

Divers Temptation

Text: James 1:1-12

“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways. Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”

Introduction:

A. The Author of the book:

1. Some believe that James the son of Zebedee, the brother of John wrote the book of James.
2. Others claim that it was James the son of Alphaeus, our Lord's half brother.
3. While it is true that the James the son of Zebedee, was present at the transfiguration of Christ, he cannot be the author of the Book of James because neither the time, occasion, or subject matter agree to him being the author.

- With reference to the time - the epistle of James was written, between A.D. 60 – 63 and according to Acts 12:1,2, Herod put James the son of Zebedee to death in 44 A.D.
- Pertaining to the occasion and subject matter - the epistle was written after the Gospel had been spread into the Gentile world, and had been received by the Jews, who were scattered abroad.
- Likewise, the content of the epistle reveals that it was written after many hypocrites, false teachers, vain boasters, and wicked men, had crept into the churches.

B. These evidences leading us to believe with absolute confidence that the author of the epistle is James the Lord's half brother.

1. James was the half brother of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. John 7:3-5 reveals that James nor any of the Lord's half-brothers were believers until after His resurrection.
3. After His resurrection the Lord showed Himself to James (I Corinthians 15:7). After which James became a believer.
4. James was one of the main leaders at the church in Jerusalem.
5. He is mentioned in Acts 15 as one of the speakers at the council held in Jerusalem and instrumental in setting the controversy.

C. The Book of James is called a "general epistle" because:

1. It is not written to any particular person, like the epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon.
 2. Nor is it written to a particular church, as the epistles of Romans, I & II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and I & II Thessalonians.
 3. It is written to the believing Jews, wherever they were, having been “scatter abroad.”
- D. Men like Luther, who placed great emphasis on justification by faith in Christ alone, could not completely grasp how the Book of James, with its emphasis on works, could harmonize with the rest of the Scripture.
- E. At one time there was a question whether the book of James should be included in the canon of Scripture.
1. However, there is no doubt that the book of James, belongs in our Bible.
 2. Why? Because the book of James is filled with **practical information** on “**living the Christian life**” not found anywhere else in Scripture.
- F. There is a definite parallelism between the book of James and the Sermon on the Mount.
1. One parallel is “**the right kind of righteousness.**”
 - In the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:20 the Lord said,

“For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

- The scribes and Pharisees knew a great deal about the Scripture, but **they did not**

have faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.

- Therefore they were not interested in honoring Him in their daily lives.
- They talked about righteousness (mainly their own), but did not practice true righteousness.

G. Throughout the book, James clearly points out that the kind of righteousness that he was looking for was **not** a righteousness **produced** by one's **own efforts**, but by faith in Christ, which **resulted in godly living**.

I. Verse 1 – The Salutation:

A. James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ:

1. Remember - James is the half-brother of our Lord and one of the main leaders in the church at Jerusalem.

- He does not mention his special relationship to the Lord or boast of his position of authority.
- Instead he calls himself a servant (or slave), indicating complete submission, absolute obedience, and complete loyalty to God and to the Lord Jesus Christ.
- James unlike many slaves of his day was a slave by choice, because he understood that the blood of Christ had bought him.
- James uses our Lord's full title:

Lord – means Master – signifies obedience

Jesus – speaks of Him as our Saviour and what He did for us on the cross.

Christ – “the anointed one” “Messiah” – the coming one who was predicted in the O.T.

B. “ To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad”

1. James is in particular writing to the believing Jews scattered by persecution.
2. However, James message applies to every believer Jew and Gentile alike - II Timothy 3:16,17.

C. “Greeting” – literally means, “to rejoice” or “be glad” - which leads us to his first main topic.

II. Verse 2 – 4 - Divers Temptations:

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

Every word of this verse has a significant meaning:

A. First “**when ye**” – (Not “if you” but “when you”):

1. Peter said in I Peter 4:12,13:

“Beloved, **think it not strange** concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, **as though some strange thing happened unto you**: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye **may be glad also with exceeding joy.**”

B. Secondly “divers temptations.”

1. “Divers” means “different types” or “a variety of.”
2. “Temptations” – means trials or testing:

3. The Greek word used here for temptations can be used in a positive or negative sense:

Verse 12: “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”

Verse 13: “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:”

- Verse 13 is the **negative sense** – where Satan “the tempter” enticed us to sin, or lapse from faith and holiness.
- Verse 14 is the **positive sense** - adversity, affliction, or trouble: sent by God, serving to test or prove one’s character, faith, holiness.

In verse 2 James is referring to the positive testing of God.

God allows trials for various positive reasons, but it is Satan and the flesh that tempt us to sin.

C. Next “**fall into**” – means “to be **suddenly be encompassed by.**”

D. Lastly “**Count it all Joy**”:

1. Rather than considering trials something to rejoice about, most Christians complain or grip about them.
2. We need to see our trials from God’s perspective!
 - We must remember that God is using the trial to mold or conform us into the image of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - “**Count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations**”

- This **does not** mean we will be thrilled or overjoyed that we are going through a trial.
- It **does mean** that we have a deep-rooted confidence that God knows what He is doing and that the end result of our trial will be His Glory and our good.

E. **Example - Israel** – of unbelief and murmuring instead of joy

1. Time after time God gave miraculous delivery or provision, yet every new obstacle seemed to overwhelm them and they murmured against God.

We see an example of this in Numbers 21:4-9:

“And the LORD hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities: and he called the name of the place Hormah. And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. **And the people spake against God, and against Moses**, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.”

2. The Israelites began to think that their circumstances were too great for even God to

handle. God brought sever discipline against Israel because of their unbelief.

D. An **example of joy in great suffering**:

Acts 16:23-31, “And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.”

1. Paul and Silas were in prison, in stock:
 - Their backs were bleeding because they were beaten,
 - Yet they sang praises unto God instead of gripping or feeling sorry for themselves.
2. They were able to have joy in the mist of trial because of their faith in God.
 - As a result, they were miraculously delivered
 - The jailer and his family were saved because God used them.

3. If we are walking by sight, every trial we face will overwhelm us.
4. If we are living by faith every trial is an opportunity for God to strengthen our faith, and glorify Himself in our deliverance.

Romans 8:29, “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

1 Peter 1:7, “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

Conclusions:

- A. First, you are not alone! Every Christian is going to have trials.
- B. When positive trials or testing comes it does not mean that we are out of God’s will – but we are going through a process that God may accomplish something positive in our lives.
- C. We must understand that we are **going to have trials**, they are **going to be of different types**, and they are going to **come** upon us (or encompass us) **suddenly** and without warning.
- D. We have a deep-rooted confidence that God knows what He is doing and that the end result of our trial will be His Glory and our good.
- E. The first step toward being victorious over our trials is remembering that they are going to come upon us.

The Crown of Life

Text: James 1:12

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”

Introduction:

- A. In order to fully understand the “crown of life” we need to study the context before it.
- B. In verses 1 & 2 we see that:
 - 1. We are going to have trials,
 - 2. They are going to be of different types,
 - 3. And, they are going to come suddenly and without warning.
- C. We also said that when these positive trials or testing come it does not mean that we are out of God’s will – but that we are going through a process that God may accomplish something positive in our lives.
- D. Notice that verses 3 is the continuation of verse 2.

Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

I. Divers temptations or testing has a divine purpose:

- A. “Knowing *this*”
 - 1. Note that “*this*” is in italic – that means it was added to give us a better understanding of what is meant.

2. So we can read the verse, “Knowing the trying of your faith worketh patience.”
3. “Knowing” means “to know” or “to understand”
4. Therefore we can say, “Knowing (or understanding) that the trying of your faith worketh patience.”

B. “Trying”

1. The “temptations” spoken of in verse 2 can be **positive** (of God for good) or **negative** (of Satan or the flesh that we sin against God).
2. While the Greek word translated “trying” in verse 3 is **always positive**.
3. It is a testing of our faith that produces something – **“it worketh patience”**

C. “Worketh patience”

1. Patience comes from the Greek word “Hupomona” which means to “a bearing up under”, fortitude, or endurance.

So we could say, **Knowing (or understanding) that the divine trying of your faith produces patience (or endurance).**

2. **The purpose of the “trying” of our faith is to purify our faith, build our endurance that we might be able to withstand the trials that come our way, and perfect our Christian character.**

Why?

Verse 4, “But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

D. Perfect work – that ye may be perfect:

1. The word “perfect” in verse 4 is the Greek word “teleios”:
 - The word does not mean “sinless perfection” as some have tried to make it.
 - In the New Testament “Teleios” is always translated “perfect” and means, “to reach the purpose for which God made it.

Examples:

A man is the “teleios” of a boy – he has matured and reached the purpose of his boyhood.

An Oak tree is the teleios of an acorn – it has matured and fulfilled its purpose.

E. The stress of trials produces maturity and endurance:

1. How are muscles developed? Exercise!
 - When we stress (push and pull and strain our muscles) they are built and matured.
 - In fact, they are sore and hurt for a time.
2. The same is true with our mind and in our spiritual life!

Example:

A man saw a butterfly struggling to get out of the cocoon, so he used a knife and to cut the cocoon and free the butterfly. To his surprise the butterfly feebly tried to fly and fell to the ground and died.

It is the stress and struggle of getting free from its cocoon that gives the butterfly the endurance and stamina to live.

So the divers temptations (or trying) that come in our life are to give us endurance and enable us to bear up under trials, and that we become strong and in the Lord Jesus Christ and fulfill the purpose for which God placed us in this world.

E. Our testing reveals our faith:

“Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:” I Peter 1:6,7

1. God knows if our faith is real and how much faith that we have.
2. Trials reveal our faith to us, as well as those around us by how we respond to the trial.

Trials will purge a Christian of those things that do not glorify God and **teach** us not to confide in the flesh, but to **place our faith and trust in the Lord**, who is always faithful.

In turn we become faithful when our faith is exercised!

II. The Spiritual Resources for our trials:

James 1:5-8, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways.”

- A. Verses 5-8 give three things that are necessary in order to have success in the trials. They are wisdom, prayer, and faith:
- B. “If any of you lack wisdom:”

1. It is important to remember that James is writing to Jews who understood the law and which wisdom James was speaking of:

The Greeks loved knowledge, but knowledge and wisdom are different.

Knowledge is an accumulation of information, while wisdom is the knowing how to use of the information.

- In James 3:13-18 James says that there is a wisdom that is from God, and wisdom that is from that is not of God.
- James is speaking of divine **wisdom that comes from God.**

Proverbs 2:2-6, "So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, *and* apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, *and* liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as *for* hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For **the LORD giveth wisdom**: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding."

2. Wisdom is needed (verse 5):

- We need wisdom in order to know how to go through the trial.
- We need wisdom to enable us to understand the purpose of the trial.
- We need wisdom to learn the lesson of what God is teaching us in the trial.
- We need wisdom to avoid going the wrong direction, or reacting to the trial in the wrong manner.

- We also need wisdom to properly submit to God in the trial in order to receive the intended benefits of the trial.

Recognizing that we need wisdom is the first step in receiving the wisdom that God promises.

C. Verse 6, “let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

1. “Ask of God” What? Wisdom!
2. The Promise – when we ask – “it shall be given him.” God gives wisdom! How? “liberally” or abundantly

Matthew 7:7,8: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

John 15:7, “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”

When we pray in the will of God and ask God for wisdom, He answers our prayer and gives wisdom liberally or in abundance.

3. “To all men” – there is no restriction to nationality, or social status. God gives wisdom to all of His children.

John Newton said:

“Thou art coming to a King:
Large petitions with thee bring;
For His grace and power are such,
None can ever ask too much.”

3. “And upbradeth not”
 - Upbradeth means, “to reprove”

Example:

How many times do we as parents give our children advise, then say something like, “But you ought to have known better.”

- God does not do that.

He never reproveth us reminds us of our unworthiness, or past failures, or rebuke us, but He gives us a generous portion, all that is necessary to endure the trial.

D. Verses 6

“But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways.”

1. “Let him ask in faith”

In Matthew 21:22, our Lord said, “And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, **believing**, ye shall receive.”

“Hebrews 11:6, “But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

When we pray for wisdom we must not doubt God’s ability to do what we ask.

2. “Not wavering” means “never doubting”

“Wavering” is oscillating, or swinging back and forth between two things!

Examples:

Belief and disbelief, trust and distrust, asking in boldness but all of the time not believing God will grant your request

3. James says that a man that “wavers” “is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.”
 - This person is like a cork floating on the waves, headed for shore one moment, and out to sea the next.
 - This person is trying to serve two masters, and not willing to break away from either one.
 - They serve God one moment and are drawn to the world the next.

E. Verse 7:

“For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.”

1. This verse says that a “wavering” person will not receive wisdom or anything from the Lord.

A wavering person dishonors and insults God by doubting the truth of His Word and treating Him as if He cannot be trusted.

2. But Faith opens the storehouse of God’s blessing!

F. Verse 8:

“A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways.”

1. Verse 8 continues the description of the wavering man.
2. Double minded literally means – “double souled”
3. It refers to a person who is drawn in two directions.

4. One moment he desires to do good and the next he does evil.

This person is like “Mr. Facing-both-directions” in Bunyan’s Pilgrims Progress.

Example:

This person attends church on Sunday, but enjoys telling smutty jokes to the guys. He reads and prays with the family and curses like a sailor on the job. He knows what is right, but tends to do wrong.

Our Lord said, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” Or the world.

We must be single minded. We must set our heart on God and do those things that are pleasing to Him, and forsake those things that draw us to the world and the lust of the flesh.

G. Verses 9-11:

“Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.”

1. Don’t be jealous of other people’s possessions, because they are temporal and will perish.
2. The world would have us believe that happiness comes from having possessions.

That is **not true!**

Nehemiah said, “the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

James says, “be content, be happy, where you are at!”

H. Verse 12: **Our Hope!**

“Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”

1. Christians can have joy even in trials because they are evidence of their sonship, and because of the presence of the Lord during them.
2. From trials God’s children learn lessons of faith, patience, humility, and the will of God.
3. Through trials the Christian is made pure and holy, like gold purified by the fires of the furnace.
4. The rewards: Real happiness, Eternal happiness - a crown of life.
5. Note: To be approved of God is the great aim of a Christian in all his trials; and in so doing he shall receive the crown of life.
6. The tried Christian shall be a crowned one: and the crown he shall wear will be a crown of eternal life.
 - **We only bear the cross for a while, but we shall wear the crown to eternity.**
 - The crown of life is promised not only to great and famous saints, but to all those who have the love of God reigning in their hearts.
 - Every person that truly loves the Lord shall have all the trials of this world fully compensated in the eternal world above where love is made perfect.

How to have Victory over Temptations

Text: James 1:13-16

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren.”

Introduction:

- A. In the first message I said that temptations can be either positive or negative:
- B. The second message dealt with the purpose of trials.
- C. In verses 13-18, James deals with the negative temptations that were spoken of.
 1. The positive temptations, or the “trying of your faith” are outward trials that serve to test or prove one’s character, faith, holiness that we grow spiritually.
 2. The temptations James speaks about in verses 13-18 are negative. They are inward enticements (or seductions) brought forth by Satan to cause us to sin, or do evil.

Example: Job 1:8,11; 2:3b

“And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But

put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.”

Verse 3, “And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, **to destroy him without cause.**”

Temptations are designed to destroy us “without cause” and eventually result in death.

D. In order to have victory of temptations we must:

1. Understand that it is not a trying but a temptation.
2. Understand the source of temptations.
3. Learn how to avoid falling when temptations come.
4. It is only through the power of the Lord that we can have victory over temptations.

A Story:

Toad baked some cookies. "These cookies smell very good," so Toad ate one. "And they taste even better."

Toad ran to Frog's house. "Frog, Frog," cried Toad, "taste these cookies that I have made."

Frog ate one of the cookies, "These are the best cookies I have ever eaten!" said Frog.

Frog and Toad ate many cookies, one after another. "You know, Toad," said Frog, with his mouth full, "I think we should stop eating these cookies are we are going to be sick."

"You are right," said Toad. "Let's eat one last cookie, and then we will stop."

Frog and Toad ate one last cookie. But there were many cookies left in the cookie jar.

"Frog," said Toad, "let's eat one very last cookie, and then we will stop." Frog and Toad ate one very last cookie.

"We must stop eating!" cried Toad as he ate another. "Yes," said Frog, reaching for a cookie, "we need willpower."

"What is willpower?" asked Toad. "Willpower is trying hard not to do something you really want to do," said Frog. "You mean like trying hard not to eat all these cookies?" asked Toad. "Right," said Frog.

Frog put the cookies in a box. "There," he said. "Now we will not eat any more cookies." "But we can open the box," said Toad. "That is true," said Frog.

So Frog tied some string around the box. "There," he said. "Now we will not eat any more cookies." "But we can cut the string and open the box," said Toad.

"That is true," said Frog. Frog got a ladder. He put the box up on a high shelf. "There," said Frog. "Now we will not eat any more cookies."

"But we can climb the ladder and take the box down from the shelf and cut the string and open the box," said Toad. "That is true," said Frog.

Frog climbed the ladder and took the box down from the shelf. He cut the string and opened the box. Frog took the box outside. He shouted in a loud voice. "Hey, birds, here are some cookies for you!" Birds came from everywhere. They picked up all the cookies in their beaks and flew away.

"Now we don't have any more cookies to eat," said Toad sadly. "Yes," said Frog, "but we have lots and lots of willpower."

"You may keep it all, Frog," said Toad. "I am going home now. I have to bake a cake."

Frog had problems saying “no” when he was tempted. Sometimes you and I have the same problem.

I. Verse 13:

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:”

- A. **“When”** – the verse does not say **“if”** but **“when”** temptations come:
 - 1. Temptations can be **abstract** – fame, power, material possessions.
 - 2. Or they can be **sensual** and come in many forms.

Temptations are going to come, and they are going to come on a daily basis! Temptations are an ongoing war in the Christians life.

What is the source of our temptation?

- B. Verse 13 clearly reveals that God is not the source of temptations:

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:”

God is in no way responsible for the evil that we do!

- 1. Because of **God’s nature** He cannot be tempted with evil:

- God is completely sufficient in Himself:

Temptation appeals to our desires or cravings, and hold out the promise to satisfy them.

God, on the other hand, has no needs to be supplied; His happiness is complete and absolute.

- Most importantly is God's holiness:

God is perfect in His holiness and cannot be moved by any inducement to do wrong. Therefore, He is never tempted to do anything evil.

2. God never brings a test into someone's life with the purpose of enticing him or her to do evil.
3. People offer **many excuses** for their sin:

- **First**, Why did God let Adam sin?

Couldn't God have made Adam so that he did not sin?
Yes, Omnipotent God can do anything!

God wanted a creature that could serve Him because he loved Him rather than because he could not do otherwise. God wanted to have fellowship with man, and One cannot have fellowship with a robot.

- Others blame their environment:

Well, if I hadn't been born in this particular place, or under these circumstances, I would be able to overcome the sin that plagues my life.

Examples:

I was deprived as a child. --- All of my family is this way.

Sin comes from the heart, not from one's environment!

In a different environment, the individual would still have the same corrupt heart apart from a right relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

C. Verse 14 reveals the source of our sin:

“But every man is tempted, **when he is drawn away of **his own lust**, and enticed.”**

1. “When he” – **that is you and I**
2. James further declares that the temptation to do evil comes “his own lust” or from elements rooted in man’s heart.

D. We cannot blame Satan.

He can entice us to Sin! But he can’t make us sin.

E. The analogy used in verse 14:

1. The words “drawn away”, means to lure forth.
2. The word “enticed” means “to catch by baiting” or ensnare.
3. The comparison:

The imagery is that of a fish swimming in a straight line and being drawn off course toward something that seems attractive (bait) only to find that the bait has a deadly hook in it.

Then James says that which lures and ensnares man is “his own lust.”

Satan puts the forth the temptation (the bait on the hook), but we make the decision to bite or not bite the hook (sin).

4. God promises the victory by providing a way of escape.

1 Corinthians 10:13, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

F. When we abide in Christ, we have the power to overcome temptations that are brought before us!

II. Verses 14 & 15 – The process or steps of temptation:

“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

The three steps of temptation:

A. The First Step has two parts: Lust and Enticement:

1. “Lust” means “to desire.”
2. In verse 14 “lust” means to seduce (put the bait on the hook).

Example: “Baiting”

Not too long ago I was watching the “Jaws” marathon (for the hump tenth) and they were trawling along baiting the big shark.

Fishers bait all the time. Baiting is when the boat trawling along very slow casting out bait until the fish begin to follow the boat and eat the bait that is being cast overboard. Once the fish are doing that the fishermen bait a hook and cast out their lines. Because of their “lust” or the desire for another free meal the fish grab the baited hooked.

3. **Lust or desire is Satan baiting the hook. It is a visual desire or bait.**

4. The second part of the first step: “Enticed”
- **“Enticed” means to be “baited” or mentally drawn to that which was visible desired.**
 - **When the visual and mental join (you see it in your mind) you are drawn to it. Then you become emotionally consumed to have it.**
 - Concerning temptations, the German Theologian, Dietrich Bonhoffer said, “The moment that visual desire consumes us, our joy in the Lord is rooted out, and the only thing that we seek is self gratification. At that moment God does not seem real to us and we loose all consciousness of reality. We desire only personal gratification.
 - It is not that Satan fills us with hate for God. We simply forget God because we are following the bait to the point that we forget who we are and what God wants for us. We are visually and mentally enticed to have something that we in all reality should not have.”

Satan’s strategy is to tempt us with a visual desire so strong that we will disobey God.

B. The second step of temptation – **Disobedience:**

“Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

1. James uses the concept of childbirth to explain how lustful desires become sin.
2. James says that a person’s lust, like a harlot entices, seduces, or tempts them.

3. Then when they surrender their will to lust, (temptation) and disobedience unite – then conception takes place, and lust gives birth to sin.

Remember lust or temptation is the visible seduction and mental enticement.

Alexander Ross said, “The mere fact of our being tempted does not involve in itself anything sinful. It is when the desire of man goes out to meet and embrace the forbidden thing and an unholy marriage takes place between these two, that sin is born.”

Example:

The fish sees the bait in the water (that is not sin)

Although looking at the bait can get you in trouble. A man and his wife were shopping at a mall booth, when a shapely young woman in a short, form-fitting dress strolled by. His eyes followed her. Without looking up from the item his wife was looking at, his wife asked, "Was it worth the trouble you're in?"

**The fish sees the bait in the water (that is not sin).
The fish sees the bait and wants it (still not sin)**

Thought: We are not tempted if the bait doesn't look good enough to make us want it.

Example: artichokes or pecan pie

Lust or temptation becomes sin when the fish take the bait. It becomes sin (sin is conceived) when our lust makes us disobey God's statutes.

C. The third step of temptation – **Death:**

1. “And sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

Remember the crown of life in verse 12? It is received in heaven and symbolizes our victory over trials and testing.

Every time we are victorious, we become a stronger Christian. However, the opposite is true in temptations.

2. The end result of temptation is death.

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Romans 5:12

Examples:

Adam and Eve – Adam desired the fruit, then he took it, which resulted in sin, and sin produced death. The spiritual death was immediate and physical death eventually came.

David saw, lusted, and sinned and death resulted. Uriah, then the son brought forth from his union with Bathsheba.

3. Notice the gradual steps, in which sin proceeds:

Every time we “take the bait” we disregard God a little more (sin becomes easier) and death enters a little more.

4. Understand the consequences of sin:

Satan makes sin pretty, but the end result is disobedience to our Lord, and death.

Every time we resist temptation we have victory, but when we constantly yield to temptation, sin will destroy us.

III. How do we have victory over our temptations?

Psalm 119:173-176, "Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts. I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD; and thy law is my delight. Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee; and let thy judgments help me. **I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant;** for I do not forget thy commandments."

James 4:7, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

2 Timothy 2:22, "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

- A. Years ago "Doc Campbell" a character on the TV show "Hee Haw" gave one of his patients some advice that will help you and I.

Doc Campbell is consulting with a patient who says he broke his arm in two places. The doc responds, "Well then, stay out of them places!"

That is good advice for temptation! We cannot regularly put ourselves in the face of temptation and not be affected. When faced with the problem of temptation, we need to take the good doctor's advice and "stay out of them places."

Psalm 139:23,24, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and **lead me** in the way everlasting."

- B. We cannot do battle with Satan in our own strength we must ask the Lord to strengthen us and lead us in our daily walk.

Fanny Crosby expressed our need to depend on God's leading in her poem entitled "Hold Thou My Hand."

Hold, Thou my hand, so weak I am, and helpless,
I dare not take one step without Thy aid;
Hold Thou my hand; for then, O loving Saviour,

No dread of ill shall make my soul afraid.

Hold Thou my hand, and closer, closer draw me
To Thy dear self – my hope, my joy, my all;
Hold Thou my hand, lest haply I should wander,
And miss Thee, my trembling feet shall fall.

Hold Thou my hand; the way is dark before me
Without the sunlight of Thy face divine;
But when by faith I catch its radiant glory,
What heights of joy, what rapturous songs are mine!

Conclusions:

A. We will be tempted – don't take the bait!

“Stay out of them places!”

B. Know the power of Satan – and ask the Lord to lead and give you strength and victory.

C. **All that is good comes from God, why would be look anywhere else.**

Begotten by the Word

Text: James 1:16-21

“Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”

Introduction:

- A. In verses 1-12, James dealt with God trying us to prove our faith and bring about spiritual maturity.
 - B. In verses 13-15, James deals with temptations to do evil or sin.
1. James says that temptations to sin are not from God, but come from within and from our own lust.
- C. Verse 16 is a warning, “Do not err, my beloved brethren.”
 - 1. The Greek word translated “err” means to go astray or go off course.
 - 2. It was used to describe a ship that had been blown of course and was in serious danger.
 - 3. James is warning the brethren not to err or make a serious mistake in judgment that could have terrible results.
 - D. **Question:** What was he warning them not to err about?

1. Do not err and accuse God of being the author of sin or of any thing that is evil.
2. To falsely charge that God tempts man to do evil is a very great error and attacks the nature, character, holiness, and being of God.
3. It is heresy, and brings swift judgment and destruction upon man.

E. After this stern warning James proceeds to the next topic:

I. Verse 17:

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

A. In verse 17, James further stresses that God never gives us anything that is not for our good.

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above...”

B. In verse 17, James uses two different Greek words that are both translated “gift”

1. “Good gift” comes from the Greek word “dosis” and emphasizes “the act of giving.”
2. “Perfect gift” is from a different Greek word “dorema” that emphasizes the gift itself.
 - Note that James did not say every “great gift” but every “good gift”.
 - Every gift, whether large or small, whether physical or spiritual, anything and everything that God gives us is good.

- But I personally believe that James is speaking of gifts that are not obtained by our merit, but purely by God's grace!
3. The Gifts of God's Grace are "perfect."
 4. Some of God's perfect gifts are: salvation, righteousness, the remission of sins, adoption, regeneration, and eternal life, the Word of God, The Holy Spirit, God's peace.

We will speak about these momentarily, but first the **next part of verse 17**:

C. "And cometh down from the Father of lights."

God is the author of all lights:

1. He created the visible lights; the sun, the moon, and the heavenly bodies.
2. Light was the first gift given to the physical world.

"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

3. Light was also God's first gift to the spiritual realm.

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." John 3:19

4. In the Scripture light is an emblem of knowledge, purity, happiness.

John 1:5 says, "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

5. Therefore John urges believers to walk in the light!

“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

When we walk in light, God reveals our sin. When we confess our sin, God forgives us and we can claim forgiveness.

6. Revelation 22:5 tells believers that they will bask in the light of God’s glory for all eternity.
- D. Not the last phrase of verse 17, “With whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”
1. James uses the astronomical phenomena of the variation of brilliance of the stars, the changing phases of the moon, and the rising and setting of the sun.
 2. Because of atmospheric conditions and the rotation of the earth, the sun, moon, and stars seem to change, but in reality they do not.
 3. James is illustrating the truth that “God does not change!

“God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”
Numbers 23:19

4. God’s character, His mode of being, His purpose, or His plans never change. He is **immutable!**

II. Verse 18:

“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”

- A. Some scholars claim that the book of James does not contain the Gospel. **This verse disproves that claim.**
- B. “Of His own will:
 1. Of his own will—shows that it is God’s essential nature to do good, not evil.

One of God’s good and perfect gifts is regeneration.

2. This is the first gift of grace God bestows upon His people.
3. Regeneration makes the recipient ready for the gift of eternal life. Which is a both a "good gift" and a "perfect gift."
4. Regeneration is an instantaneous act.
 - Regeneration is not a progressive act, as is sanctification.
 - A person is born again instantly, and is born a perfect new man in all aspects. No one is more regenerated than another, nor is the same person more regenerated at one time than at another.
5. Regeneration is the implantation of new principles of light and life, grace and holiness, in a person.
6. It is a quickening of one who was dead in trespasses and sins and a forming of Christ in their souls. It makes them partakers of the divine nature. It is an act of God and not man.

“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

7. John 1:13 clearly teaches that this is an act of God, and His alone.
8. The cause of regeneration is “his own will.”
9. God does not regenerate by external causes, but of His own free choice, and because it is His sovereign will and pleasure to do so.

Ephesians 1:11, “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after **the counsel of his own will:**”

C. “Begot he us with the word of truth.”

Can a person be saved apart from the Word of God?

C.D. Cole said, “The gospel saves believers, but it has no power to make believers. The preaching of the gospel is the means of making believers, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” We repeat, that the preaching of the gospel is the necessary means to faith, for “how shall the believe in him of whom they have not heard?” If sinners are saved, the gospel must be preached to them as the means to faith and resultant salvation. However, there is a difference between means to faith and the power for faith. The power to make believers is in the effectual call of the Holy Spirit.”

Examples:

Romans 1:15-17, “So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”

1. The apostle Paul preached Christ indiscriminately to the Jew (the natural Jew found it a stumbling block), and to the Greek (who saw it as foolishness), but the called of both the Jew and Greek, by faith, saw the power of God unto salvation.

Acts 16:14, “And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.”

2. Lydia heard Paul preach, the Lord opened her heart, then she heeded the things that were spoken.

The “things spoken” was the Gospel, the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. James say, the Father choose us “of His own will” before the foundation of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ died on Calvary to redeem His sheep, and we are effectually called and “born again” of the Holy Spirit, but not without the use of the means, the Word of God.
4. The word is not the begetting principle itself, but only that by which it works: the vehicle of the mysterious germinating power.

Ephesians 1:13, “In whom ye also trusted, **after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel** of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,”

1 Peter 1:23, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, **by the word of God**, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

D. Verse 18b, “That we should **be a kind** of firstfruits of his creatures.”

1. Note the words “be a kind”

- The first-fruit offering was the first portion of all that the Lord gave His people.

Deuteronomy 18:4, “The firstfruit also of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give him.”

- The first-fruit gives God the Priority of Claim:
 - E. We should be a kind of first fruits, God’s portion, a treasure, a peculiar property to Him, as the first fruits were.
 - F. We should be separated from the world, and consecrated to God, because of the grace of God.
 - G. We are also to be devoted to the service of God, and to his praise, honor, and glory.

Conclusions:

- A. In conclusion let us remember that temptations to sin are not from God, Satan sets the bait, but come from within and from our own lust.
- B. Remember the warning of verse 16, “Do not err, my beloved brethren.”
 1. Do not err by accuse God of being the author of sin or of anything that is evil.
 2. Be quick to remember verse 17 where James stresses that God never gives us anything that is not for our good.
 3. That, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.”
 4. One of God’s good and perfect gifts is regeneration – the bestowing of Grace that we might repent and have faith to believe unto salvation.

- C. Because God bestowed His grace we should be separated from the world, and consecrated to God, because of the grace of God.
- D. Likewise we are to be devoted His service, His praise, honor, and glory.
- E. Give God the first-fruit of your live!

The Role of the Word of God in the life of a Christian

Text: James 1:19-27

“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”

Introduction:

A. In the first chapter of James, James teaches us how we can grow spiritually and mature in the Lord in three ways:

1. First, through trying and testing.

1 Peter 1:7, “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:”

2. Secondly through temptations.

Every time we say “no” and overcoming a temptation we mature spiritually through the grace and power of God.

3. Thirdly – our topic today – When we hear, and apply the Word of God in our lives we grow spiritually and mature in Christ.
4. James uses three figures to describe the Word of God.
 - It is like a seed planted in the heart – verse 21,
 - A mirror into which one looks – verse 24,
 - And a law by which one’s life is guided – verse 25.
5. We also find three imperative verbs that reveal the demands of God’s Word upon the believer.
 - First, **hearing** the Word of God – verses 19,20,
 - Secondly, the **receiving** the Word – verse 21,
 - Thirdly, the **doing** the Word – verses 22-27.

B. The theme or key verse of today’s message is found in verse 22.

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”

1. In verse 22 we find the most committed sin in all Christianity today.
2. Most Christians receive (through S.S. lessons, preaching, etc.) the Word of God, but do not apply it in their lives. (Sad but true statement)
3. A survey was made among Christian young people:

- 8 out of 9 said that a sexual relationship outside of marriage was bad and not morally acceptable. **(To which I say AMEN!)**
- They have been taught well and know the correct answer!
- But **sadly** only 2 out of 9 said that they had not had a sexual relationship.
- This survey concluded that **what we know** and **what we do** are **not the same!**

C. In verse 22, James says that it is possible for you and I to be hearers of the Word and not doers of the Word.

Dealing with this issue Dr. A.W. Tozer wrote, "There is an evil which in its effect on the Christians religion may be more destructive that that of communism and liberalism. It is the glaring disparity between theology and practice among professing Christians. So wide is this gulf, that separates theory from practice, in the church, that an inquiring stranger, who chanches upon both, would scarcely dream that there was any relation between the two of them. An intelligent observer of our human scene, would heard the Sunday morning message and later watched the Sunday afternoon conduct of those who heard it would conclude that he was examining two distinct and contrary religions. It appears to me that too many Christians want to enjoy the herald-di-fillic right (right of association) but are not willing to endure the inconvenience of being right. The divorce between theory and practice become permanent in the Christian community. Truth sits forsaken and grieved until her professed followers come home for a brief visit, but then she sees them depart again when the bills come due."

1. **You and I need to hear and this message and apply it in our lives.**

2. James gives us **three things that must happen** if we are going to mature and grow from the Word of God:

I. Develop an attentive heart - Verses 19-21:

A. Verse 19:

“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:”

1. “Wherefore” – implies a connection between that just previously spoken and that about to be spoken.

Those who have been regenerated by the Word (verse 18) are to conduct themselves according the instructions found in verses 19-27.

2. “Swift to hear” – there should be an eagerness to listen to and comprehend the Word of God.

I Thessalonians 2:13, “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”

- Some people hear the Word of God but it is only “words” and it has no effect in their lives.
 - Others received the Word of God as truth, from the Father of lights who cannot lie, and it had immediate effectual results in their lives.
3. “Slow to speak” – **shows a reverent attention** as the Word of God is being presented.
 - Sometimes a person is so eager to be the teacher that they do not have time to be the student.

Example:

When two people debate a theological question, they hear very little of what the other is saying, nor are the questions ask by either side answered. Why? Because they were not heard because the other is so busy mentally preparing their next statement and waiting for the other person to pause so they can inject their ideas. And they continue usually getting louder and interrupting the other more often, until at last a stalemate is called. The purpose of the debate was not to gain knowledge, but an opportunity to express their view. Therefore, a debate usually has little influence in changing either's opinion.

- If we were as willing to hear or listen as we want others to be when we talk our lessons and sermons would be much more effective.

Thought:

This can be equally applied to talking in our mind as well as out loud.

Example:

Something is said, and we start thinking about that and miss the remainder of what is said in the lesson or message, which may have been something we really needed to hear, but we allowed Satan to distract us.

We need to have attentive ears so that we may hear what God is saying to us.

Example:

Jesus teaching the Sadducees and Pharisees – Have you not heard – they knew the law by memory – you know what is right, but you are not living it.

4. “Slow to wrath”

- Not only are we to guard against a quick tongue, we are to guard against angering quickly.

“A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.” Proverbs 15:1

Ephesians 6:4 says, “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

- I think we can justly say, provoke not your spouse to wrath, or your co-worker, or neighbor, etc.

B. Verse 20:

“For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

1. If we want others to see Christ in us, by God’s grace and through His power we must overcome anger and wrath.
2. Wrath and anger are characteristics of the works of the flesh, while love and self-control are characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit.

If we want to learn from the Word of God, we must have a calm spirit.

C. Verse 21:

“Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”

In order to learn from the Word we must also have a clean heart:

1. The condition for us to receive the Word of God is that we “Lay apart all filthiness and superfluity

of naughtiness,” which means, “an overflowing of wickedness”

If we are to receive the Word of God we must strip off and casting aside like a dirty garment all that is impure in the sight of God.

2. “And receive with meekness”

In order to learn from the Word we must also have a Teachable heart.

The attentive heart hears what God is saying; the teachable heart prepares to do what God says.

- Meekness – is an attitude of humility
- Humility means to subject yourself quietly to God, being open to correction.
- The humble Christian says, speak to me through your Word, and correct me, and there will be no defensiveness on my part.

Example: It is like a boxer dropping his guard.

3. “And receive with meekness the engrafted word”

- Not only must we have a meek, humble heart we must have an attitude of hospitality.
- “Receive” means “to give ear” or “to be hospitable” “to accept.”
- We are hospitable (like we would receive a guest) to the Word of God.
- We receive ALL the Word of God, the part we like and the part we don’t like.

Example:

Children with food – “picky eaters starve” and do not get the full benefit of a balanced meal.

- D. In order to grow from the Word of God we must 1st submit to the Lord, secondly, we must receive the Word of God, ALL of the Word – the part we like and the part that reveals sins and shortcomings that require us to change. And 3rd we should do it with joy.

II. In order to grow from the Word of God we must also have an obedient heart – Verses 22-27:

Verses 22 through 27 are the heart of the book of book.

In these verses we find a command – verse 22, an illustration – verses 23,24, and the application – verses 26,27.

A. Verse 22:

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”

1. Verse 22 is a command!
2. It is also an extension of what has already been said concerning hearing and doing.
3. “Be ye” literally means “become ye” or “show yourself to be.”
 - The tense of the Greek word means, “keep on becoming” or “keep on showing yourself to be.”
 - A Christian that responds to the demands of God’s Word only once in a while, is not a real doer.

4. The Greek word for “doer” is used four times in the book of James (1:22,23,25; 4:11) and in Romans 2:13.
 - In every place but Acts to be a “doer” of the Word is to submit to its authority and comply with its requirements.
5. “And not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”

Here James warns about being a “hearer only.”

If we are doers of the Word we will not be “hearers only.”

- The word “hearer” is found only in verses 22, 23, 25, and Romans 2:13.
 - In ancient times it was used for an attendant at lectures. “Hearers” often being distinguished from those who were real disciples or learners.
6. James says a person that thinks it sufficient to be a hearer only is deceiving himself or herself.
 - Some Christians hear the Word, but change does not result. Being a doer of the Word makes a difference in your life.
 - I often say it this way, “ you cannot stay were you are, how you are.”

B. Verses 23,24:

“For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.”

1. It is very clear that the mirror represents the Word of God.

2. People, who are hearers, see themselves in the mirror and forget what they see. **(Or the Word of God has little or no influence on them).**
3. But a Christian who is a hearer and a doer sees themselves in the mirror and says, “oh me” and does something to change whatever is wrong!

When we look into the Word of God we are see our weaknesses, our failures, and our sin. We see ourselves according to God’s righteous standard (His Word) and we do something to fix what is wrong, so that we look good before our Lord.

C. Verses 25:

“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”

1. Verses 22-24 speak of those who do not act upon the Word of God (hearers only).
2. Verse 25 deals with those who act upon the Word of God (hearers and doers).
3. “The perfect law of liberty”

Question:

Does the perfect law of liberty mean that we are liberated from the law, and can do as we please? Does it give us a license to live in sin?

Example:

While researching the survey on teens and sex outside marriage one of the people surveyed said:

“I was always told to stay away from it at all costs. They told me I could get a girl pregnant, but I knew about birth control. They told me I could get diseased, but I knew condoms could protect me from such diseases. They told

me it was a sin against God, but I knew I wasn't perfect and God forgives all sins equally.”

- This is the thinking of those who say that perfect law of liberty mean that we are liberated from the law, and can do as we please.
- James does not saying that we have a license to sin!
- **True freedom is found only in the Lord Jesus Christ!!**

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” John 8:32, 36

- Christ set His people free from eternal death that results from sin, and put us at liberty to both will and do His good pleasure.
 - Seeing ourselves in the mirror of God's Word should change our “wanter.” We should want to do those things that are pleasing to God.
4. “This man shall be blessed in his deed.”
- Blessed is the same word used in the Beatitudes and means “happy”
 - **True happiness, in the scriptural sense comes from putting what the Word of God says into practice in our everyday lives.**

D. Verses 26:

“If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.”

1. Verse 26 will be dealt with in detail in another message. However, a person can pay close attention to every detail of the walk, and if they do not bridle (control) the tongue, one wrong word, one angry word, can void all actions and testimony.

“Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.” Psalm 141:3

E. Verse 27:

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”

1. Faith in Christ results in pure religion or a “true love” for others.
2. James was convinced that true Christianity would produce service that is glorifying to God and helpful to others. He spoke of bridling the tongue, visiting the fatherless and widows and keeping ourselves pure in a perverse world.

Conclusions:

- A. Is God’s Word changing your life?
Are you a hearer or a hearer and doer?
- B. God’s Word is real and like a mirror it shows you where change is needed in your life.
- C. Is God’s Word changing you day by day?
- D. Is your faith (the gift of God unto salvation) showing in your pure religion?
- E. James never said that works save you. He said that if you are saved – you will have pure religion and others will see Christ in you and He will be glorified by you.

The Character of Faith, or Faith Manifested

Text: James 2:1-13

“My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.”

Introduction:

- A. Many scholars say that James is an exposition of practical religion, and that its primary focus is Christian conduct not creed, behavior not belief, deeds instead of doctrine.
- B. Likewise, these same scholars say that there is no gospel in the book of James.

1. However, that is not true!
 2. In reality James contains many theological concepts.
- C. For example, in chapter two, the doctrine of faith is presented as the fundamental element in Christian character and conduct.
1. The word “faith” is found in the book of James very frequently.
 2. Only the books of Romans, Galatians, I Timothy and Hebrews have more occurrences of the word “faith.”
 3. It is also interesting that only six books use the verb for “believe” more often than the book of James.
 4. James speaks of:
 - Testing of faith (1:3),
 - The prayer of faith (5:15, cf. 1:6),
 - The works of faith (2:18,22),
 - The perfection of faith (2:22),
 - Being rich in faith (2:5),
 - Dead faith (2:17,26),
 - And idle faith (2:20).
- D. Faith as seen in James chapter 2:
1. Faith centers in the Lord Jesus Christ (1a).
 2. Faith transcends social distinctions (1b-13).
 3. Faith is expressed in obedient deeds (14-26)

E. This message deals with verses 1 - 13.

F. An outline for verses 1-13:

1. Faith centers in the Lord Jesus Christ (1a)
2. Faith transcends social distinctions (1-13):
 - Partiality is inconsistent with faith in Christ (1-4).
 - Partiality is contrary to the purpose of God (5,6)
 - Partiality is not in the best interest of the Christian (6,7)
 - Partiality is a violation of the royal law (8-13)

I. Verse 1:

“My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.”

- A. James identifies to whom he is speaking - “**my brethren.**” (Believers - those who have faith in the Lord).
- B. “The Lord of glory” is a title for the Lord Jesus Christ.
 1. Note that “the Lord” is in italic meaning that it was placed there for clarification.
 2. By omitting them “glory” becomes a descriptive modifier and it could be said, “our Lord Jesus Christ who is the glory.”
 3. James may have been making reference to the word “Shekinah” (a word frequently found in rabbinic literature but never found in the Bible).

4. We have heard the term “Shekinah glory”, which means the glorious manifestation of the presence of God to His people.
5. James says that the Lord Jesus Christ is the “shekinah” or glorious manifestation of the presence of God among His people.
6. The title “the Lord of glory” is found in only one other place in the Bible – I Corinthians 2:8.
7. However, Hebrews 1:3, John 1:14, and Luke 2:30-32 express the same idea.

II. Verses 2- 4 – Faith exceeds all social distinctions (differences):

“For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?”

A. Partiality is inconsistent with faith in Christ:

1. “For if there come unto your assembly”
2. The **specific place** mentioned is **the assembly** (the church). Thus this **is dealing with partiality among Christians.**
 - These verses very clearly teach that a believer is not to prejudice or show partiality between other Christians.
 - To do so is sin!
 - The Apostle Paul said the same thing in Galatians 3:38:

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

B. The principle illustrated – verses 2-4:

1. James illustrates by saying, two men come to the church. One is “a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and the second is a “poor man in vile raiment.”
2. The well-dressed influential man (symbolized by the ring) receives respect and special attention, while the poor person is ignored, neglected and sometimes treated badly.
3. The phrase “respect of persons” is also found in Romans 2:11, Ephesians 6:9, and Colossians 3:25.
4. In each place it asserts that there is no respect of persons with God.

Thought:

I wonder how many churches would shun the Lord Jesus Christ, the king of kings, and Lord of Lords, because of the way He was dressed? **The religious crowd of his day did!**

Example:

Youth activity – group gathering to hear a man they greatly respect and honor – they arrive to find a vagrant lying outside – everyone ignores him, makes remarks about him and to him. When everyone is seated the speaker is introduced. There is silence then the vagrant walked in from the back. To everyone’s surprise the person they were so disrespectful of was the speaker in disguise.

- C. James says that it is wrong to judge a person on outward appearance. He also says that this type of

attitude is incompatible with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and it is sin!

III. Verses 5-7 – Partiality is contrary to the purpose of God:

A. The poor are special objects of God in two ways:

“Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor.”

B. Therefore, to show partiality against them is an offense against God!

C. First, they are chosen of God:

1. This **does not mean** that God has chosen **only** the poor, or that **all** poor are chosen, nor does it mean that no rich are chosen.

- God is not a respecter of persons and chose whomsoever He wills.
- Is not every person in the place they are in by the providence of God?

2. But (humanly speaking) as a rule the poor are more open to the Gospel. Because the gospel offers so much to the poor and demands so much of the rich.

3. The poor become so very rich in Christ whereas the rich (as the world considers them) must realize that their riches cannot obtain eternal life for them, and therefore must humble themselves to receive salvation as a gift of God.

4. It is exceedingly hard for many rich people to humble themselves to this extent. While the poor rejoice in such an exceedingly great gift.

5. **An Example:** The rich young ruler

Luke 18:18-30, “And a certain ruler asked him, saying, **Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?** And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother. And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up. Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. **And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.** And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, **How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.** And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved? And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.”

- The rich young ruler was not willing to admit that his riches would not help him in the matter of salvation.
- The Lord was saying, if you want salvation you must understand that your wealth is useless and riches cannot help you, and humble yourself and come as a total depraved sinner seeking God’s forgiveness and His gift of eternal life.
- Becoming spiritually rich is far more important than becoming financially wealthy!

D. Secondly they are “rich in faith” and “heirs of the kingdom

1. Men are chosen, not because they believe, but that they might believe. Therefore, faith is the results of election and is a gift of grace.

2. Faith is more precious than gold and silver and is the means by which we receive all spiritual blessings.
3. Some of the riches we receive are the robe of his righteousness, full pardon of sin, adoption, which makes us heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, and heirs of the messianic kingdom and all the promise pertaining to it.

Since all these things are received by faith, believers are truly rich people.

E. Partiality **is not** in the best interest of Christians:

“But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?”

1. Oppress – James ask is it not the rich people that exploit you, grind you down, dominate you, and aggressively act against you.
2. Do they not take you to court at every opportunity?

F. Verse 7: “Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?”

1. These people are either unbelieving rich men who blasphemed and cursed the name of Christ, and forced others to do likewise.
2. Or professors of the Christianity, who through disgraceful treatment of their poor brethren, or by dragging them into the courts of the Heathens caused the name of Christ to be blasphemed and evil spoken of among unbelievers.
3. James is saying it is ridiculous to be partial to the rich, because they are the very people that oppress the poor, treat you with great violence,

and take advantage of you to accomplish their own ends.

IV. Partiality is a violation of the royal law – Verses 8-13:

If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

A. Verse 8 – “If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture”

B. What is the royal law?

1. The royal law is the law of love, it commands us to love men, without distinction, rich and poor, bond and free.
2. It is called the royal law, because it is the law of the King of kings given in Matthew 22:37-39

“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. **And the second** is like unto it, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**”

3. **The first commandment deals with our love for God; the second, the royal law, is fulfilled when we love our fellowman as we love ourselves.**

C. Verses 9 -11:

“But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.”

1. Showing partiality violates the grace of God and the Word of God.
2. The seriousness is seen in verse 9 - “**ye commit sin.**”
3. If the law is broken by showing "respect of persons, then the " the whole law is broken. A person that willfully breaks one command is a lawbreaker and is guilty before the whole law.

D. Verse 12:

“So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.”

1. James directs Christians to live their lives by the law of liberty, because we will be judged by the law of liberty.
2. We talked about the law of liberty in James 1:25
 - The law of liberty is the Gospel law of love. It is not a law of external constraint.
 - The law of liberty, through God’s mercy, frees us from the curse of the law, that we should love and obey God willingly.

D. Verse 13:

“For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.”

1. Verse 12 says that we shall all be judged by the law of liberty.

2. II Corinthians 5:10 speaks of this judgment also:

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

3. Verse 13 says that we shall all stand before Christ to be evaluated for the way we have honored Him in our daily lives.
4. That is why he said, “so speak and so act, as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy. But let us remember that “blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”

Conclusions:

- A. The Book of James teaches us doctrine, then how to apply it in our Christian walk.
- B. James tells us that we must have faith and that faith in Christ is demonstrated in the our manner of life and conduct.
- C. Don't show partiality – All Christians are our brothers and sister in Christ and to be treated equally.
- D. Love others as yourself – In doing so we show the love of Christ.
- E. Be merciful that you may be shown mercy.

Faith Demonstrated

Text: James 2:14-26

Introduction:

A. James 2:14-26:

“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”

B. Romans 4:1-5:

“What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on

him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

C. Galatians 2:16:

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”

The oldest supposed contradiction in the Bible found in the verses that I have just read.

Some are confused by the two writings and say that Paul says that we are justified by faith and James says that we are justified by works. But it cannot be both!

Example:

Martin Luther was climbing the steps to St. John’s Church in Rome, on his knees, practicing good works that he might be acceptable to God. On the way up the steps Romans 1:17 struck his heart like a lightning bolt from heaven. He arose, went home, and nailed his 95 thesis on the church door at Wittenberg and the Reformation was on. Luther’s text was Romans 1:17, “The just shall live by faith.”

Martin Luther referred to the Epistle of James as an epistle of straw and not worthy to be included in the Word of God.

This thinking is typical of the supposed discrepancy between the theological stance of James, the pastor of the church in Jerusalem, the Lord’s half-brother, and Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

However, when the teachings of James and Paul are viewed in the proper perspective there is no contradiction!

Paul was speaking of “the way of justification”, while James is describing “the life of the justified.”

D. The intent of James:

1. James never intended to contrast two opposite methods of salvation: one by faith and one by works!
2. James, Paul, the Apostles, and all the other writers of the New Testament were in complete agreement that salvation is by grace through faith.
3. What James was doing was contrasting two types of faith:
 - One that was genuine, the other bogus
 - One that was alive, the other dead
 - One that saves, one that does not save.

James revealed the fallacy of a person claiming to have saving faith, but not having practical righteousness, or good works, to prove the reality of their faith.

James emphasized that the kind of faith that saves us in the faith that also produces good works.

- E. Paul and James complement each other, together they give a **fuller perspective** of all that is involved in salvation.

Example:

The four Gospels give us a fuller view of Christ.

Christianity is not just faith alone, nor is it just works. It is a faith that is manifested by works!

Genuine faith produces indisputable works. If it doesn't, one should question whether they have genuine faith.

I. Genuine Faith is not an empty claim – Verses 14-17:

“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”

We need to consider three important words found in verses 14 through 26 – “faith”, “works”, “justify.”

- A. James uses the word **“faith”** to refer to both “dead” (bogus) and “genuine” (living) faith.

Both are used in verse 14.

1. “Though a man say he hath faith” refers to a person claiming to have faith.

James does not say, “If a man has faith.” He says, “if a man says that he has faith.”

2. “can faith save him?” refers to the dead faith that person really has.

This is a rhetorical question! The answer is of course – the **“dead” or bogus faith being spoken of cannot save a person!**

- B. “Faith” and “believing” are related – **because to have faith is to believe.**

1. James points out that “belief” or dead faith that only admits the existence of God is not sufficient to save a person. **Why? Verse 19:**

“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.”

The demons know that God exist, but they are not saved, nor is a person that only has “bogus” or dead faith.

C. The Apostle Paul uses the word “faith” in a different manner:

1. Paul used “faith” as a complete trust in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Paul presents Christ as the Savior that gives us new life through the new birth.

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20

3. In Romans 10:9,10 Paul tells the sinner how to obtain salvation:

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Paul speaks of “faith” as the gift of God and says that when a person believes, Christ becomes their righteousness and they receive a new life.

D. “Works”

1. Paul usually refers to “works” done by the unbeliever in an attempt to secure salvation by their own merits.
 - He meticulously stresses that these types of work cannot secure salvation.

“Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Ephesians 2:9

Where Paul is speaking to unbelievers about the fallacy of a “works salvation”

2. James speaks of “works” differently. He says that if you have genuine faith, and have truly believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, then you will have some works as the outward evidence, or fruit, of that inward experience.

Paul emphasized that salvation is by faith and faith alone and cannot be secured by any type of “works.” James speaks of “works” as the fruit of one’s salvation.

E. “Justify”

1. Paul speaks of being justified as the legal position attained by Christ finished work on Calvary.
2. James speaks of being justified as something that results from a genuine relationship with God. He speaks of being justified before men.
 - This is seen in chapter w in statements such as:

“Though a man say” – verse 14

“seest thou” – verse 22

“Ye see then” – verse 24

Paul deals with being justified before God. This justification secures pardon for the sinner and makes them acceptable before God, because of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This justification is a one-time-act.

James is speaking of being justified before one’s fellow man. This is a continual process and looks beyond what a person says to see if their life supports what they say.

James says, if you are justified by faith (something invisible) then your faith will be manifested (made visible) by you deeds and actions.

II. Only demonstrated faith is genuine – verses 15-20:

Characteristics of Genuine faith:

A. Verses 15-17 – Genuine faith is not idle but fruitful:

“If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”

1. The people involved in this illustration are Christian brothers or sisters that have a real need.

James says that if a person says, “well brother I’ll pray for you, I trust that God will provide your needs” --- they do not have limited faith --- their faith is DEAD!

I John 3:18 says, “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”

When a person that has genuine faith sees a brother in need they will not stay uninvolved.

Example:

Arturo’s church when we were financially strapped in Cd. Obregon.

Genuine faith gets involved.

B. Verses 18-19: Secondly – Genuine faith is not verbal or intellectual doctrine, it is visible.

“Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee

my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”

1. In verse 18, James is arguing with an invisible 2nd person.
 - This imaginary person is arguing that there is a place for both faith and works.
 - James refutes this in the last part of the verse!
 - Shew means to display or exhibit to bring to light.

James says that real faith will be exhibited in the actions and attitude - it will be visible.

2. Verses 19 & 20:

“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”

- James says that having a bare historical belief about the oneness of God will it save anyone.
- He goes on to say, “the devils also believe, and tremble.”

James is saying, that just a belief in God is not Saving Faith, and that a belief in God does not give Eternal life or a secure you place in heaven. Faith is more than an intellectual knowledge. There are thousands who believe (intellectual knowledge) but are not saved.

Example:

Churches are full of people that attend services, they say the right things, but they have no spiritual discernment or understanding, they question everything, they show no love for the Word of God, nor are they willing to dedicate time to Bible study. On the outside they have the right appearance, but inside they are full of dead bones, and have a dead faith.

Saving Faith is the gift of God and when you have genuine faith will be seen visually in the actions of your life, because you are a new creature in Christ.

III. Genuine faith produces an obedient life – verses 20-26:

- A. In verse 20 James states that faith without works is dead.
- B. In verses 21-25 James uses two well known people to illustrate this point.

It is in these verses that some have seen a conflict between the teachings of Paul and those of James. A superficial reading of these verses might lead one to that conclusion, however a through examination reveals that there is no contradiction at all.

- C. The example of Abraham – verses 21-24:

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.”

In our comparison of James and Paul’s use of Abraham it is important to point out that they use two different incidents in Abraham’s life.

1. In Romans 4 the Apostle Paul speaks of Abraham in Genesis 15.
 - When **Abraham was 89**, God promised him an heir. When **Abraham is 99** he still has no heir and does not understand why.
 - God takes him out tells him to count the stars. Abraham said that he could not – because they were innumerable.
 - Then God tells him that so would the seed that come out of his loins.
 - In Romans 4:3 the Apostle Paul says, “For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.”
 - Paul says that when Abraham believed God he had conversion experience.

2. James however, uses a different incident found in Genesis 22:
 - Abraham who is now a believer, is told to take his son, his heir, the child of promise, and sacrifice him to God.
 - Abraham took his son, to the appointed mountain, at the appointed place, and prepared him for sacrifice in the appointed way.
 - Then Abraham raised the knife to plunge it into Isaac’s heart, believing that God would raise Isaac from the dead.

Two separate incidents. In the first Abraham was without hope, and trusted God for the promise. In the second, Abraham demonstrates that hope by offering his son.

The Apostle Paul spoke of the inward experience when Abraham by faith, believed God for salvation. (How man is justified in the sight of God)

James speaks of the outward demonstration of that saving faith to those around us.

Example: Evangelist ask pastor about two men that made professions of faith. Pastor says, Jim is a saint (reasons) but Joe went back to a life of sin after 3 weeks. Did this surprise God? No! God knew that Jim believed and had genuine faith, and that Joe made a gesture, an outward profession (dead bogus faith).

God knew, but the pastor did not know, the evangelist did not know, the people of the church did not know. It was only Jim's fruit or works that demonstrated proved that he was justified by faith, and it was the lack of fruit or works that revealed that Joe did not have a genuine conversion experience with the Lord.

James says that your works make faith perfect!

IV. Conclusions:

- A. There are people (maybe someone present) who believe mentally that Jesus is the Son of God. But they have not taken any action on what they believe. It's a purely intellectual belief - they (You) are just as lost as the person who has openly rejected the gospel.

"You must receive Him by faith - As many as receive Him, to them gave he power to become the son's of God."

- B. Once you have believed, by faith your works will prove to men that you have a genuine faith.
 - 1. God sees your inward faith
 - 2. Men see your works, the result of your faith.

- C. "By faith" Noah, Abraham, Moses, Rahab

1. In Hebrews 11 we read how that they demonstrated their inward faith through their outward works.
2. They are not the only “by faith” heroes!

Example:

Ignatius was the pastor of the Antioch church. He was a mighty preacher, and emptied the Greek temples and turned them from idolatry to Christ.

For his zeal he was brought before Caesar and sentenced to die in the coliseum.

The history books say that when Ignatius stood in the arena, and they opened the cages of the wild beast, he held out his hand to the leading lion, and above the sound of the crunching of bones he was heard to say, “Now I begin to be a Christian.”

James says that inward faith is demonstrated in the activities of life.

The Tongue – So small yet so powerful

Text: James 1:26 & James 3:1-12

1:26, “If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain.”

3:1-12, “My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the horses’ mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.”

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The Holy Spirit used different men to address certain spiritual truths.
 - 1. Paul spoke much of justification by faith.
 - 2. The author of Hebrews dealt with the atonement of Christ and His High Priesthood.

3. John developed the doctrine of the deity of the Lord and the love of God.
4. James deals with the practice aspects of our walk with Christ.
 - And who better than the one secular history called “James the just.”

B. After dealing with the subject of works and their relationship to faith, James now turns his attention to controlling the tongue.

One of the key evidences of faith is a controlled tongue. A genuine faith not only produces good works, it also controls a person’s words.

C. The tongue can be used to honor and praise the Lord or it can be used in so many ways that dishonor the Lord.

1. For example, when a Christian tells off-color stories or jokes, half-truths, gossip, profanity in a time of anger
2. Verse 2 says, “For in many things we offend all.” or we all offend.
3. We are all guilty of misusing the tongue, so this message applies to all of us.

D. The Bible makes controlling the tongue a matter of great importance.

1. Speaking of the so-called gross sins, like Blasphemy, sorcery, murder, adultery, or homosexuality,
2. Yet those same people do not hesitate to assassinate the character of fellow believers.
3. Some like “Irrabela Young” do it through gossip.

- Who was Irrabela Young.
- She was a woman that lived in England
- This was the inscription placed on her tombstone,

“Beneath this stone lies the lump of clay of Irrabela Young, who on the 24th of May began to hold her tongue.”

2. Others try to disguise their gossip under a spiritual pretext.

- Please pray for old so-and-so because -----
- Great care must be taken not to allow a prayer request to result in gossip by using the spiritual pretext like “I’m telling you this so that you may pray more knowledgeably.”
- It is not necessary to give “the details” if they do not present the person you are speaking about in a positive manner, or are not essential to effective prayer. God knows the details!

E. In this message I am going to speak about the Power of Words

1. **Question:** How many of you have almost had your heart to stop when someone said something to you?
2. Examples of the **Power of Words:**

The phone rings and you hear the voice on the other end say, “this is officer Smith with the police department.

The nurse calls and says, “the doctor needs you to come in because there is a spot on your X-ray.

Your teacher or professor says, take out a clean sheet of paper.

Someone yells, "Hey you!"

F. Before we examine what James is saying in verse 26, I want us to look at the Lords teachings in Matthew 15: 10-17:

And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: **Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.** Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable. And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth **come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.**

1. **The problem isn't the tongue but the heart.**
2. The tongue is neutral - it follows the orders it receives from the heart.
3. For example – You drop a bucket into a well – the bucket brings up whatever is there.
4. James is telling us that whatever is in the heart comes out of our mouth.

G. The tongue is:

1. A 2in, 2 oz. membrane.
2. The tongue is our **organ of speech:**

- The tongue is used to articulate words
- Without it the teacher could not teach,
- The Ambassador could not negotiate,
- A soldier could not give commands,
- Pastors could not exhort or rebuke,
- Issues could not be solved
- **Without our tongue** our communication would be reduced to grunts and groans.

I repeat, the problem isn't the tongue, but the heart.

H. James addresses the subject in our text verses James 1:26, and 3:1-12.

I. The importance of controlling the tongue:

James 1:26, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."

James 3:1, 2, "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body."

Again - James says that it's a heart problem.

A. Peculiar saying:

1. "If a man be religious" James 1:26 and "be not many masters" (teachers) James 3:1
 - Master (teacher) in Jewish culture a position of great honor. (Rabbi - the good one.)
 - Be careful - he doesn't say, don't be a teacher", he says be careful, because teachers will be judged stricter.

B. Three reasons why they will receive a stricter judgment:

1. Teacher have a real amount of influence:

- Be careful what you say because you are influencing others.
- A Teacher is responsible to teach the truth:

Never mix personal opinion and truth.

2. A Teacher is expected to live what he teaches:

- "If any man among you seem to be religious (all teachers to an extent)
- Lifestyle must match the teaching.

3. Three questions to ask yourself before you teach.

- Do I believe what I'm teaching? **Conviction**
- Do I live this? **Credibility.**
- Will this change lives in a positive manner?
- Yes, we will be better people for the Lord.

James says, don't covet a position of higher influence, where you life and words will have a great influence on others, unless you are willing to fall under this stricter judgment.

II. Explanation of the importance of the tongue - verses 3 - 5:

"Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!"

The tongue (or the power of our words) is important for three reasons.

A. The Tongue is **Powerful**:

The Tongue has the ability to change people and behavior.

1. James gives an analogy (comparison) in all three verses. (Expound each)
 - Verse 3 - Bits in the horse's mouth.
 - Verse 4 – a ship rudder
 - Verse 5 – The tongue is small - but defiles the whole body.
2. The Application is found in verse 6:

“And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.”

3. Just as a spark can cause a forest fire - the tongue is powerful and can be positive or negative (Build up or tear down) in people's lives.

B. Secondly, the Tongue is dangerous – Verse 5:

1. The tongue is a fire:

Not a simile – James does not say **like** a fire but **is** a fire.

2. James also describes the tongue as a "**World of Iniquity.**"
 - **This is a very graphic illustration:**
 - **The world is full of sin and iniquity;**

- **And James says that the tongue is also full of iniquity.**
- **One does not have to be among the people of the world very long before hearing God’s name used in vain or other profanities.**
- **The tongues of the world utter unchaste words; angry, lies, reproach, backbiting, and tale bearing.**
- **The world expresses itself with the tongue.**

Example: The expression, “he curses like a sailor.” Sin, cursing, evilness, and the pride of the world are summed up in the tongue.

3. James goes on to say that the tongue **defiles** the **whole** body – Verse 5.

- The “whole body” the temple of God is defiled when we use our tongue to our words to hurt someone.

4. “And setteth on fire the course of nature.”

- Word spoken can irreversible damage, and accomplish the devil’s purpose.

Example: A woman repeated a tale on another woman, which resulted in the woman suffering great misery and agony. Later the tale was proven untrue. The woman who spread the gossip went to a sage and asked “what shall I do.” The sage told her to take a pillow of feather and scatter the feathers all over town. The woman took a feather pillow and went up and down the streets of the city scattering the feathers everywhere. She returned to the sage and asked, “now what shall I do?” The sage told her to go and gather all the feathers up again. The woman said, “that is impossible, they have blown everywhere. I

could never find them all again.” Then the sage said, nor can you ever gather back all of those words you said.”

Once we say something, we cannot pull it back, we cannot unsay it, and most of the time no atonement repay the hurt that is done.

C. Thirdly, the Tongue is **Indicative** (reveals our heart) – Verses 9 & 10:

“Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.”

1. A person’s speech reveals their true character:

- Our speech is like the bucket it brings up what is there (in the heart).
- It is not natural to use the same tongue, the same voice, and my words to praise God and take my petitions to Him in prayer, to lash out, or bear a tale, or bring sorrow to others.
- James says that it “ought not be so.”

D. Verses 11 & 12 illustrate the point.

“Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.”

1. It is not natural for a fountain to produce sweet and bitter water.
2. It is impossible for a fig tree to produce any other fruit but figs.

3. Likewise it is not natural for Christians to use their tongues, or words to praise God, and rundown others.

James says that our tongue reveals our spiritual condition to those around us.

4. James says three things in these 2 verses:
 - First, the tongue defiles – it defiles the whole body.
 - Secondly, the Tongue defies -- it is not natural for the tongue to praise God and hurt others.
 - Thirdly, the tongue displays - it displays what we are. We don't need an X-ray to see what is in the heart - just listen to a person for awhile and see what comes out of their mouth.

III. How do we change our speech and heart?

- A. Repent and ask Gods' forgiveness. (But you say, "I didn't say anything against God.")

Matthew 25:40, "And the King shall answer and say unto them. Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren,"

- B. If you hurt someone, ask forgiveness of the injured party (difficult).
- C. Think before speaking – you can never pick up all of the feathers.
- D. Let evil speaking stop with you. Don't repeat it.
- E. If you must tell someone tell God. He already knows but you'll feel better.
- F. Be accountable for what you say.

G. Vow to become an encourager and not a critic.

Conclusions:

A. Many of you have been hurt by someone.

1. You need God to heal the wound.
2. If you have a root of bitterness, you need to get rid of the bitterness, and develop a forgiving heart.

B. If you have hurt someone:

1. You need to say, Lord give me the courage and strength to go and make it right.
2. **The Holy Spirit can give us victory over the sin of not holding the tongue if we acknowledge that we have a problem and yield to and seek His guidance daily.**

Wisdom

Text: James 3:13-18

“Who is a wise man and endowed with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.”

Introduction:

- A. James introduces the topic of wisdom with the question,

“Who is a wise man and endowed with knowledge among you?”

- B. James speaks of **two types of wisdom** in Chapter 3:13-18.
1. The first is **earthly**, sensual, and devilish and gives no consideration to God whatsoever.
 2. It approaches life as if God did not exist and results in envy and strife.
 3. The second is **Godly wisdom**.

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

- C. The definition of **wisdom**:

1. Noah Webster defines wisdom as the use or exercise of knowledge.

2. The secular Greek word for wise man is “one who has intelligence and education above the average person.”
3. The New Testament defines wisdom as “one who has spiritual discernment and discretion, who has the ability to see clearly what is right and to act accordingly.”

D. How to recognize wisdom - Verse 13b:

“let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.”

Key word – “shew”

1. **There is a double emphasis in here:**
2. First, the true test of wisdom is **works not words!**

Mere talk, however fluent, clever, and orthodox, does not prove wisdom. The person professing to be wise is to “shew,” show, or prove their wisdom by their works.

- **How?** “Out of a good conversation.”
 - The Greek word translated “**Good**” can also be translated “morally good” or “**noble.**”
 - “**Conversation**” is the Greek word “anastrophe” and means “manner of life, conduct, or behavior.”
 - **Thus wisdom will be seen in a persons “noble conduct” not just their talk!**
3. The second emphasis is on **meekness:**

The world places little importance on meekness! However meekness is one of the noblest Christian graces!

- In Matthew 11:29, II Corinthians 10:1 meekness is shown as a characteristic of Christ.
- It is a fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:23
- Matthew 5:5 reveals meekness as a distinctive trait of those who belong to Christ.
- **Meekness is being humble-hearted or a willingness to submit to God, and is opposite of arrogance and the self-assertiveness attitude of earthly wisdom seen in verses 14-16.**
- **Therefore, a truly wise person possesses true knowledge of both the human and divine, and that wisdom will be seen in their life.**

E. The remainder of the chapter contrast earthly wisdom (Verses 14-16) and Godly wisdom (true wisdom – verses 17-18).

I. False Wisdom – verses 14-16:

“But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.”

A. Verse 14 - The Evidences of False Wisdom ---
“envying and strife:”

1. Definition of envy:

- Envy is “a zeal” in behalf of, or for a person or thing (Can be positive or negative).

- **In this verse** it means a zeal or fierce desire to promote one's own opinion to the exclusion of those of others.

2. In Galatians 5:20 the Apostle Paul list “envy” as one of the fruits of the flesh.

3. **“Bitter”** is a resentful attitude – and is manifested in **strife** or bitter actions.

B. Earthly wisdom is not of God and totally denies eternal values:

Example - The theory of evolution:

Evolution is the devil's attempt to explain everything that exists apart from a supernatural God.

Those who believe the theory of evolution do not have to acknowledge God's rule over the universe and over them. Therefore, it is a way of eliminating any feelings of responsibility or accountability to Almighty God.

Evolution is a perfect example of worldly wisdom because it is earthly, sensual, and devilish. Resentment, jealousy, and selfish ambition – these are the sure marks of a life dominated by worldly wisdom. ↓

4. James says that jealousy and self-ambition is a **heart problem**.

“But if ye have bitter envying and strife **in your hearts**, glory not, and lie not against the truth.”

- **We say that the heart is the seat of affections.**
- **The Israelites, said that the heart was the source of moral action, and the seat or center of the whole personality.**

5. Verse 15 – earthly wisdom is not of God, because it is earthly, sensual, and devilish:
- Earthly – because it originates from this world’s system rather than coming from God.
 - Sensual – because it appeals to the senses of the natural man rather than to his moral and spiritual sensitivities.
 - **The results earthly, sensual wisdom are witnessed everywhere, because society generally decides what is moral by determining what is the common practice rather than seeking God’s moral standards.**
 - This kind of wisdom is devilish, because it has the characteristics of its author the Devil!
6. Verse 16 - The Consequences of earthly wisdom:

“For where envying and strife is, **there is confusion and every evil work.**”

- Earthly wisdom creates confusion, disorder, and is destructive.

Example: Evolution – How much confusion, disorder, and destruction has it caused.

- **If a person operates with only earthly wisdom, they will only be able to accomplish only what they can do in their own power and nothing more. Or they can humble themselves, get on their knees and ask God for heavenly wisdom and for Him to do for us that which we cannot do for ourselves.**

II. True Wisdom – Verses 17-18:

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.”

True wisdom comes from God and finds it's fullness in Christ.

“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” I Corinthians 1:30

A. The traits of Heavenly Wisdom:

1. It is **Pure**: undefiled - it is free from everything that is earthly, carnal, or sensual, or devilish.

True wisdom produces purity of heart, and is the means by which a person is kept free from envy, lust, pride, selfishness, and wrath which are prevalent in carnal and unregenerate men.

2. It is **Peaceable** – exact opposite of worldly wisdom that produces envy and strife.
3. It is **Gentle** – forbearing and courteous

II Timothy 2:24, “And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,”

4. Easy to be entreated

Those who have heavenly wisdom are willing to listen to and heed reasoning and wise counsel

5. Full of Mercy and Good Fruits:
 - Concerned with the practical things:

What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And

one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

- **Godly wisdom is characterized by mercy and is expressed in Christ-like acts toward others.**
- **Those possessing true wisdom go about joyfully doing good works, with respect to God and man, as fruits of the Spirit and grace.**

6. **Without Partiality** – Without Prejudice –

- Making no distinction between people.
- Dealt with this issue in James chapter 2
- Partiality is a sin, and is opposite of heavenly wisdom.

7. Without Hypocrisy:

Definition:

A semblance of having desirable or publicly approved attitudes, beliefs, principles, etc, that one does not actually possess.

Humanly speaking hypocritical Christians do great harm to Christianity through their pretentious attitudes and actions.

III. Conclusions:

- A. **It is interesting to observe that the traits of heavenly wisdom listed in James are without exception the qualities that were embodied in**

Christ during His time on earth. He was in the fullest sense the embodiment of the wisdom of God.

- B. We must understand that God is the author of true wisdom and that He will give us the wisdom we need when we humbly seek Him.**

“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.” Proverbs 3:13-17

- C. Do you have the character traits of a wise man that James gave in verses 13 and 17?**
- 1. If you don't – seek the Lord as ask Him to give you heavenly wisdom.**
 - 2. If you do, your faith and wisdom will be manifested as fruits of the Spirit, and demonstrated by your good works.**
 - 3. If you are unsaved, you cannot possess heavenly wisdom until you are drawn of the Spirit to Christ and receive forgiveness of your sins, by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.**

Problems of Worldly Mindedness

Text: James 4:1-10

“From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”

Introduction:

- A. Our English Bible is divided into Books, Chapters, and verses to facilitate Bible Study, however many times the content of one chapter continues in the next. That is the case in James 4.
 1. The subject of verses 1&2 follow the earthly, sensual, devilish wisdom discussed in chapter 3:15. that resulted in “envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work.”
 2. James chapter 4 gives a practical application of the havoc that takes place when worldly wisdom rather than heavenly wisdom dominates the life of a Christian.
 3. This havoc is seen in the following ways:

- Choosing pleasure (the passion for self-gratification) as the primary aim in life. (1-10)
- Harsh criticism of fellow Christians (11,12)
- Arrogant disregard of God (4:13 – 5:6)

B. The Passion for Self Gratification

I. A Passion for Self-gratification causes wars and fightings– Verses 1,2:

Verses 1,2, “From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.”

- A. The passion for self-gratification or a self-assertive spirit is the pursuit of my desires without regard to God, His will, or others.
- B. This passion comes from an inward aggressiveness that leads us to want our rights and pleasures without considering what God wants or what would be best for ourself or those around us.
- C. The Westminster Catechism declares that the chief end of man is **“to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever.”**
- D. However, there is another philosophy that affirms that pleasure is the chief good in life and that moral duty is fulfilled in the gratification of pleasure.
- E. Simply stated, it says that the chief aim of man is self-gratification rather than the glorification of God.
 1. The English word for this philosophy is **“hedonism.”**
 2. Hedonism comes from the Greek word used twice in this passage.

3. It is translated “lusts.” In the KJV and “pleasures” in the ASV.
 4. Hedonism means “a lust or desires for pleasure.”
- B. James ask the question, “From whence *come* wars and fightings among you?”
1. Note two things:
 - First note the words “among you.” Not only is their war and fighting in the world they are also in the church (a shame).
 - Secondly, they come from “your own lust” (I will speak about this momentarily)
- C. Lust or hedonism causes four things:
1. It causes wars and fighting – Verses 1,2
 2. It makes prayer ineffective – Verse 3.
 3. It is repulsive to God – Verses 4-6
 4. It demands repentance – Verses 7-10
- D. A hedonistic person or society believes that pleasure or self-gratification is ultimate, and these people are willing to do whatever is necessary to achieve their desire or pleasure, without consideration of God or others.
- E. It is very important to remember that James is speaking to Christians! James says that hedonism or the quest for self-gratification is complete disregard of God’s laws and flagrant sin against our Lord.
- F. Those who choose pleasure rather than God will find that the desire for pleasure will lead them to do things they never dreamed that they were capable of.

Example: King Ahab & Naboth and his vineyard

G. Note the phrase, “that war in your members.”

1. The source of these wars and fightings is our own lust! But where does the lust come from?
2. The source is our “members or “natures.”

“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”
Galatians 5:17

3. Believers have **two natures**:

The **spiritual nature** is made for eternal and desires to live in a manner that pleases God, and finds no satisfaction with anything the world has to offer. Then there is the **old fleshly nature** with its sinful self-gratifying tendencies. It is never content with anything but the things of the world.

4. When a believer gives in to the desires of the flesh, this not only makes conflicts in his own life, but it also causes conflicts with others around him.

H. Verse 2:

“Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.”

1. You desire or covet what others have, but you desires remain unfulfilled; you kill (or hate, which is to murder as far as the heart is concerned), and you burn with envy, and cannot obtain the gratification you desire; so you fight and war, but you don’t have what you desire, because you do not ask.
2. Self Gratification ignores the rule of God in our lives. (Self **instead** of Christ).

3. Why or how does this happen?

The answer – “ye have not, because ye ask not.”

If you do not ask God for power to overcome the flesh, the flesh will overcome you.

II. Self-gratification makes pray ineffective – Verse 3:

“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts.”

A. Self gratification affects our prayers:

1. “Ye ask, and receive not”
2. This verse answers verse 2 as well as the first part of verse 3.

B. James says that those seeking self-gratification normally **do not seek God** in prayer.

C. The second reason of unanswered pray was that those that sought the Lord:

1. Came with the wrong motive and selfish intent.

“Ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”

2. And God does not answer this type of prayers.

I. Prayer has more to do with aligning ourselves with God’s will and purpose than asking Him to align Himself with our agenda.

1. Not my will, but thy will oh Lord.
2. Why? Because prayer moves us away from ourselves and our desires, and gratifications and toward God and His will.

III. Self-Gratification is repugnant or distasteful to God – Verses 4-6:

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”

- A. James uses very strong language to describe those who seek self-gratification.

What does James mean by, “Ye adulterers and adulteresses?”

1. James has clearly stated that a spirit of self-gratification makes effective pray impossible,
 2. James says seeking friendship with the world, makes them “unfaithful” which constitutes **spiritual adultery**.
 3. James reinforces the relevant Old Testament truth that God is a jealous God.
 4. This verse alludes to Old Testament passages like Psalms 73; Isaiah 54:5; Jeremiah 3:30; and Hosea 2:2 that speak of God as the husband of Israel.
 5. Christians are also consider to be the bride of Christ, therefore “friendship with the world” is “unfaithfulness” and those guilty of it are committing spiritual adultery.
- J. “Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”
1. The though here is that friendship with the world amounts to hostility toward God.

Manton said, “When you begin to please the world you wage war against heaven, and bid open defiance to the Lord of host.”

K. Verses 6-10 give us the remedy:

“But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, ye sinners; and purify *your* hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”

1. “**More Grace**” – God gives us all the grace that we need to live a life pleasing to Him in this face pace world----- all we have to do is **ask!**

IV. Steps to overcoming a self-gratifying spirit:

A. Humility (the book-ends) – Verses 6 & 10.

1. **Humility** is the ability not to compare yourself to others.

Verse 10, “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”

- When we look inward to self, we become selfish.
- When we look outward, we start comparing ourselves to others and become competitive and self-righteous.
- When we look to God – we become humble!

“Then said I, *Woe is me!* for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of

unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.” Isaiah 6:5

2. Second step – Repentance – verse 9:

Verse 9, “Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heaviness.”

- Verse 9 express how a person repenting and getting their life right with God feels!
- Just like Isaiah, when we see ourselves as we really are, our laughter will be turned to morning, and our joy to heaviness.
- **Repent and change what?** The self-gratifying spirit that makes you or I commit spiritual adultery again our Lord.

3. Third step – Submit to God – Verse 7a:

“Submit yourselves therefore to God.

What does this involve? Giving up your rights, and giving God His blood bought rights. (Lordship of Christ)

4. Forth step – Resist the devil – Verse 7b

“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

- Resist the world’s philosophy of “hedonism,”
- Ask God to help you not have a spirit of self-gratification, and to give you a humble spirit that you might keep your eyes on Him and His purpose for your life.

5. Fifth step – Draw nigh to God – Verse 8a:

“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.

There is a difference in submitting to God and drawing neigh to God.

- Submitting is completely surrendering our rights to God.
- Drawing neigh deals with our personal relationship with the Lord.

In any type of relationship, including marriage, rights have to be settled before the relationship can be developed.

6. Cleanse your hands and purify your heart – Verse 8b:

“Cleanse *your* hands, ye sinners; and purify *your* hearts, ye double minded.”

- Cleansing your hands deals with your actions.
 - Purify your heart deals with our attitude:
- B. James 3:11 says the heart is like a fountain or well, whatever is there, whether worldly or spiritual, will show in our actions and attitude.

V. The results of overcoming a self-gratifying spirit – Verse 10:

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”

- A. When you submit yourself to God and draw neigh unto Him, with clean hands and heart:
 1. God hears your prayers and because your desire is to glorify Him, He answers your prayers.

2. Then He will **“Lift you up.”** God will bless you and in this present life, and in the future.

I Peter 5:6, “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:”

Conclusions:

- A. Sinner humble yourself and come to the cross, that you might receive the free pardon of sin in Christ.
- B. Christian, examine your heart, and if you find a spirit of self-gratification – repent and submit yourself unto the Lord.

The Coming of the Lord and His Judgments

Text: James 5:1-11

“Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you. Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”

Introduction:

- A. The last message dealt with the Lord’s Will.
- B. In James 4:13-17 James dealt with the presumptuous attitude of Christians concerning the accumulation of wealth and the future.
- C. Now we come to Chapter 5:1-6

1. There is disagreement between scholars about whom these six verses refer:
 - Some say it refers to the wealthy Christians spoken of in James 1:10 who are reminded that life is short and riches soon pass away.
 - Others believe that these verses refer to the unsaved rich people spoken of in James 2:1, where James condemned Christians in the churches for showing them partiality, reminding them that these are the very ones persecuting them.

I. I believe that verses 1-6 speak to the unsaved rich! Why???

“Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.”

- A. First, in these verses James speaks in the manner of the prophets Amos or Micah and declares the inevitable impending judgment of God upon the rich and their riches.
- B. This is seen in the language of verses 1-3 where James speaks of both the **severity** and **certainty** of God’s judgment:

“Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.”

1. The **severity** is seen in the words “**Weep**” and “**howl**” and **miseries**

Weep (Greek - klah'-yo) **Howl** (Greek - ol-ol-odd'-zo) – both mean to mourn, weep, howl, or lament -- weeping because of pain or grief for the thing signified.

2. The **certainty** is revealed in the words **that shall come upon you.**

- B. Verses 2 & 3 reveal what happens to temporal riches:

“Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.”

- C. Verse 4 reveals how far these people would go to get rich or richer.

“Behold, **the hire of the labourers** who have reaped down your fields, which is of **you kept back by fraud**, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.”

Cheat people out of their wages

- D. Verses 5 & 6 reveal that however rich they are, it is never sufficient and they are never satisfied.

“Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.”

1. There is nothing wrong with having wealth, as long as that person puts “seeking the kingdom of God” first!

2. James says that we must have the right attitude toward riches.
3. How many times have you heard someone say, "Well if I had a million dollars"...
4. Actually thinking through what you would do if you did receive a large sum of money, would help you analyze what your real attitude toward riches is.
5. **Think about what you would do if you received a million dollars for a moment ---**
 - What did you think of first - buying things for yourself, or was your first thought about how much you should give to the Lord?
 - **Job is a perfect example of a Christian that was rich, yet his first thoughts were about pleasing the Lord.**

Example:

I heard that the man that won the 300,800,000 power ball jackpot the other day gave his church 30,080,000 even though he only received about 150,400,000 total.

He tithed on the gross, yet God can't trust some Christians to do as He commands with their weekly paycheck.

E. James prophecy answered!!!!

1. The rich of James day lost everything when Rome invaded Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple in 70 AD.
2. I also think it will apply to those remaining after the rapture of the saints!

Revelation 6:5,6, "And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine."

Revelation 18:1-20, "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and **the merchants** of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. **And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most**

precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! **For in one hour so great riches is come to nought.** And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! **And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.** Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for **God hath avenged you** on her.”

These verses and others reveal the certainty of God’s impending judgment:

Romans 12:19, “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”

Hebrews 10:30. “For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.”

II. Verses 7-11

“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

Note the change of tone as James begins to speak to the brethren.

A. An exhortation to patience:

1. The book of James opens with an appeal for patience –

James 1:4, But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

2. And ends with an appeal to patience!

Verse 7, “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.”

- In bookstores around the country you will find books written about the Apocalypse that say there is no prophecy in the book of Revelation.
- They say that it would be meaningless and of no comfort to those Christians being persecuted and killed for their faith to say that sometime in the future, the Lord is going to come again.
- **But that is exactly the exhortation James gives the believers that are scatter abroad!**

- **It has already been over 2000 years since James wrote this and the Lord has not come yet!**

Question: Is there comfort and strength in the promise of the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Answer: Yes!

- The Bible exhorts us to live in expectation of the soon coming of the Lord.
- Someone would say, but it has been such a long period of time!
- To us it may be a long time, **but to Him**, He says that a **thousand years with God are but as a day**.
- **That means that the Lord has only been gone a couple of days, SO maybe He will return during the third day.**

B. Patience is the keyword of these verses:

1. Patience in various forms “patient,” “patience”, and “endure” occur 6 times.
2. The Greek roots that form these words mean to be longsuffering, or long tempered, to show self-restraint.
3. Paul says in Philippians 4:5-7 “Let your **moderation** be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.”
 - Moderation comes from the Greek word “epieikes” (ep-ee-i-kace) meaning a humble and bowed spirit, and surrender to the Lord.
 - Combining patience and submissiveness we draw the conclusion that James is telling us to be yield to Christ and show the self-

restraint that enables Christians to bear insult and injury without resorting to hasty retaliation.

- **Why?** James 1: 2, 3 says,

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.”

Out of the light that dazzles me,
Bright as the sun from pole to pole,
I thank the God I know to be,
For Christ the Conqueror of my soul.

Since His the sway of circumstance,
I would not wince nor cry aloud;
Under that rule which men call chance,
My head with joy is humbly bowed.

Beyond this place of sin and tears
That life with Him and His the aid,
That, spite the menace of the years
Keeps and shall keep me unafraid.

I have no fear though strait the gate,
He cleared from punishment the scroll;
Christ is the Master of my fate,
Christ is the Captain of my soul.

We patiently watch and wait for the coming of the Lord bearing with patience those things that come our way, knowing that Christ the righteous judge shall avenge those who wrong us and at the same time holds in His hand our reward.

C. The **fruits** of patience:

Example: Verse 7 - The Husbandman – The Farmer (prepares, plants, waits for the early and late rains – at the proper time goes into the field to harvest the fruit thereof)

Galatians 6:9, “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

2 Corinthians 5:10, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

1 Corinthians 3:11-15, “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”

Conclusion:

Be patient; stablish your hearts (stand strong) for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

Are you ready?

Prayer and Healing

Text: James 5:13-18

“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.”

Introduction:

- A. These verses deal with the doctrine of prayer and healing.
- B. There are many different opinions and much dispute over the doctrine of healing:
 1. The Roman Catholic Church uses these verses to establish the doctrine of extreme unction.
 - They state that the purpose and effects of the Sacrament if received in faith and in a state of grace, the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick provides the recipient with a number of graces:
 - I quote, “Including the fortitude to resist temptation in the face of death, when he is weakest; a union with the Passion of Christ, which makes his suffering holy; and the grace to prepare for death, so that he may meet God in hope rather than in fear. If the recipient was not able to receive the

Sacrament of Confession, Anointing also provides forgiveness of sins. And, if it will aid in the salvation of his soul, Anointing **may** restore the recipient's health.”

2. The Holiness and Charismatic groups believe that the gift of healing still exist and practice it.

A group in Baracoa Cuba that had only the Pentecostal radio station influence – claimed to be Independent Baptist – but they Pentecostal in practice. Some of the women got very upset when the truth of God’s Word was presented.

In this message I want to examine healing and prayer from a Biblical perspective.

I. Verse 13:

“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.”

A. James has already dealt with the subject of prayer in chapter 1:5-8 and 4:2, 3.

B. In these verses, James again makes it very clear that God grace and goodness is to be remembered in everything!

1. If a person is afflicted they are to pray!

- The word “afflicted” comes from the Greek word kakopatheo and means to suffer hardships or troubles:
- It speaks of any kind of affliction whether they are physical or emotional, personal or domestic.
- These are afflictions that result from ordinary trials, spiritual conflicts, or even religious persecution.

Regardless of their type or source James says, “let them pray.”

C. The tense of “pray” makes it to mean, “to keep on praying.”

Isaiah 40:31 says, “But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

1. In II Corinthians 12:8,9 the Apostle Paul said,

“For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

2. Prayer always has a result – in Paul’s case it was not healing, but grace sufficient to endure.

II. Verses 14:

“Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:”

- A. In the 13th verse James used the word “afflicted” which speaks of suffering in a broad and general sense. The reference to sickness in this verse is more narrow and specific.
- B. “Sick” comes from the Greek word “astheneo” meaning to be “powerless” or “without strength.”
- C. The indication is that it is a sickness that incapacitates a person from working.
- D. Other words the elders are not summoned for an occasional headache, leg cramp, etc., but in cases of grievous diseases and great pain.

E. The **sick person** only has **one responsibility** – to call for the elders.

F. The Elders:

1. Who are the elders?

- The term “elder” is used in several different ways:
- A person of advanced years
- A person holding a position of authority
- Those associated with the Synagogue were referred to as elders.
- The members of town councils are called “the city elders.”
- The church officer responsible for the pastoral oversight and spiritual leadership is referred to as “elder” in many N.T. passages.

2. Since James is talking to Jewish Christians scattered abroad by persecution it is evident that he is referring to the pastor.

3. The terms “elder”, “pastor”, “bishop”, or under shepherd are interchangeable and speak of the pastor.

C. What is the elder (elders) to do?

1. Two things – He is to **pray** for, and **anoint** the sick person with oil.
2. Verse 14 does not say anything about the sick person praying. It says, “and let them (the elders) pray over him.”

3. However, it is safe to assume that if the sick person was concerned enough to call for the elders, he or she had already prayed about their condition.

D. What does this praying and anointing with oil mean?

When you check the commentaries you will find many different interpretations:

1. Some say that the anointing with oil is symbolic and has no medicinal value.
2. Others say the anointing is medicinal and helps the person get well.
3. Gill is not decisive except to say that it is not the extreme unction practiced by the Catholic Church.

So we see that there are varied interpretations of this verse. However, what does the Bible say about it?

E. Thoughts about anointing:

1. We must remember that James is writing to Israelites scattered through persecution.
2. Anointing with oil was a Jewish custom; therefore James did not need to explain it to them.

It is noteworthy that “anointing” is not mentioned in any New Testament book written specifically to the gentiles.

3. Anointing is mentioned in two ways in the New Testament:
 - The Greek word “Chrio” is the religious word used for anointing one to a position or office.

Luke 4:18, "The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor;"

2 Corinthians 1:21, "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, *is* God;"

- The Greek word "aleipho" means "to rub or spread on"

James uses "aleipho" --- "to rub or spread on"

4. Anointing with oil as already stated was a Jewish custom and practice used for first aid:

Mark 6:13, "And they (the Lord's disciples) cast out many devils, and **anointed** with oil many that were sick, and healed *them*"

Luke 7:46, (Our Lord speaking), "My head with oil thou didst not **anoint**: but this woman hath **anointed** my feet with ointment."

Luke 10:33,34, "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion *on him*, And went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, **pouring in oil and wine**, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him."

5. **In these verses we see that oil and wine have healing properties, but anointing with oil also has a psychological effect - it strengthens the faith of the sick person and gives them something to help them believe that they can be made well.**

III. Verse 15:

"And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

- A. **The elder or elders are to pray and anoint** "in the name of the Lord."

B. The result is seen in verse 15:

“And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.”

C. Questions and thoughts concerning this passage:

1. Does this passage teach that we are not to seek medical attention, but only call for the elders to come and pray?
 - There are religious groups that say yes! However, God never intended that we neglect the medical care available in our day.
 - **Nor does the Lord intend for believers to depend entirely on the physicians and neglect to take it to the Lord in prayer.**
2. Another Question. **Is there such a thing as divine healing?**
 - Is there any other kind? No!
 - I have been asked many times if I believe in divine healing. My answer is “does anyone heal, but God?”
 - The physician can treat our ailments, the surgeon can perform surgical procedures, the pharmacist studies many years in order to be able to formulate medications.
 - But none of these men can heal. **ONLY GOD HEALS!!**
 - There is only one kind of healing – it is **DIVINE HEALING** that comes from the gracious hand of God!
3. Seeing verse 15 an unconditional promise causes problems:

“And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him”

4. In the world in which we live it is obvious that not everyone is healed.

Paul said in II Timothy 4:20, , “Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.”

1 Timothy 5:23, The Apostle Paul speaking to Timothy says:

“Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.”

5. Considering Mark 11:24, another verse that seems to be unconditional will help us answer why not all are healed!

Mark 11:24, “Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*.”

6. Gill says “that is, according to the revealed will of God, is for the confirmation of his Gospel, and for the glory of his name:”

It is understood that there is an implied condition! The same is true in verse 15!!!

So, do we have the right to look to God for healing and expect Him to grant our petition?

Exodus 15:26, “I *am* the LORD that healeth thee.”

Matthew 8:16,17, “When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with *his* word, **and healed all that were sick:** That it **might be fulfilled** which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare *our* sicknesses.”

Application:

- A. We should not hesitate to take everything to God in prayer.

Hebrews 4:16, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

- B. Our petitions are granted in accordance with God’s will.
 - 1. When we pray in faith and in accordance with God’s will our petitions will be answered with an affirmative “yes.”

Verse 15c, “and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.”

- 2. This portion of the verse indicates that sometimes sickness is the result of sin.
- 3. If it is the case, the verse clearly indicates that not only will physical healing take place but spiritual healing as well.
- 6. It is important to note that not all suffering is the result of sin.

Examples: Job and Job’s friends

John 9:3, “And as *Jesus* passed by, he saw a man which was blind from *his* birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? *Jesus* answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.”

Conclusions:

- A. We do well to remember that God’s glory is His primary purpose in all things.

- B. We should also remember that all healing comes from God.
- C. Having used the means God has given us, the doctor, medications, and the hospital – then after prayer --- we submit ourselves to God leaving the outcome in His sovereign hands.
- D. Whatever the outcome, I know that I can face tomorrow, for He holds my hand.
- E. If God heals, praise Him for His mercy and goodness.
- F. And if it is God's will that our lives be a closed book; then may we have faith to believe that He will heal us on the other side.

Effectual Prayer

Text: James 5:16-18

“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.”

Introduction:

- A. In the first part of verse 16 we notice three specific things:
 - 1. “Confess your faults one to another”
 - 2. “Pray one for another”
 - 3. “That ye may be healed.”
- B. Verse 16 also summarizes verses 13-15 and gives the theme of the chapter with these words:

I. Verse 16a:

“Confess your faults one to another.”

- A. Some say this verse advocate public confession of personal intimate sins to the entire congregation.
- B. However, the wording of James 5:16 does not require such an interpretation!

1. But the confession here required is that of Christians to one another.
2. It is wise to let the extent of the sin determine the extent of the confession!
 - If the sin is against an individual the Scripture does not require that the person confess the sin to the congregation, **but rather that he go to the person sinned against.**

Matthew 5:23, 24, "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that **thy brother** hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first **be reconciled to thy brother**, and then come and offer thy gift."

- If the sin is committed against a group then confession and reconciliation should be made with the group.
- If the offense is against the whole congregation then the sin should be confession to the entire congregation.
- However, if the sin is against God and God alone, then confession is required to God alone.

James 5:16, does not indicate that a sin should be confessed to the elders, unless the sin is against the elders.

- Some have twisted this verse to mean that all sin should be confessed to a priest.
 - If that were true then the priest should also confess to the laymen, because the verse says confess your sins one to the other.
3. The purpose of confession in James 5:16:

- The confession here deals with fellowship with God and with others, and the restoration of that fellowship.
- Unconfused sin hinders our relationship with God.

Psalm 66:18 says, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:”

- Unconfused sin also hinders our relationship with other Christians.

For that reason the Apostle Paul wrote:

“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.”

- Confession is a powerful deterrent to sin:

Example:

Say we tell a lie, and later have to go back and confess to the person we told the lie too.

Confessing a sin is a difficult thing. But when we do we feel a sense of great relief, but at the same time it makes us think twice before we tell someone else another lie.

B. “Pray one for another.”

1. I think there are two meanings to this portion

- First – we are to pray for one another

Example: The Prayer List in the bulletin

- Secondly, (and I think this is what James is specifically dealing with at this point).
- Both those who have sin and those sinned against are to pray for each other.

- This type of prayer unites hearts and brings about reconciliation.

C. “That ye may be healed.”

1. Those that are physically sick and seek healing through prayer are healed. (Context of the passage).
2. Spiritual healing is also meant.
3. Confession and reconciliation bring spiritual healing and restored fellowship.

II. Verse 16b:

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

A. There are two conditions for effectual prayer found in verse 16:

1. **The first condition** - The character of the petitioner – the petitioner is to be a **righteous** man or woman.
 - Only God is righteous! However at the moment of our salvation the righteousness of Christ was imputed to us. Therefore God sees us as faultless, and guiltless.
 - James is speaking of a person whose way of thinking, feeling, and acting is wholly conformed to the will of God. A pious person who needs no rectification in their heart or life.
2. **The second condition** – deals with the earnestness (sincerity and intensity) of the prayer.

- The Greek word translated “effectual” means to be strong, to have power or strength to overcome.
- **The RSV translates this verse “The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects.”**
- In verse 16, the word “prayer” is translated from the Greek word “deesis” (deh’-ay-sis) and emphasizes a particular request for a specific need.
- Effectual prayer is serious, earnest, fervent prayer for a specific request.

II. Verse 17-18:

“Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.”

A. James uses Elijah as an example of fervent prayer:

1. These verses refer to I Kings 16 & 17 where God sends Elijah to King Ahab and his wife Jezebel
 - Elijah prays for the rain to stop and it does.
 - 3 ½ years later Elijah prays for it to rain and the drought ends and it rains.
2. Note what James says concerning Elijah:

“Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are...”

- **In other words Elijah was not a superman, he was a man that had the**

same feelings and emotions that you and I have!

- Secondly, Elijah prayed “fervent” prayers that God heard and answered! Why????
- Elijah knew the sovereignty and holiness of God. Knowing that he sought to be a righteous man, and was grieved at the sin of Israel. He was also a man that believed and obeyed God (time after time).
- Dear saints, many of our prayers are not answered, because we do not believe and obey God.

B. Prayer is very important to God:

The Bible gives a beautiful imagery of how God looks at prayer:

C. The Tabernacle:

1. When the priest entered the Holy place the candleholder on left, the table of shew bread was on the right, and directly in front of the veil was the altar of incense.
2. While the priest burned the incense on the alter the people prayed outside in the courtyard.
3. The fragrance of the incense flowed up to God as a sweet savour unto the LORD.

D. In Revelation 5, we see the Lamb of God prevailing to open the book of redemption, When our Lord takes the book from Him who sat upon the throne scripture says,

“And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.”

- E. All of this is another beautiful picture of how God looks at our prayers.

Revelation 8:3,4, “And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.”

- F. The imagery is all though the Scripture. Our prayers are a sweet savor or fragrance that ascends to and delights God in Heaven.

Conclusions:

- A. Elijah prayed earnestly and it stopped raining for 3 ½ years.
- B. Elijah stood boldly in an evil and corrupt day.
- C. 3 ½ years later Elijah prayed for rain. He prayed six times and did not receive an answer, but the seventh time his servant returned and said that he saw a cloud the size of a mans hand over the sea. He told Ahab that it would rain – and it did.
- D. James wrote about Elijah to those who were scattered, those facing problems, persecution, and great need.
 - 1. He said Elijah was a man, he had feeling, needs, disappointments like you and I have.
 - 2. But Elijah prayed to bring revival and it came
 - 3. He prayed in the hour of need in the home of the widow of Zarephath and God provided.

4. He prayed when the widow's son died and God heard his prayer and restored the boy to his mother.

E. Elijah was a man, just as you are

1. The book of James deals with wisdom, faith, trials, temptations, patience, good works, the tongue, worldliness, God's will, humility, and relationship with God and other Christians.
2. Is it surprising that the last chapter deals with prayer!
3. James says, seek righteousness, and then pray earnestly, boldly, believing God because

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

Reconciling A Brother

Text: James 5:19, 20

“Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”

Introduction:

I. The controversy regarding these two verses:

- A. Matthew Henry, W.A. Criswell, and others, believe that the Apostle James is speaking about the winning of souls.
- B. Gill, Epp, Vaughan, Jamison Fausset Brown, and Nelson believe that the Apostle is speaking of the restoration of a brother or sister that has erred and fallen away from the truth.
- C. While the winning of souls is of paramount importance!
- D. I do not believe that the laws of Biblical Hermeneutics allow that interpretation of verses 19 & 20.

II. The reasons why this passage does not deal with the winning of the Lost:

- A. The Laws of Biblical Hermeneutics require the verses in question to be in agreement with the near context (The book, chapter, and those verses before and after the verses in question).
 - 1. To **whom** is James speaking?
 - The first verse of the Book tells us to whom James is writing.

“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, **to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad**, greeting. **My brethren**, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of **your** faith worketh patience.”

- As James moves from topic to topic, time after time he clarifies **to whom** he is writing:

Chapter 2 starts, “My brethren”

Chapter 3 starts, “My brethren”

Chapter 4 starts, “My brethren”

Chapter 5 starts “Go now ye rich men”

James is very careful to specify when he is speaking to another group other than the brethren!

Chapter 5, verse 7, “Be patient therefore, brethren,”

2. The Near Context of verse 19,20:

- Verse 12 “my brethren”

(James clarifies whom he is addressing)

- Verse 19 – Who is addressed? --- “Brethren”

The Laws of Biblical Hermeneutics demand the conclusion that the Apostle James is addressing the same group that he has address throughout the entire book.

B. Further proofs:

1. The grammatical structure of the verse:

“Brethren, if any of you...” **You who?** – You brethren

If James were speaking of the lost he would have said, “If any of them” - Indicating those outside of Christ.

2. The meaning of “Do err.”

“**Err**” is the Greek word “planao.” It **means** “to go astray, to wander from the truth, to sin.

Matthew 18:12, “How think ye? if a man **have** an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and **seeketh that which is gone astray?**”

One who is not converted cannot go astray!

3. Verse 20 – “he which **converteth** the sinner from the error of his way.”

“Converteth” is the Greek word “epistrepho”

4. “Converteth” has two meanings:

- **First** – it speaks of salvation – the transitive meaning -- “to turn to” - speaking of a sinner turning to Christ for salvation.
- **Secondly** - it is used to speak of one returning or coming back.
- Thus the verse could say --- he that causes one to return, or come back, from the error of his way.

Therefore, using the meaning “causing one to return, is hermeneutically acceptable and in this case agrees with the context of the verse.

5. Verse 20 – “shall save a soul from death”

- Again we have a word that can be used in two ways.
- **First** – it can mean Spiritual death.
- **Secondly** – it can mean physical death.

- Which is the meaning I believe it has in this verse.
- We will discuss the meaning further momentarily.

C. **Now that we have established to whom James is speaking** let's investigate **what** he is saying to the "brethren".

I. Verse 19:

"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

James' last words contain a tone of pastoral concern and evidence the spirit of love and practical service that runs like a golden thread through the entire epistle.

- A. The connection to the preceding verses:
1. These verses are closely connected to those that precede them.
 2. In the preceding verses James urged the brethren to show sincere interest in their brethren, by praying for them, especially in times of sickness or affliction.
- B. In verses 19, 29 the Apostle James reveals what our attitude toward those who are spiritually sick should be.
1. Instead of condemning them for their failures, James encourages us to lovingly seek them out try to reclaim them for the Lord's glory!
 2. This is a ministry of love and compassion
 - Every Christian should love the brethren

- Every Christian should be ready to demonstrate mercy and compassion.
- Ministering and Mercy are spiritual gifts

Galatians 6:1,2, “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”

D. “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth” (verse 19a) is a conditional clause.

1. **Conditional means** that it describes an action that is assumed not to be true, but that is possible and probable.

1 Corinthians 10:12,13, “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

2. “Brethren” qualifies the “Any of you”

The erring brother is a believer who has wandered away from the truth.

3. This person is in danger! Why? Because they are traveling the broad road that leads to destruction.

Remember the Greek word for “**err**” means “to go astray, to wander from the truth, to sin.

4. **“Truth,”** has great significance both in this passage and throughout the New Testament.
 - It has already been used twice in the epistle of James:

- In 1:18 James spoke of "the word of truth" as the instrument of the new birth.
- In 3:14 he cautions the brethren about lying "against the truth."
- Therefore the word "truth" can speak of doctrine, conduct, or both.
- It is used this way in Matthew 18:12,

"How think ye? if a man **have** an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and **seeketh that which is gone astray?**"

- It suggests that the person has lost their way **(either renounced the doctrines (principles) of the faith or are not living by its teachings - or both.)** and is wandering aimlessly along a dangerous path toward destruction.

Illustrate: Mountain paths in Mexico and their dangers.

- I John 1:6 speaks of "doing" the truth
- Galatians 5:7 speaks of "obeying" the truth.

E. "And one convert him"

1. We have already discussed the meanings of "Convert".

Thus "one convert him" speaks of the brother or sister that causes the erring one to return, or come back, from the error of his way.

II. Verse 20:

“Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”

- A. Verse 20 explains what happens when someone turns a sinner to the truth:

In Luke 22:32, our Lord used the same word when He spoke to Peter: "When thou art **converted** strengthen thy brethren."

1. Peter had been converted for almost 3 1/2 years. But he fell into great sin by denying his Lord.
2. The circumstances made him look like an unregenerate man.
3. When Peter's faith recovered, he repented, and returned to following Christ.

Some versions render it in the imperative, "in time, convert, turn, or returned."

4. "And strengthen thy brethren,"
 - Which is exactly what he did.
 - All of the disciples had forsaken the Lord and fled. After his recovery, Peter gathered them up, and they returned to Jerusalem, where they assembled together with other believers.
 - Peter strengthened their faith in the Lord, and encouraged them to choose another apostle to take the place of Judas.
 - Through the power of God, Peter continued to strengthen the brethren until his death.

Conclusion:

- A. Therefore **“converteth the sinner from the error of his way”** implies much more than a mere rescue from error.
- B. It suggests that the one who wandered is healed of his backslidings and returns to the joy of God's favor and fellowship.

John Adam said: "Some who are thus drawn away from the truth never were really under its power. They professed without having embraced the faith of the gospel. They belonged to the visible Church, but were not enrolled among its living members. These are turned in a real and thorough way only by being brought back to that God from whom they have all along been going astray. . . But others are real Christians who have been seduced by the great deceiver. They have gone astray. . . so grievously that, were they left to persist in the course entered on, they should eternally perish. . . . But the constitution of the covenant provides against such an issue, and one of the chief means employed to prevent it is prayer and effort on the part of fellow-Christians"

Just how the Christian is to go about the work of restoring an erring brother is not explained.

- B. How is this work of reconciliation to be accomplished?
 - 1. First, we should show a great interest in the lives of the brethren and be an active encourager in their lives.
 - 2. Secondly, from the context (verses 13-18), we may safely assume that intercessory prayer plays a large part in it.

We should all consider ourselves members of the fellowship of encouragement in this church!

- C. What are the far-reaching consequences of a Christian reclaiming a backslider from the error of his way?

1. He is the instrument of saving a soul from death.
2. **Is this physical or spiritual death?**
 - Since it speaks of a Christian is cannot mean eternal death. Because eternal death is separation from God in hell, which a Christian will never experience.
 - Therefore, it has to speak of physical death:
3. **There are many passages that speak of physical death due to sin:**

Examples:

Ananias & Sapphira

1 Corinthians 11:29,30, "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

1 Corinthians 5:5, "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

4. And the **second** far-reaching consequences of a Christian reclaiming a backslider from the error of his way is secondly covering a multitude of sins.

"And shall hide a multitude of sins," means that by bringing the wander to repent and confess their sins, they receive forgiveness.

- When I think of these backslidings I think of Peter.
- Consider the following Scripture.

Isaiah 38:17, “But thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.”

Psalm 103:12, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. removing them as far as the east is from the west”

Micah 7:19, “He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.”

- The idea is that God pardons their sin and treated them as if they had never committed sin.
- **The work of saving souls and forgiving sin is God's work.**
- **However Christians are privileged to be God's instruments.**

Calvin wrote, "We must therefore take heed, lest souls perish through our sloth, whose salvation God puts in a manner in our hands. Not that we can bestow salvation upon them; but that God by our ministry delivers and saves them who seem otherwise to be near to destruction."

- D. Verses 13-18 teach us that we are to be concerned with the health of other's believers.
- E. Verses 19-20 teach us that we are also to be concerned with their spiritual health.
 1. When we see a brother starting to stray from the path of truth, we are to seek to restore them, and turn them from the error of their ways.
 2. James says that the reward is saving a brother or sister from death, and the prevention of a

multitude of sins that would be a bad testimony
and bring the judgment of God.