dry. That's the love that last for eternity, available to all through God's Word and sacrament. As God's dearly loved children, we can be patient, knowing God is silently working behind the scenes. He's shaping world events, from the world scene to our own front yards. And He wants us to use our time to thank him and trust: He's got our best interests in mind.

After God gives us this attitude adjustment to be patient, He asks us to practice what we preach. **Yes, Come LORD Jesus; come with Your persevering presence.** We need to remember something. James, the writer of our text, was a practical guy. He

didn't write his book to have someone to place it on a shelf to gather dust. He wanted us to use it his "how-to book" to put our Christian faith into actionHe says:

¹⁰Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. "As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy. To help us understand patience, James uses Job as a living example. I like Job because he's easy to relate to. He was a humble man, a God-fearing man. He seemed to have everything going for him and in a matter of moments he lost everything: his kids, his wealth and his health. But, by the power of the Holy Spirit, he didn't lose His faith in God. He was patient and persevered. He was down for the count, but by God's grace, he wasn't out. God strengthened him to handle his larger-than-life problems with Biblical knowledge and Spirit-driven faith. In the end God took care of him and he knew it.

Like Job, we will face many problems in life. Our Savior, Jesus, tells us ahead of time that our problems shouldn't surprise us. Jesus said: *in this world you will always have trouble (John 16:33)*. Luke repeated this thought when he told us: *We must go through many hardships to enter into the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22)*. So problems, this side of eternity, will happen. The question really is: "how will we deal with them?" If we try to "go-it-alone," we'll fail for sure. We don't have the strength. We're only human, frail and wobbly. But, we know where to go. **Yes, Come LORD Jesus; come with Your persevering presence.** God asks us to be like Weebles. A weeble is a 1970s toy for small children. A Weeble wobbles, but it doesn't fall down. As we go to our LORD in prayer, we're confident that God will provide the strength for our every need. God provides the Christian faith we need to face any problem.. Faith has been described as: "doubt that said it's prayers.

Don't let your holidays become HOLLOW-DAYS, hollow of the true reason for the season. Instead join me in asking God to make them HALLOWED-DAYS, set apart to welcome the Christ-child. So, the next time you sit down to eat, remember this as Your Advent prayer too: **Come LORD Jesus. Come with Your patience, and come with Your persevering presence.** Don't worry – God will give you reasons to be patient this week. Just wait. Amen.