

James 1:1-4 Count it all joy...

1. How is suffering approached and thought about in our culture today?

Read James 1:1-4

2. James gives us five outcomes of facing trials of various kinds, what are they, and how can various trials bring these realities to the fore in our lives? (Note: The word test is a word that refers to the refining of gold or silver from ore – the process by which it is strengthened)
3. James says we can know joy even in the midst of suffering when we know that these things are the outcome. How is this principle hard to hear in our modern western secular worldview?

Read Mark 3:13-15; 20-21; John 19:25-27; Acts 15:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

4. In the sermon Tim made reference to the life of James (Jesus' younger brother), as a life lived in keeping with this principle. You have just read many of the narrative references or glaring absences of James from the story of Jesus. From the sermon and the references you have just read what changes do you note in James' life, and to what would you attribute it?

Read Hebrews 12:2

5. Facing suffering does not automatically make us better, sometimes it makes us bitter, angry, cold, hard. In the close of the sermon Tim made reference to this passage from Hebrews where we hear that Jesus counted it joy to endure the cross for our sake, that we were the joy that was set before him. How can looking at Jesus and his work for us enable us to count it all joy when we face trials of various kinds?