

Stand Firm with Patience

You too, be patient and stand firm,
because the Lord's coming is near.
James 5:8

Maybe the best way to start a
thought about this Bible verse is to
add verse 7 from chapter 5 in the
epistle of James:

⁷ 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.

⁸ You too, be patient and stand
firm, because the Lord's coming is
near.



Back in the days just after Jesus ascended to heaven, the disciples seemed to think that Jesus would return within their lifetimes. Many passages in the Bible seem to give us the same message, as it is also expressed twice in Revelations chapter 22: "Look! I am coming soon!"

But we know now that "soon" did not mean in less than 2,000 years. Isn't this one of the mysteries of God's Word? What did Jesus mean by telling us that He would come again "soon?"

The Bible explains to us that God does not see things the same way that we do. It says in 2 Peter that "with the Lord ... a thousand years are like a day." Jesus himself also told us (see Matthew 24) that no one knows when the last day will come, not even the Son, but only the Father. It's not something we can easily understand, but it is God's Word to us.

Many of the parables that Jesus told, and also these verses 7 and 8 in James 5, help us to understand the motive of God's Word to us on this subject. We're supposed to live our lives as if Jesus might come again at any time.

For people who don't believe in Jesus, the thought of Judgment Day coming at any time often seems like a scary thought. All kinds of story books and fantasy movies have been made to suggest ideas that are not from God's Word, maybe for the purpose of helping them hide from the truth. It's important, though, to be

clear about God's Word on this and not be confused by those imaginations from unbelieving men.

For those of us whose hearts have been moved by the Holy Spirit to believe and appreciate the love of Jesus, the thought of His return seems something like Christmas coming for a child! Compared to the troubles of this world, it will be a happy day!

What should we do while we wait, then? In James, God tells us that our outlook should be like a farmer. We should be planting seeds – the seeds of hope in others, so that the Holy Spirit might bless our planting and convince the hearts of others about the truth and beauty of Jesus' love. While we wait for Jesus to return, we can strive to imitate the example He set for us, where He first preached of forgiveness and salvation and then He attended to the physical needs of the people He met, wherever He went in this world.

Actually, we have no reason to be anxious. When we realize that our salvation is assured, it seems easy to wait patiently for Jesus to return. If you have something in this life that is making you anxious, maybe some suffering or maybe some doubt or fear, find a brother or sister in Christ and share your concern. Let the rest of us pray for you and with you, and let those of us who can, share Jesus' love with you by ministering to your needs, as we are able.

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