

Our Daily Homily - James

by F.B. Meyer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a blameless life, free from sin and defilement, and highlights the benefits of poverty, simplicity, and service.

Scripture: Isaiah 6:5, Matthew 5:8, Romans 12:2, Philippians 4:6-7, James 1:27, James 2:5, James 3:2, James 4:5, James 5:16, 1 Peter 1:15-16

Topics: "The Power of Prayer", "Holiness"

Description

F.B. Meyer emphasizes the call to live an unspotted life as defined by James 1:27, highlighting the importance of pure and undefiled religion that manifests in holy living. He reflects on the significance of poverty in God's eyes, illustrating how Christ's life among the poor exemplifies humility and reliance on God. Meyer warns against the sins of speech and the dangers of worldliness, urging believers to fully yield to the Holy Spirit, who desires complete devotion. He concludes by affirming the power of prayer from a righteous man, which can bring about significant change and relief in times of suffering.

Transcript

Unspotted from the world - James 1:27

"The white flower of a blameless life!" The view of pure and undefiled religion presented in this definition was characteristic of James, surnamed the Just, who was revered even by the Jews for his austere piety, and whose vesture of simple white was emblematic of his stainless character. Whatever may be our views about the doctrines of Christianity, we must see to it that their outcome be in pure and holy living. Orthodoxy of view is utterly worthless unless it be combined with orthodoxy of life. This was the side of truth on which James insisted.

What a beautiful conception is here! The unspotted life! No book is like the Bible in its conceptions of sin; indeed, we owe to it the thought of sin, and its evil in the sight of God. But there is no book with so lofty an ideal of what life may become when it is yielded to the grace of Christ. A cleansed heart, and an unspotted robe; no sin allowed and permitted in the soul, and no evil habit allowed to dominate and enthrall the life.

But how is it to be ours?

(1) Put the grave of Christ between you and your former life, and so reckon that you are dead to all solicitations that would induce you to live according to the lusts and passions that dominate the rest of the

Gentiles.

(2) Seek by use to exercise your spiritual senses, that you may be quick to discern the first and most distant approach of temptation, that so it may find you hidden in the risen living Saviour.

(3) Let the blood of Jesus be instantly applied, so that you may be immediately cleansed from the least spot that may have defiled your dress.

(4) Keep away your eyes, and speech, and feet from all scenes and society that have a defiling influence.

Hath not God chosen the poor of his world? - James 2:5

There is nothing that men dread more than poverty. They will break every commandment in the Decalogue rather than be poor. But it is God's chosen lot. He had one opportunity only of living our life, and He chose to be born of parents too poor to present more than two doves at His presentation in the temple. All His life was spent among the poor. His chosen apostles and friends were, with few exceptions, poor. He lived on charity, rode in triumph on a borrowed steed, ate His last meal in a borrowed room, and lay in a borrowed grave. "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world?" Why is poverty so dear to God?

It is in harmony with the spirit of the Gospel. - The world-spirit aggrandizes itself with the abundance of its possessions. Its children vie with each other in luxury and display. The spirit of Christ, on the other hand, chooses obscurity, lowliness, humility; and with these poverty is close akin.

It compels to simpler faith in God. - The rich man may trust Him; but the poor man must. There is so much temptation to the well-to-do classes to interpose their wealth between themselves and the pressure of daily need; but the poor man has no fortress in which to hide, except the two strong arms of God. He waits on Him for his daily bread, and gathers the manna falling straight from the sky.

It gives more opportunities of service. - The rich are waited on, and pay for servants to wait on those they love. The poor, on the contrary, are called to minister to one another, at every meal, and in all the daily round of life. Herein they become like Him who was, and is, as one that serveth, and who became poor, that through His poverty we might be rich.

If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man - James 3:2

Think of the sins of speech! How innumerable they are! When we see them in the light of this chapter, we can understand the holy Isaiah saying, "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 sins of speech about ourselves. - The tongue boasteth great things. We are all apt to be vain, boastful, exaggerated. We tell stories that redound to our own credit; contrive to focus attention on our own words and deeds; and even in delivering God's messages manage to let it be seen that we have a clearer insight into truth or a closer familiarity with God than our fellows.

The sins of speech about others. - "We break the law of courtesy, and become harsh, insolent, and uncivil; or the law of purity, and repeat stories that leave a stain; or the law of truth, and practice insincerity, equivocation, and dissimulation; or the law of kindness, and are harsh and implacable to those who are beneath us in station. Or in our desire to stand well with others we are guilty of flattery, servility, timeserving, and the like."

The sins of speech in connection with God's work. - We disparage other workers; compliment them to their faces on addresses they have delivered, and disparage them behind their backs; pass criticisms which take away the effect which their words had otherwise exercised over others; contrive to indicate one defect in which was otherwise a perfect achievement. Alas for us! How greatly we need to offer the prayer of the psalmist: Set a watch, O God, upon our lips!

The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy - James 4:5

A very deep and remarkable verse! The apostle is contending against the worldliness which was so rife among the believers he was addressing. They were set on pleasure; they sought the friendship of the world, and became unfaithful to their divine Lover; they were proud and high-minded. He went so far as to speak of them as adulterers and adulteresses; and then adopting a gentler, pleading tone, he says, "You are grieving the gentle Holy Spirit who has come to dwell within you, who yearns with a jealous envy to possess your entire nature for Himself."

The Spirit of God dwells within thee, O believer in Jesus Christ. If a man have not the Spirit of God, he is none of His; and since thou art undoubtedly one of us, thou hast most certainly the Holy Spirit. But the mistake of thy life consists in this, that He hath not thee. Some part of thy heart is given, but not all; and this causes Him the most exquisite pain, like that which we suffer from jealousy.

No keener pain is possible to the heart of man than to have good reason for the belief that a loved one is not wholly true; that there has been an alienation of affection which was once whole and entire; that another is receiving a part at least of the heart's devotion. The fire and screw are light in comparison with our anguish then; but, this is what the Spirit of God suffers when we share between Him and the world that love which should be all His own. "I, the Lord thy God am a jealous God," is as true as when first spoken from Sinai. The person of Jesus Christ must be the Sun of our system, though that system may include many planets beside.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much - James 5:16

It might be rendered literally: "Very strong is the supplication of a righteous man, energizing." When a man is right with God, not regarding iniquity in his heart, nor seeking aught for his own pleasure, the energy of the Divine Spirit moves mightily within him, and his prayers become very strong. They recall the Master's, with their strong cryings and tears.

The righteous man finds relief for suffering in prayer. - "Is any among you suffering? let him pray." There are sorrows we cannot tell to our dearest. Surges of grief sweep over us for which we have no words. Life is a stern fight for us all; and each heart knows its own bitterness. But there is always one resort: we can pour out our sorrows into the ear of our compassionate and merciful High Priest.

The righteous man prays the prayer of faith. - The prayer of faith is that which is so sure of the Divine answer that it knows that it has received it, though there is no appearance of its having been granted to the sense. We can only pray that prayer when we have asked what is in God's will to bestow. But righteous men cannot always pray thus, because they do not know the Lord's will on matters not recorded in this book. There are some sicknesses which are unto death, and we cannot pray the prayer of faith for these. If you cannot pray the prayer of faith, take medicine, and use the best means in your reach.

The righteous man can affect the whole history of his fatherland by his prayers. - It was so with Elijah, as we learn here. It was so with John Knox, whose prayers were more dreaded by Mary of Scots than the armies of Philip.

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