Transformed through Trials

James 1:1-8, 12-17 [1] James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings. [2] Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, [3] for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. [4] And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. [5] If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. [6] But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. [7] For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; [8] he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

[12] Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. [13] Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. [14] But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. [15] Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. [16] Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. [17] Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

Background

Author: James. Half-brother of Jesus. He was transformed. Skeptic to servant.

- During Jesus' ministry, James did not believe in Him (John 7:5). Likely among family members thinking Jesus was mad (Mark 3:21).
- The resurrection sealed transformation (1 Cor 15:7, then he appeared to James, then all the apostles....)

Audience: Scattered Jews. Ancient Israelites. Early persecuted Jews.

- By the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), Jews were living across the entire Mediterranean world, Jews of the Diaspora.
- A later dispersion affected Christian Jews: persecution under Saul (Acts 8:1) scattered believers throughout Judea and Samaria, Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch (Acts 11:19).

Purpose: Teach, encourage and exhort the early church.

- This letter is for us too. We are scattered everywhere on this earth. Pilgrims of this earth (Phil. 3:20; 1 Pet. 2:11). For we are part of a kingdom. A kingdom with Jesus as King. We own nothing here. Our allegiance is to Jesus alone.

Expect trials, yet when it happens, the unexpected nature of it can overwhelm

John 16:32-33 [32] Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. [33] I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Acts 14:21-22 [21] When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, [22] strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

Matt 4:24 – all kinds of sickness

2 Tim 3:6 – never-ending human desires

1 Pet 4:10 – Infinite forms of God's grace, sufficient for our needs

Count it all joy

- **Phil 3:7-8** [7] But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. [8] Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ.

Ask for wisdom

- **Matthew 7:7-8** [7] "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. [8] For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

Nullify doubt

- **Hebrews 13:8** [8] Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.