Sermon: **Consider it pure joy whenever you face trials…** (James 1.2)

Last week we looked at when God challenges us, and how hard that can be. This week we look at the challenges that come from others, usually forced on us, not willingly taken on.

Thus not accident, illness, old age, etc, though the same principles apply.   
So, hardship from neighbours, family, government, strangers. For example, ideas or offers of help rejected, hate-mail, raw deals from EQC, road rage, email scams, bullying boss.

How do we deal with them, what should be our attitude towards them?

James tries to address this, writing to Jewish Christians many of whom were poor (some became poor for selling up when they thought Christ would return in their lifetime), some exploited by rich landowners – see 2.6, 5.1-6. Probably not our problem, but not atypical of the kind of problem we do face.

What does James recommend? – TEXT! Joy??   
James not alone: see also Romans 5.1-5; 1 Peter 1.6-7; 2 Corinthians 1.4.

Note what James is not saying

* Not some positive thinking psycho-babble (it hurts but smile, don’t worry, be happy)
* Not glib advice of the kind often offered at a dying person’s bedside, or at a funeral
* Not that suffering is good

[1] James repeats beatitude advice (Matthew 5.10-12) – God blesses those who persevere.

[2] Resisting trials leads to perseverance, wholeness (“perfect” in 1.4)

[3] Your perseverance will help others.

[4] The exploiters will get their come-uppance.

TEXT. Joy is not mere happiness, but has roots in confidence, remaining positive despite negative outlook not through sheer willpower, but knowing that God who in Christ experienced this also, is involved too.