**James 1:12 Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.**

For the last four weeks, we’ve looked at Advent. We started with Faith. We found that Hope sprang from Faith. Joy and Peace rose in the light of Hope. Today, we have our eye firmly set on Love – the very center of the circle – everything that is of God is born of His Love. Without Love, there is no Christmas. 1 Corinthians 13 speaks of Love - the Greatest gift of all – verse 13 says *And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.* Love is the start of our journey, love is the end of our road, and love is the fuel that powers our walk. The greatest Love, the greatest gift ever given we celebrated yesterday – The birth of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

 Remember that we learned from James in James 1:2-4 that Adversity produces patience and we’re to let patience have it’s perfect work, with a sense of Joy in the fact that we are being completed and perfected. We learned from Paul to rejoice in Hope in Romans 12:12, remaining patient in trial and constant in prayer. We listened to Peter in 1 Peter 1 as he instructed us to have Joy inexpressible during times of trial – and in the end, we receive the end of our faith – the salvation of our very souls. Last week, it was Jesus’ turn – telling us that even in trial we have peace in Him, because He overcame the world and all its tribulations and adversities. James, Paul, Peter, Jesus, and now we return today to James. The theme being – trials will come, adversity will come, tribulation will come – we can rest in confidence and count it all joy, and endure, knowing that God has a perfect plan made with His perfect love for us, the children He’s perfecting for eternal life with Him.

 James 1 is where we started this series and James 1 is where we will end. James 1:12begins - *Blessed is the man who endures temptation.* Blessed is man who **endures**, remains under, patiently stays strong – wait a minute, we’ve seen that word before – sure we have, in Romans 12:12 – *Rejoicing in hope,* ***patient*** *in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer –* **temptation** – we’ve seen that word before as well, in 1 Peter 1:6 and in James 1:2 – it means adversities or trials. Blessed is the man that stands up and perseveres in Faith through all manner of trials and adversities. If we’re not careful, we’re going to realize that the giants of our Faith – Peter, Paul, James and so many others were telling us that Faithful Perseverance with a sense of Hope, and Joy and Peace are the hall mark of a mature Christian with eyes fastened on Jesus.

 Verse 12 continues *for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.* When who is approved? The man that endures in Faith until the end, even as the trials come, even when adversity sets in. This man will receive the crown - literally the wreath, the prize – of life which the Lord has promised – not to everyone… but to those who love Him. Those who love God just as Jesus said we must in Matthew 22:37 - *Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.* Love God completely and with everything. That is the man, the woman who will be found approved, and receive the crown of life, as the Lord promised. That is person who will, as we read in 1 Peter 1:9, *receive the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.*

God loves us and Hebrews 12:6 says - *For whom the Lord loves He chastens,
And scourges every son whom He receives.* God brings discipline, He trains those He loves and scourges the ones that He will receive. 1 Peter 4:12 -13 puts a fine point on it all for us - *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.* Do not think it strange when adversities arise, do not think it wrong when trials present – this is God at work in our lives. *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.* Indeed, *Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

This week, let’s sit a while and think about how we view the adversities and trials in our lives. Are with thankful for how God is completing us? Are we expectantly watching the sky hoping for Christ’s return? Are we enduring with a sense of Hope and Joy and Peace, knowing that God Loves us more than we can imagine? I hope so. The Bible shouts this message through eternity. When we receive it, we will be changed forever.