

Epistle of James - Part 1

by John Hunter

This sermon explores the foundational teachings of the Epistle of James, focusing on the tested life, the new birth, and the importance of the Word of God in Christian living.

Duration: 1:00:24

Scripture: James 1:2-3, James 1:12-15, James 1:17, James 1:19-20, James 1:22, James 1:27

Topics: "James"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker introduces the book of James and explains that they will be studying one chapter per night. The sermon is divided into three main subjects: the tested life, the new birth, and the Word of God. The speaker emphasizes the importance of being a doer of the word and not just a hearer. They also discuss the mechanics of sin and the need for self-control, as well as the characteristics of true religion, including controlling one's tongue, caring for widows, and remaining unspotted from the world.

Transcript

We are going to have studies in the epistle by James. We'll read tonight in James chapter one. You will notice that there are five chapters in the book.

We have five nights. So we'll give ourselves to a chapter a night. Now you'll understand that I can't by any means go through it verse by verse and statement by statement.

We would like to have done that but we haven't the time. So each night I shall read the chapter. As I read I shall divide it for you and then I shall pick out the salient truth that lies in each of these chapters.

So tonight chapter one. Now to handle it easily I'll divide it into three. These three are big subjects.

Verses one to twelve, the tested life. Now your life must be tested. The tested life.

One to twelve. Verses thirteen to eighteen, the new birth. Verses nineteen to twenty-seven, the word of God.

So you'll immediately recognize that these are teaching meetings. The tested life, one to twelve, the new birth. Thirteen to eighteen, the word of God, nineteen to twenty-seven.

Let's read it, shall we? 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 you fall into diverse 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 tough.

For let not that man think that he shall receive anything 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, the tested life.

Now the new verse. 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.

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 cursed fruits of his creatures. The new verse.

Now the word of God. 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 soul. 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 glance.

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 word, 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.

You don't think that, but that's what it says. Pure religion, and undefiled, before God the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. Now back to verse one, and we'll begin with the exposition.

Now I shall, you'll notice I've dropped the second hymn. That's because we've so much ground to cover, and I'll probably each night expound until about ten past nine. Hope to have the meeting over by a quarter past.

Now first of all, when you would approach an epistle like this, you ask yourself three questions. Who wrote it? To whom was it written? And why was it written? Well we're told who wrote it. It's James.

I take it out of the five James mentioned in the New Testament, that this man is the Lord's brother. He wrote it to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad. So I take it that addressing them as brethren and beloved brethren, that they were Christians who had been scattered abroad by persecution.

The reasons why he wrote it are numerous. Let me detail some for you. First of all, he wrote for a doctrinal reason.

He wrote to announce the principle, the doctrine of justification by works, chapter two. And just at this point, let me say this to you good men and sisters that read your Bible. I hope you haven't been tripped up with the suggestion that when Paul talks of justification by faith, that's God's word and justification by faith by works is man's word, for that's not true.

More about that tomorrow night when I deal with the doctrine. But doctrinally, he's writing to teach the truth of justification by. Secondly, he's writing for social reasons.

He's going to have quite a bit to say about the rich and the poor. And also, now this will surprise you, he's also going to write about the exploitation of the workers by their employers. You possibly didn't think tonight that that was in your New Testament, but it is.

It's in the epistle of James. There's a social passion that blazes its way through the Bible that demands righteous dealings between master and servant. And that was in the Bible long before there was socialism and communism.

So he writes for social reasons. Thirdly, he writes for some practical reasons. He writes to encourage them in the trials that they're going through.

He writes to show them that in these trials, they will need wisdom. He writes to teach them that if you're a true Christian, one of the supreme marks is that you've learned to control your tongue. And finally, on this practical reason, he writes to show the need for separation from the world.

Otherwise, he calls you an adulteress. If you're going in for the world and claiming to be a Christian, then you have betrayed the terms of the sacred covenant. Finally, he writes for devotional reasons.

That is, he writes to try and encourage them to go in for humility and prayer and joy. They are broadly the reasons for the epistle. Now, verses 1 to 12, the test of life, let me break it up for you.

Verse 1 is the salutation. Verses 2 to 4, the testing of faith. You'll get the expression, won't you, in verse 3, the trying, the testing of your faith.

Verses 2 to 4, the testing of faith. Verse 1 is the salutation. 2 to 4, the testing of faith.

Verses 5 to 8, the need for wisdom. 9 to 11, the rich and the poor. Verse 12, the conclusion.

There's a blessing for those who endure and the crowd. The conclusion. Come now to verse 1. You will notice that he describes himself as a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

You will notice in verse 2, he talks about having the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, notice that. Verse 1 of chapter 1, verse 1 of chapter 2. Now, I'll tell you why.

This James, whose writing is known as the Lord's brother, he was reared alongside of the Lord Jesus. Now, John's very blunt. In verse 5 of chapter 7 of his gospel, he tells us that none of the family believed in Christ when he went out into his public ministry.

And Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15 that James was converted when he saw his erstwhile brother in resurrection. He appeared to James. That's interesting.

But he's converted now. His eyes have been opened to the royal glory of the lad he was reared with. So now he comes to address him.

Now, listen carefully. And he calls him the Lord Jesus Christ. If anyone would have had a right to call him Jesus, would have been the man that was reared with him.

But now that he has seen that this person is none other than one equal with God, he calls him the Lord Jesus Christ. So don't you get familiar and call him Jesus. He's your Lord.

He's the son of God. He's not your big brother. Oh, this terrible casualness that's going about.

This false intimacy that treats Christ as if he was your next door neighbor. He's the Lord Jesus Christ. When he talks about him, he never addresses him any other way.

Notice, he's the servant of God and of the Lord Jesus. And whenever you get that phrases like that, God and the Lord Jesus, that's a reference to the deity of Christ. God and the Lord Jesus Christ indicates oneness, indicates unity, indicates equality, indicates differences of personality in the Godhead.

Again, you will notice that that servant here is the word for slave or born slave. Does that convey anything to you? In those days, a slave was nothing. He had no rights of any kind at all.

His master could abuse him and kill him and nobody asked any questions. If he had a wife and a family, the children belonged to the master. It was a humiliating business to be a slave.

Nobody gloried in being a slave until Christianity came. Have you good folks ever seen that Christianity converts words as well as people? Nobody gloried in being a slave until Christianity came and men began to glory in being the slaves of God and Christ. They raised the word to a dignity it never knew.

It's the same with the cross. Nobody gloried in a cross. A person carrying his cross was going out, going out to die and never to come back, going out the object of ridicule and contempt.

Nobody gloried in a cross until Christ died on the cross. Then men were saying, God forbid that I should glory save in the cross. Christianity has converted words and made them glorious.

A slave. Let me tell you what it meant to be a slave. It meant absolute obedience.

It meant absolute humility. It meant absolute loyalty, absolute obedience. He had no rights of his own.

Absolute humility, no will of his own. Absolute loyalty, no interest of his own. Absolute obedience, the law of the word of his master.

Absolute humility, the law of the will of his master. Absolute loyalty, the law of possession. Have you got that? To be a Christian is total obedience.

No rights of your own. And then everybody's insisting on the rights today. They all want the rights.

No rights. You're under the law of the world. That's total submission.

Absolute humility, no will of your own. Lost in the will of God. You've come to it.

Not my will. Absolute loyalty. No interest of your own.

Everybody wants their interests as well as living for Christ. Isn't that right? You want your interests and you want your pleasures and you want this and that. But slavery, slavery supreme to God and Christ demands my obedience and my will and my loyalty.

You think the same? All these things begin to realize the kind of ministry that James brings. He wouldn't have been welcomed on our conference platforms. We don't like this sort of thing, do we? Come now, please, verses two to five, the testing of faith.

You'll appreciate that faith must be tested. How can it be proved to be real if it's not tested? Now, verse two. My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into different forms of temptation.

Now, just a minute before we begin. In this chapter, you have the word temptation here. Isn't that right? Verse two.

And if you go down the chapter, you've got the word tempt in verse 13, 14. Now, there's a difference. It's the same one.

But in verses one to 12, it is the idea of testing. Count it all joy when you experience different forms of testing. But when you come to verses 13 to 15, it's temptation.

That is, let no man say when he's tempted. I am tempted of God. You see, God tested Abraham.

Offer up your son. He tested Job. This is what's here.

Now, watch again, please, how James somersaults things. He says, whenever different forms of testing come into your life, count it all joy. And that's just what we don't do.

Now, he's not saying that you'll enjoy being in the testing, but your attitude is one of joy. That circumstances do not disturb the inward joy of your soul. Different forms of testing.

That's right, isn't it? For instance, you could lose your health. That's a big test. All right.

You could lose your husband. You could lose your wife. You could lose loved ones.

You could lose the business. You could be made what we call, here in the old country, be made redundant, lose the job. That's a big test.

You could be brought into a variety of circumstances, either in your family or outside, in which your faith is tested. Now, he says, count it all joy when you fall into different forms of testing, because you're realizing now that God's testing your faith. It's easy to say, I believe when the sun's shining all the time.

Isn't that right? You see, you went to a big steelworks, they've got a testing room. And they take the steel into the testing room to prove that it's genuine, as far as their claims are concerned. And God's wanting genuine Christians who come through the testing of their faith, that they prove to be genuine and real.

They don't evade the test. Verse three, knowing that the testing of your faith worketh endurance. Now, notice joy is based on knowledge.

You count it all joy because you know Christians are intelligent people. And we know that the testing of our faith will work endurance. That is that if you go through the test with God, it will produce what I would call stickability.

It will produce in your soul, the spirit of endurance. It will bring a little steel, give you a little backbone. Isn't that what we want? Isn't it good to watch the people of God in their circumstances? They don't give up.

They develop a spirit of endurance. That's four. But let endurance work itself out.

That you may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing. So that if you go through the circumstance, the results are threefold. One, perfect.

Now that word perfect is the word for mature. It's the maturing of a person that's fitting in them constantly for the work that God has called them to do. So that you're growing up to maturity.

The testing of your faith will work endurance. Let endurance work itself out in your life and you'll suddenly be mature. He says entire, perfect in every path, lacking in nothing.

So what he's indicating is this, that out of all the trials, you'll develop a maturity. Listen carefully. Perfect in every path, lacking in nothing means that the elements of weakness in your character will begin to disappear and the elements of strength take its place.

There was, there lives a way down yonder in Wales, a couple that many years ago I married. Within this last three years or so, very real problems come into the marriage. Now, the little lass I'm talking about was a very beautiful girl.

Very, I mean, simple. Now I mean, I don't mean she was simple in mind. I'm talking about simple in its finest sense.

And then these problems came. And then the first opportunity that I had and sat down beside her to talk to her, this is what she was saying. She says, I'm different now.

She says, this has matured me. She says, I'll never be the same again. In other words, she had gone through it with God and it was hard, very hard.

But step by step, she took it with God and she realized herself that it had changed life for her. She was nearer God now because she was proving God in a tremendously difficult situation. She didn't try to evade it.

She didn't go off and move off elsewhere. But in it with God, she found that elements of strength were coming into her character. It's a very real thing.

It's a very real thing to meet people who have gone through the experiences with God, isn't it? And emerge from it. You see, what he's teaching you is this, that the full orb life in its radiance is going through the experiences of life with God to bring out to the end the man or woman that God wants you to be. That life, life in its finest expression is life lived in fellowship with God and Christ in the circumstances of life.

Some Christians have problems with nerves, etc. Follow? And they go along to a psychiatrist. And very often the psychiatrist will say to them, no, your trouble is that you're inhibited.

Your religion inhibits you. The psychiatrist thinks because you don't do certain things that you're inhibited, that you're not allowed to express yourself. And they'll tell you, they'll tell you away, you go out and have a good night, either with drink or with a woman.

Now, verses like this tell you that real life and the development of character and personality is only known by the persons who go through life and the circumstances of life and fellowship with God and Christ. Now you remember that, you younger folks, don't you? Life, true life will only be developed in a nearness to God. God alone knows what lies before you.

So listen, the ministry might be preservative and helpful to you. Although you say, I could appreciate all that, but you know, I would need a lot of wisdom in a situation like that. Look at verse five.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not. Got that? Now let me go over the verse with you now. If any of you lack wisdom, that's your need.

Let him ask of God, him here of course means brother or sister, let him ask of God, that's your privilege. That giveth to all men liberally, that's his character. And upbraideth not, that will be your experience.

And it shall be given him the wisdom, that's the assurance. Got that? Come again. If any of you lack wisdom, over that write simplicity.

That is, you're simple enough to know that you need wisdom. Let him ask of God over that right availability. God is available.

That giveth to all men liberally over that right generosity. He giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not over that right ungrudging. And it shall be given him over that right certainty.

Got it? Come again. In the situations of life, when you feel that you'll never be able to cope and the things beginning to get beyond your capacity, then tread the sacred road to the sanctuary. Ask God, for God has everything you need.

And avail yourself of deity. For God is living to be all this to you. Make him real in life.

And you'll find that he'll give liberally. For God always gives bountifully, doesn't he? In his grace toward you when it is made you in Christ, hasn't it been the wealth of divine grace? God gives in, I was going to say in buckets full. You understand what that means, don't you? He pours it out.

That's right. It's just the same when you come to your Bible. You listen to any man that knows God and his book.

You'll find that he'll give you the truth of God in buckets. It'll come pouring out. For God's life, isn't he? He gives liberally and upbraideth not ungrudgingly.

That is, he's not like our friends, who if they give you once or twice, they begin to think you're imposing on them. They begin to upbraid you, don't you? You don't appreciate it. You're back again.

God's not like that. You ask him and he'll give you, come back constantly and he'll constantly give you. He never grudges you what he's got.

He lives for you. Let him ask and it shall be given him. He'll never disappoint you by asking faith.

Nothing wavering. You got that? A double-minded man, a double-souled man is unstable in all his ways. You can't have one eye on God and one eye on the world.

You got that? You can't be like the wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. There it is in the wind. It blows it this way and the next moment it's away the other way.

Oh no. You need to be marked by stability. You'll need to have faith to believe that what God says, God can do.

Verse 12. Blessed is the man that endureth testing. For when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

There it is now. And at the end of the road, you'll be crowned for you'll never lose by going through experiences with God. But this experience of God is hammered on the anvil of human experience.

That's how you get to know God. So he's saying, welcome with joy the opportunity of development of your talent in the circumstances of life. Let's come now to the new verse.

13 to 18. Follow now please will you? Verses 13 to 15, the mechanics of sin, sinning, the mechanics of sinning. 16 to 18, the new birth of his own will beget he us.

Now please verses 13 to 15. He's going to show us the background against which we received the new birth. He's going to teach us all about this doctrine of sin and sinning.

Verse 13. But no man say when he is tempted, he is tempted of God. For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.

Got that? So that the source of the temptation is not in God. Verse 14, the source of the temptation is in man's nature. Every man, everyone is tempted when they're drawn away of their lust and enticed.

And verse 15 is the result of yielding. Got that? Now come again. Well, it's pretty sound theology this.

But no one say when he's tempted, I am tempted of God. For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. That is, he's drawing attention to the fact that men will blame God for their sin and their desire to sin.

Am I right? For instance, at the fall, the woman blamed the serpent, but Adam blamed Eve. And he said, the woman thou gavest me to blame God. So people will tell you, it's not, I can't help my nature.

I can't help the strong desires that cry out for satisfaction. God's made me like that. Our national poet, Robbie Byrne, Robbie Byrne said this.

Thou knowest thou hast made me with passions wild and strong, and listening to their licing voice has oft times led me wrong to blame God. But despite the fact I've nearly made him a God over yonder in Scotland, he was a sinful man. That was his confession.

He blamed God. Now I know, I know that some of us have a bigger problem with passions inside than others. Remember that.

Remember this. Let no man say that when he is tempted that he's tempted by God, for God is the untemptable God. Got that? The untemptable God.

He says, he cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. If there's nothing in God to respond to evil, then he'll never cause you, put you in circumstances. If God doesn't dabble with sin, he never tempts others to dabble in it.

God is true to his character. He is the untemptable God. He cannot be tempted with sin.

There's nothing in him to respond. The same as there was nothing in Christ to respond to sin. Christ is the untemptable God.

I know that Christ was both God and man, but he was one person and you can't separate his person and say that he went into the temptation as a man, for that's not true. You can't separate his deity from his humanity or his humanity from his deity. He's one person.

Clear? That's 14. But we are all tempted when we were drawn away of our desires and enticed. It's the picture of the animal.

It's safe in its den until the bait is produced. Then it's drawn away of its own desire to get it and comes out to find itself caught in the trap. It's like the fish swimming through the sea.

It's perfectly safe in its habitat until it sees the bait, makes for it to find itself trapped. So he says, each one is tempted when he's drawn away of his own desires and enticed. Don't always think that lust in the Bible is sexual.

Evangelical Christians have this weakness. Every time lust is mentioned, they think it's sex. Strange thing that, isn't it? You can have strong desires in many another field of life and it will trap you and ensnare you.

Now look at verse 15. Verse 15 has in view childbirth. Desire when it hath conceived.

That's the conception in your mind. If you allow that to go on, it will bring forth sin. That's the birth of the child.

And when it has grown up and finished, it brings forth death. Now notice that. Lust, desire when it is conceived.

So it starts here. It's the awakening of the desire in your mind. Temptation is a natural desire which because of attraction is taken beyond the limits that God imposed.

So that, so that, the thing begins in here. It's living in here. It's been conceived.

For after all in childbirth, the child's living from conception. Abortion's murder. So you, so you, put it very simply.

So you begin in your mind. Something has been said by someone to you or some action performed and the thing begins to engender in your mind. You conceive in your mind.

You're reacting against them. Now, as soon as you have hard thoughts about them, if you're wise, you'll go to God about it and get rid of it. But if you, if you allow that thing in your mind to conceive and build up, you will ultimately bring that to birth in hot words.

Bring it to birth in certain actions. That will go up. It is showing the great principle that sin produces death, the point of no return.

That's the mechanics of sinning. It's pretty sound psychology, isn't it? I would to God that the Christians would go to their Bible for their psychology. Ah, but listen, isn't it good that God didn't leave us there? 16 to 18, the new birth.

God didn't leave us there. God moved to save us from ourselves. Do not err, my beloved brethren.

Every good gift and every perfect gift cometh down from the father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Every gift that's beneficial, every good gift, every perfect gift that's suited to your need comes down from the father of lights, resplendent in his holiness and majesty. But the God who never varies.

Listen now verse 18. Of his own will, that's the ground of new birth. Begat he us with the word of truth.

That's the means of the new birth. That we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures. That's the result of new birth.

Notice please, new birth. It began in his own will. Got that? God willed it.

Well, I know the general conception is that you got it when you believe. Listen, this is stressing the divine side. God willed it.

Of his own will. It's not so much the will of God as the God who wills. Of his own will, it began with him.

The wonder of electing grace. Sovereignty of God. You could never have brought yourself to that.

Of his own will, he begat us with the word of truth. That's the gospel. That we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

Remember the sheaf of first fruits? It was dedicated to God. A new birth has in view the fact that we come to life as a people consecrated to God. God moved to save you from your sins.

Thank God, won't you? Thank God for his will and his word. That's accomplished it. Now we'll come to the word of God.

19 to 27. 19 and 20, hearing the word. Verse 21, receiving the word.

22 to 25, obeying the word. 26 and 27, the purpose of the word. The word of God.

Now please, verses 19 and 20, hearing the word. 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.

He's calling for your ears to listen. Hear that? He says, swift to hear and slow to speak. Notice hearing and speaking, the connection, won't you? You see, your ability to speak depends upon your ability to hear.

Isn't that right? You take your child. Its ability to speak depends upon its ability to hear. It hears you.

So it says the things you say. That's why in the gospels, a man who was deaf had an impediment in his speech. His hearing was impaired, so his speaking was impaired.

Now, but notice, swift to hear, slow to speak. That's just the opposite with us, isn't it? You've never been in the company. You can't get a word down the edgeways.

Everybody's wanting to talk. Nobody's wanting to listen. But God says you must be swift to hear and slow to speak.

That's why he gave you two ears, but only one mouth. Swift to hear, slow to speak. It's a great thing to hear the word of God.

Isn't it? Great thing to listen to God. Swift to hear. Slow to speak.

Isn't that right? You know, there are lots of people you get into company with them and they're sitting there quiet. You think they're wise. Until they open their mouth, then you realize they're otherwise.

Isn't it? Swift to hear. Slow to speak. Slow to wrath.

Not quick temper. For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Anger and wrath never accomplish anything for God.

You say, what about that word in Ephesians 4, be angry and sin not, let not the sun go down upon your wrath. Then they're always quick to talk about righteous anger. Remind you very oftentimes a lot of flesh about it.

What he's telling you is this. Maybe at times you might be righteously angry. Be angry and sin not.

Never allow the taint of self to come in to your anger that will make it sin. And never go to bed nursing your wrath. Let not the sun go down upon it or the thing will have built up by the morning.

That's 21. You're going to hear the word of God and receive it. You'll need to get rid of a lot of things.

You'll need to lay aside all filthiness. What he calls here superfluity of naughtiness, excessive wickedness. And you'll need to cultivate meekness to receive the implanted word.

When you see the God by spirit implanting his word in your soul, it'll save your soul and save your life. God wants to implant that word. Do you hear it? God wants to implant it.

The implanted word. But he said, you'll need to put aside all filthiness, excess badness. Because the word of God can't be where there is filthiness and wickedness.

Now, just a minute. We live in a filthy world. Make no mistake about that.

The climate's rotten. Rubbing shoulders every day with men and women who are morally rotten. You'll need to put that aside.

Filthiness, uncleanness, dirt. Now you're not going for these double jokes. You say one thing and it means another.

That's filthy. And you'll receive with meekness the implanted word that will save your life. Preservation of the word of God.

Now the final section, please. 22 to 27. Obeying the word.

Verse 22, he makes the appeal. Be a doer and not a hearer. Verses 23 and 24.

He's drawing attention to the danger of disobedience. Verse 25. The blessedness, the wonder of obedience.

Now he, verse 22. Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. Well, it's possible to be self-deceived.

To think because you sit and listen to it, you're all right. I heard a sister going out a meeting one night saying, she says that was for me, but I'm not having it. That's a dangerous condition to be in, isn't it? That's a terrible thing.

Verse 23. If anyone be a hearer of the word and not a doer. Now you'll know just where you are.

You've come along tonight. You're sitting there. Now you're a hearer of the word.

Now you make sure that you practice it. If you are a hearer but not a doer, you're like unto a person that beholds their face in the glass. And beholding his face in the glass, looking in, he goeth his way and forgetteth what manner of man he was.

That is, he looks in the glass and he sees he's a little disheveled. He could do a haircut or combing his hair to make it sort of tidy. I hope you're all listening.

This casual idea to come up in and out. You think your hair hadn't been combed for weeks. All disheveled.

There's obviously something needed to be done. You go away and forget what manner of man you were. You see, when you come to your Bible, your Bible will show you what you are.

That's right. It exposes you. Now verse 25.

Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty. You might say, well, what's that? The gospel? Well, the gospel in its fullness is the word of God to us. We're looking in tonight to the perfect law, that of liberty.

This word that is a law that is binding on us. But this word that binding on us will lead us into liberty supreme. We're the only free people in the world.

We're the only people that know freedom. From the power of sin and Satan, it's domination. And slavery.

But notice, you look into it and you continue therein. Got that? You continue therein. Being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer, that man shall be blessed in his deed.

So, so we continue. Isn't that right? By the grace of God, we continue to this day. Now, can you see that he's trying to get over to us the authority of the word.

Words binding on us. That's good. Now come now to the last two verses.

Now we said, if there's any among you that would take the place of being religious, outwardly observing your religion, but you've no control over your tongue. Then he says, you're deceived. There's no result in your religion.

You see, according to James, a person who can master his tongue or her tongue. We'll see, we'll see on Thursday night that they can control the whole of their life. Now, you will notice, please, that he talks about a religion that is pure and undefiled, and it's marked by three things.

One, you can control your tongue. Two, you visit the fatherless and the widows. And three, you keep yourself unspotted from the world.

Now, do you think, do you think that you match up to this? Now, there are some widows in the meeting, you'll be listening. Now, we'll deal with the tongue on Thursday night, as well as wisdom from heaven. Explain it all to you.

But notice, pure religion and undefiled. Now, here's the real thing. Now, it's not before men.

This. It's before God, the father. Clear? It's what you are now is before God.

Is this. You visit the fatherless and widows and their affliction. I don't need to tell you good folks that know your Bible.

God always had a great interest in the widow and the fatherless. They were very much exposed in their day and in old days to exploitation of every kind. And they were desperately in need of help.

So that, so that your pure religion is that you can control your tongue and discipline your life. That you move around to help those who need help and encouragement. But they could be in deep spirit, you'll need.

I need all the help and encouragement that can be done from you. So that you visit them in your need. And you keep yourself unspotted from the world.

So that you're living in separation from the world. I was telling the young folks here on Sunday night, there's a new cross. The new cross and the new gospel says that you can trust Christ and go on the way you lived before and help these folks in the world.

The old cross used to slay you. It's not right. Your Bible says.

You keep yourself unspotted, unsoiled from the world. Remark you, unconsciously the world will soil you. Have you found that at work even? With a lot of ungodly people.

If you're sensitive at all, you're so soiled. I used to be desperate for lunchtime to come, just to get away into a corner and go and talk to God about it all. You felt the conversation and the whole thing was godless.

It was soiling you. Keep yourself, and there's a lot, there's a lot more things can soil you. You keep yourself unspotted from the world.

You don't become as like them as you can. You become as unlike them. You remember Romans 12 says, be not conformed to this world.

Phillips in his translation says, do not allow the world to squeeze you into its mold. Once it does that, you're spotted. You're defiled.

You're just like one of them. The test of the life. The new birth.

The word of God. So may the Lord bless his word.

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