



生命园地

本期要目：

- 第一页： 试炼中的喜乐
- 第二页： 不信的惧怕
- 第三页： The Journey of Faith
- 第四页： The Journey of Faith

生命园地 第十三期 (二〇〇九年五月) 北美基督徒中心出版

荒漠甘泉

试炼中的喜乐

“无论何时，你们看见你们自己被各样试炼围困了，都要以为大喜乐。因为知道你们的信心经过试验，就生忍耐。” (雅各书 1: 2-3, 卫司译本)

神常围困他自己的儿女们，为的是要训练他们；可是人总错看他的围困，误会他的作为。约伯就是这样，他说：“人的道路既然遮隐，神又把他四面围困，为何有光赐给他呢？”(约伯记 3: 23) 啊，神的儿女们！试炼虽然围困我们，仍有许多隙缝可以透光。荆棘不会来刺你，除非你靠着它；并且那些伤你的话语、使你痛心的信札、亲友的弃绝、经济的压迫……神都知道。如果，你敢完全信靠他，他必与你表同情并且负起你一切的责任。



荆棘编成的藩篱，
被寒冬剥夺了青翠，
剩下树枝，
满眼针扎尖刺。

春天来了，像花朵怒放，
抽出了绿色枝条，
嫩叶纷披，婆婆掩隐，
如何地青葱美娇。

神赐的晴天终于来了，
痛苦的呻吟停止，

艰难中绽出花朵，
结成平安的果子。

让我们高歌前进，
穿过隐伏的人生陷阱，
走上恩威兼施之神安排的道路，
高唱悲壮和柔和的歌咏。

一月十二日《荒漠甘泉》

一封信

我的身体情况，你是知道的，是慢性病，是器官病，发病就很难过，就是不发病，病依然在身上，只有发不发之分，没有好不好之分。夏天到了，多晒些太阳可以改变一点颜色，但不能改变病。但我维持自己的喜乐，请你放心。希望你自己也多保重一点，心中充满喜乐。

(这封信是倪析声在一九七二年四月二十二日，他六十九岁那年，也是在他被囚禁二十年之后，接近离世之日写的。)

转载自《喜乐的心》四月二十二日



《信息》

不信的惧怕

“我要依靠他，并不惧怕。”（赛十二2）

诗：主在前面将我带，他已划定我行程；可靠犹如他大爱，无忧无惧往前征。

你们不要太注重你们的喜乐……，或是你们的愁苦……你们不能用喜乐或愁苦，给基督所已成就的完美工作加深什么。比方有人为我还清了债务，我却因欠债自怨自艾而愁苦，或因债得清偿而喜乐，两方面的感情都是合乎情理的，然而对于债务已得了结这个事实，其又有何助益呢？

亚伯拉罕在那山上已找到可以与神办交涉的地方，罗得却说：“我不能逃到山上去，恐怕这灾祸临到我，我便死了”。不信的恶心，常把信心之地看为最可怕，和最黑暗的绝境。

主称你们为弟兄，也不以为耻；难道你们在世人面前承认他为主，就以为耻么？不要一直在心中盘算，什么时候才好坦然承认信主这事实，请你们要马上坚决的承认，不顾一切的去作一下，结果如何，你可以交给主。我从经验上知道，只要大胆公开承认自己属于基督，已经得胜过半了。我可以按我的认识来告诉你们，如果一个人靠着主的力量，受引导在同伴和朋友面前宣告说，我是属于基督的，我必须为他而活，这一个人就不会感觉痛苦，像那些有心事奉主，而又畏首畏尾，不敢承认主的人一样。

我不知用什么话比“应当一无挂虑”，更能安定我们的心。我不晓得有多少次发现果然是“一无”的。

出于缺乏信心之谨慎，是无补于实际的；它只能让仇敌乘机逞强来攻击我们。

不管存心多好，但若以不信之心，来作信心之工，结果就只有失败，而无任何成功之可言。神的儿女在信心道路上，遇着难处的时候，若倚赖不信者的护庇，而不投靠神的帮助，就必定远远的深入歧途。

人心稍微出现不信的阴影，撒但就会乘虚而入，且得以大张威势。

不信恶心一旦见诸行动，唯一结果就是烦恼与悲伤。

心中若还留下任何一点的叹息，没有向恩典的神倾吐，或是仍残存一点的不信，这就是肉体的活动，也是仇敌的工作。我们可能有时会灰心（这种情形必定已经缺乏信心），但是若把这些事都带到神面前，最后必要平安的过去。

人若说有信心，却先为着未来的艰难而挂虑，这样的信，当然经不起神所看为好而安排给我们的难处。

心灵受压或灰心丧气，还不算是罪的本身，但什么时候不信靠神，罪就进来了。

我必不惧怕，因为主是活的，他的名是耶稣！

—达秘—

转载自《基督是我们的满足》

香港教会书室出版



The Journey of Faith

A Fresh Look into the Book of James

Scripture Verses: James 1:1-5 (All verses quoted are in ASV)

We are having a fresh visit to the book of James. My prayer was for the Lord to unload me of all my preconceived notions of what I thought I knew and that I would not come to this book wearing 'colored glasses' that will shade everything I see. When you wear colored glasses, what you see is not really what it actually is. This is because there have been more comments heaped upon the book of James than any other book in the New Testament. Most of them unfortunately are unfavorable, beginning with Martin Luther's, and I am afraid that even up to today, we are still very much influenced by him.

The most troubling point in this book to many Christians is the portion of *'faith without works is dead'* (James 2:20 KJV) and *'by works was faith made perfect'* (James 2:22). It troubled Martin Luther almost 500 years ago and it is still troubling Christians today. Although the Lord has since opened His Word more to us, I am afraid that I may still be affected and colored by the comments I have heard in the past. So when I came to this book this time, I prayed that it would really be a fresh visit. In fact, every time when we come to the Word of God, we must ask the Lord to give us an open heart as well as an open mind so that the Holy Spirit will have the opportunity to speak to us afresh and that we will not be influenced by the past.

The first point I want to share is ***What Should Be Our Attitude When Coming to the Book of James***

James 1: 1 begins with, *'James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion, greeting'*. Here James has introduced himself as a servant (or in Greek, a slave) of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ when he wrote this epistle approximately between 40-50 A.D., during the time of the Roman Empire. In those days, there were Roman citizens and there were slaves and only citizens had civil rights while slaves had none. We do not quite appreciate this today because slavery was abolished over a century and a half ago in the US and we all have civil rights now. However, it was not so during those times. Roman citizens (that is free men) had civil rights and slaves had none meant that slaves did not have the right to express their own opinions. This is really important. A slave was a property, a possession, of his owner and as such, did not possess the right to express his own opinions. If he had any, he had to keep it to himself. James' acknowledgment of himself as a slave of God and of Jesus Christ meant that God and the Lord Jesus was his Master. So, before his Master, he had nothing of his own opinions to express. By ascribing this title to himself he implied that what he wrote was not from him but was the expression of the wishes of the Master. These opening words made it very clear that he was only expressing what God wanted him to. So when we come to this book, we must be careful how we talk about it. We must see whose words these actually were. I was very much touched that we must be careful what we say about this book.

This book was written as a greeting to the 12 tribes in the Dispersion. You may ask what has this got to do with us if it was written to the 12 tribes that were dispersed? In Greek and the word 'tribe' means 'a sprout'. A sprout comes from a seed that has been put into the ground, and with the warmth and moisture in the ground, something comes out of it in due time because there is life in the seed. Furthermore, the word 'dispersion' means to scatter by sowing. It is not a random act of strewing some inanimate objects on the ground but it is the sowing of seeds with life so that they may sprout. Remember, this was not James' own description of those fellow Jews who were scattered.

James 1: 1 continues with *'... to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion, greeting'*. In other versions, the word 'greeting' has also been translated 'rejoice'. In Greek, the word 'greeting' means 'that may you have joy'. To put it in another way, it can be read, 'James, the slave of God and of Jesus Christ, to the 12 tribes that were scattered, rejoice (or that you may have joy)'. Such an opening word of this book surely must come from God and not from James, a slave. In James 1:21 he mentions the need to put away 'all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness', and 'receive with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls', this meant that the Word in you will sprout as implied by the use of the adjective 'implanted'. When the Lord Jesus was on the earth, He gave the 'Parable of the Sower' which was recorded in Matthew 13 and Mark 4. There He said the seed sown is the Word. What is scattered that can sprout is the Word. It was not only to the 12 tribes in the Dispersion at that time, but it also to us today that we have been scattered with the Seed of Life in us so that the Word in us can sprout.

P.T.O

Garden of Life

North America Christian Centre

www.naccvan.com

8850 Selkirk Street, Vancouver, BC. Canada V6P 4J8

The Journey of Faith (Continued)

We should not think that this was an accidental or random scattering of seeds. We Christians should never think that what has happened to us was accidental or coincidental. Rather, we need to see that this was God's sovereignty and in accordance to His good pleasure. The last 50 years, that is, in the 2nd half of the 20th century, has been a tremendous time of scattering for us as Christians who bore the Seed of Life within, especially to those of us who have migrated to the United States. With this in view, wherever God has scattered us, we may have joy (or rejoice). When we greet our brothers and sisters in Christ from different places, there is a joy within because we realize it was God who had scattered us.

James 1:2 says, *'Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations'*. Some versions translate 'temptations' as 'trials'. This book tells us that whenever we *'fall into manifold temptations'* (or trials), that it was God Who had scattered us and placed us there. It is not important for us to focus on whether trials are different from temptations or that 'trials' are the difficult situations which work out positively and 'temptations' are those that work out negatively, but rather it is important for us to see that wherever the Lord has planted and scattered us, we need to *'count it all joy'* when trials or temptations befall us.

Romans 14: 17 says, *'for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit'*. The book of James is also very much focused on the matter of joy. When we see that God is sovereign and that He has scattered His people with the Seed of Life to sprout, then wherever we are and whenever we face trials, we can count it all joy.

James 1:3 says, *'Knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience'*. If you want to prove something, you must first have to have it. The 'proving of your faith' simply means that you do have faith because you cannot prove what you don't have. The word 'patience' is also rendered 'endurance' in some versions. The word actually means to 'remain under'. This is the same word that is translated 'abide' in John 15:4 when the Lord Jesus said, *'Abide in Me, and I in you'* and John 15:5 continues by saying, *'I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit'*. This word abide (rendered patience in James) simply means to remain, just stay there. We prove our faith by counting it a joy while going through trials. We 'remain under' to let something work out without trying to get out of it. God has planted in us with the Seed of Life in order for the seed to sprout. James 1:4 continues, *'And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing'*. When we 'remain under' our situations until its completion, we will lack nothing.

James 1:5 says, *'But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him'*. This verse is quite puzzling because James just said in the previous verse that you will lack nothing. However, James did not say if you lack faith, or if you lack endurance, or if you lack works, but rather that 'if you lack wisdom'. What does it mean? James 3:17-18 says, *'But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace'*. In other words, if anyone lacks this kind of wisdom, that is the wisdom that has the point of view from above, let him ask of God.

Our human wisdom is very short-sighted and very narrow in context. But if anyone lacks the wisdom that is from above, let him ask of God. Only God can give to all liberally the kind of wisdom with the perspective from above. I was very encouraged by this opening word.

—Message given by James Chu—

(To be continued in the following issues)