

Have you ever felt like you were living a righteous life—reading your Bible, praying daily, worshiping God, participating in fellowship, serving others, growing in discipleship—yet life still seemed unfair, hard, and nerve-wracking? Our text speaks of Christians who were mistreated, maligned, and oppressed. Life was hard in Jesus’ day. Common laborers lived in poverty, exploited by wealthy landowners. One-third of the Roman world was enslaved. Women had no rights. The rich ruled. Injustice abounded masked as judicially correct in spite of unsubstantiated charges, judicial bias and influence via favoritism or coin. James is well aware and boldly observes:

**James 5:6: “You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.”**

- **Grammatical Usage:** “**You have condemned**” or in the Greek, “katedikasate” meaning, “pass judgment”; “**he does not resist**” or “antitassetai” meaning, “align oneself against.”
- **Literal Interpretation:** You have passed judgment and ruined innocent men in your career, and they have not aligned against you, powerless to stop you.
- **Contextual/Comparison:** God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word.

## I. RESISTANCE

### A. THE BEHAVIOR OF THE OPPRESSED ADDRESSED

#### 1. **Romans 13:1-7**

- a. A clear-cut command to submit to “**the governing authorities**” (v. **1a**). Immediately following the command is the reason for it: authorities are God-ordained (v. **1b**). Therefore, resisting earthly authority is the same as resisting God (v. **2**). Rulers are a deterrent to evil in society (v. **3**); in fact, a ruler is “**God’s servant**,” bringing retribution to the wrongdoer (v. **4**). Christians should submit to human authority not only to avoid punishment but also to maintain a clear conscience before God (v. **5**). Specifically, Christians should pay their taxes (v. **6**) and pay the proper respect and honor to “**God’s servants**” (v. **7**).
- b. This is not to say that God approves of everything governments do or that kings are always right. On the contrary, Scripture has many examples of kings being held to account by God (e.g., **Daniel 4**). Furthermore, **Romans 13** does not teach that Christians must always obey the governing authorities, no matter what. The one exception to the general rule of obedience is when man’s laws are in direct conflict with the plainly revealed law of God. Examples of God’s people practicing civil disobedience include Peter and John defying the Sanhedrin (**Acts 4:19; 5:29**), the Hebrew

midwives refusing to practice infanticide (**Exodus 1:15-17**), Daniel ignoring the Persian law concerning prayer (**Daniel 6:10**), and Daniel's friends refusing to bow to the king's image (**Daniel 3:14-18**).

**B. NOT RESISTING IS BASED UPON TWO THINGS...**

1. AN AWARENESS that the Lord is coming to judge - **James 5:8-9**
2. A WILLINGNESS to let Him be our avenger - cf. **Luke 18:7-8**

**II. BE PATIENT**

**A. THE WORD FOUND HERE IS SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT THAN THAT FOUND EARLIER IN THIS EPISTLE...**

1. In **James 1:3**, the word is "**hupomone**"
  - a. Which normally means to be patient in reference to THINGS or CIRCUMSTANCES
2. In **James 5:7-8, 10** the word is "**makrothumia**"
  - a. Which normally means to be patient in reference to PEOPLE (like those who oppress you)

**III. ESTABLISH YOUR HEARTS**

**A. THE WORD "ESTABLISH"...**

1. Means "to fix, make fast, to set"
  - a. Involves strengthening our heart in a certain way
  - b. Here, it means to strengthen our heart so as to be patient

**B. THE "KEY" TO ESTABLISHING OUR HEARTS...**

1. Is the Word of God - cf. **2 Peter 1:12**
2. Through constant and careful study of God's Word.

**IV. DON'T GRUMBLE**

**A. ESPECIALLY AGAINST ONE ANOTHER (v. 9)**

**B. WE HAVE GOOD REASON NOT TO GRUMBLE...**

**V. PRAY**

**A. THIS IS THE KEY THING TO DO WHEN OPPRESSED...**

1. As we learn from **James 5:13**
2. This is what the Christians of James' day were doing - cf. **Jm 5:4**

**B. WHEN WE PRAY, GOD HEARS!**

1. As seen in **James 5:4**
2. As promised by both Jesus and James, the Lord will avenge His righteous ones - **Luke 18:7-8; James 5:7-8**
3. It may not come when we want it, and the Lord may "**bear long with us**" - cf. **Revelation 6:9-11**
4. But when the time is ripe, the oppressed will be avenged!

➤ **Conclusion:** Will I submit my will to God's will in every aspect of my life?