

CHRISTIAN LIVING FOR THOSE WHO ARE "SCATTERED ABROAD"

TEXT: James 1

INTRODUCTION:

1. James brother of the Lord, (speech recorded in Acts 15:13-22).
2. Took the position that the Gentile Christians did not have to be circumcised.
3. Quoted O.T. prophet Amos 9:11-12 to prove his point.
4. This would have placed him on the opposite side of the issue from the fanatical Jews.
5. He is said to have been slain by them in A.D. 63 by being thrown off the roof of the temple when he refused to denounce Jesus as the Christ.
6. The book of James is the "How To" manual for Christians.
7. It is specifically written to the "Twelve Tribes Who Are Scattered Abroad"
8. Thus it is a practical manual for Christians in any culture.
9. In a sense, Christians are always foreigners in a strange land.
 - a) "This world is not my home, I am just passing through."
 - b) John 17:14-20 *"They are not of the world."*
 - c) 1 John 2:15-17 *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. "*
10. To be a successful Christian in a world to which we do not belong:

I. BE PATIENT WITH FOREIGNERS AND LEARN FROM TRIALS (2,3,12).

II. PRAY AND SEEK WISDOM (WHICH IS THE PROPER USE OF KNOWLEDGE) (5-8).

III. TEACH THE PEOPLE ABOUT TREASURES IN HEAVEN (10-11).

IV. DON'T BLAME GOD FOR YOUR TROUBLES AND DON'T TEACH THEM TO (13-17).

V. REMEMBER FROM WHERE YOU CAME (18).

VI. GUARD YOUR INFLUENCE (19-20).

VII. TEACH THE WORD NOTHING ELSE WILL RESULT IN SALVATION (21).

VIII. DON'T JUST TEACH THE WORD; DO IT! (22-25).

IX. BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY (26).

X. PRACTICE PURE AND UNDEFILED RELIGION AMONG THESE PEOPLE (27).

They are looking for pure undefiled truth!

JAMES 2

I. DO NOT, BY YOUR ACTIONS, LET THEM THINK THAT HAVING RICHES MAKES THEM BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE (1-6).

A. Part of our culture!

- 1) The man with the nicest house, car, clothes etc seems to have respect without earning it.
- 2) The man with average things has to earn his respect.
- 3) This is done by living every day, what we believe and putting into practice what we teach for the all the foreigners (those outside of Christ) to see.

B. The Apostle's reaction to the teaching of Jesus on this matter (Matt 19:25; Mark 10:17; Luke 18:26). *"When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?"*

C. This would be the common reaction of many.

II. DO NOT SHOW PARTIALITY; THE RICH ARE OFTEN ENEMIES OF THE TRUTH (7-11).

A. *Acts 10:34-35 "Then Peter opened his mouth and said: 'In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.' "*

B. James 2:1,4,9; 3:17-18 without partiality and without hypocrisy.

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITH AND WORKS (12-26).

A. Do what you say you are doing, Be what you say you are (12)!

- 1) In a George Barna survey (2/16/07) among those who call themselves 'born again' believers answered questions that show that their faith in Christ has little influence upon their every day lives and their decision-making.
- 2) This is also seen in the fact that other surveys find few distinctions in the lifestyles and values, from non-believers.
- 3) James implores us to have a faith that is practical, noticeable, purposeful & outstanding!

B. Those that show no mercy will have no mercy shown to them in the judgment (13).

C. If one says he has faith, then his works must show it (14, 18).

D. Destitute brother illustration (15-17).

- 1) *"The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. They say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers."*
- 2) Empty, vain and useless to tell people you hope they get better, and not be willing to do something to help them get better!

E. Just believing there is a God is not the same as believing and obeying (19-20).

F. Three Illustrations to prove this point:

- 1) Abraham (21-24) Didn't just say "I would offer my son if God asked me to." But actually showed by his actions that he was willing to do so!
- 2) Rahab (25) Didn't just talk, but acted upon her faith and she and her whole family were saved because of it (Matthew 1:5).
- 3) Death (26).
 - a) As long as there is life in the body there is movement, motion, existence, awareness, usefulness - it works!
 - b) When the spirit leaves the body the body returns to dust.
 - c) Simply put, a life without active faith is like a corpse.
 - d) Let your faith become more than words, - let it become alive by your obedience!

CONCLUSION:

1. The point of chapter two seems to be, that living one's Christianity among people who don't understand it requires that one both say and do.
2. Great chapter on influence toward those who are outside!
 - a) Col 4:5-6 *"Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one."*
 - b) 1 Thess 4:10-12 *"But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more; that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing."*
 - c) The faith of the Roman Christians was spoken of throughout the whole world (Rom. 1:8).
 - d) The world draws conclusions about to whom we belong by the way we love one another (John 13:35).
 - e) Matthew 5:13-16: *"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lamp stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*
3. People stop allowing us the opportunity to teach them and the reason often given is the inconsistent behavior of our members.
4. Believe and obey today!

JAMES 3

TEXT; James 1:19; 3:1-18

INTRODUCTION: James 1:19

1. The proper use of the tongue is a prominent theme in Scripture:
 - a) Proverbs 18:21 *Death and Life are in the power of the tongue:*
 - b) James 1:26 *If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridles not his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this man religion is in vain.*
2. Matthew 12:36, 37 Jesus says: *That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*
3. Our tongues can convey power and strength or disease and discouragement.
4. God wants our tongues to promote power and strength.
5. With our tongues we should promote the power of life, the power of hope, the power of truth and the power of the gospel!

I. BE CAREFUL HOW YOU TEACH THEM AND WHAT YOU SAY: THEY WILL BE WATCHING TEACHERS MORE CLOSELY:

A. Teachers - didaskalos - James 3:1

- 1) It appears that many desired to be teachers, but only a few were qualified.,
- 2) Also comparatively few were required.
- 3) A small number, well qualified, would do better than a large number not qualified.
- 4) And a great deal of harm could come from having several unqualified teachers.
- 5) Remember, they are "scattered abroad", teaching people who were not at Jerusalem on Pentecost so the questions would be difficult for the untrained to answer properly.
- 6) The KJV translation "masters" is not a good one unless we understand it to mean an instructor-as the "school-master."
- 7) The position does carry authority, but it is authority based not on power, but on superior qualifications.

B. He is writing to Jewish Christians:

- 1) We are told elsewhere in scripture that this desire was common among the Jews.
- 2) They loved the name, the office and the prestige of "Rabbi," equivalent to "teachers here."
 - a) Matthew 23:5-12 *" They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.'*
 - b) Romans 2:17-24 *"You, therefore, who teach others, do you not teach yourself?"*

c) 1 Tim 1:7 *From which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.*

3) This fondness for the office of teachers they naturally carried with them into the church when they were converted, and it is this which the apostle rebukes here.

C. The uncontrolled tongue is a dangerous weapon to start with...

- 1) It has separated best friends.
- 2) It has destroyed strong families.
- 3) It has split churches.
- 4) It has destroyed ministries.
- 5) It has generated wars.
- 6) It has destroyed many years of great effort.

D. What others have written:

- 1) "Slander has an edge sharper than any sword, and the tongue has more venom than all the snakes of the world."
- 2) "Many would never write with a pen what they say with their tongue."
- 3) "A sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener with constant use."
- 4) "The dog is considered man's best friend, because he wags his tail not his tongue."

E. But it is even more deadly when teaching the masses!

D. People stumble in many things, but the one who does not stumble in words has made great strides toward self-control in his entire life. (2)

III. WATCH YOUR TONGUE, ESPECIALLY HERE: (3-6).

A. Illustrations to show the importance of controlling the tongue.

- 1) Bits and rudders - means of directing.
 - a) They represent instruction, guidance of things much larger than the person.
 - b) Our tongue directs others to light or darkness.
 - c) It can crush or heal.
 - d) It offers hope or despair.
 - e) As the blossom before the fruit, so kind words can go before the trouble.

B. James 3:5 Even the tongue is a little member, and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!

- 1) Fire: Practically nothing can be restored after it has been burnt by fire.
- 2) Once harmful words have been sparked, nothing can restore the damage.
- 3) How many careers have been destroyed by "off the cuff" remarks.

C. Vs 6 says the tongue can defile (make dirty) the whole body....

- 1) The tongue will offer hope if it has been properly instructed.
- 2) Without the Bible, we have no way to light any one's pathway or to snatch one out of the

fire or even tell them about the positive things Jesus will accomplish when he returns to earth in the clouds.

IV. THE TONGUE SHOULD BE USED ONLY FOR TRUTH James 3:9-13:

A. Truths set forth by scripture:

- 1) You can't bless God and curse man who is created in God's image. Springs do not provide sweet water and bitter and figs do not grow on vines.
- 2) Truth is realized when words correspond with one's behavior. James 1:26
- 3) The tongue is a transparent way of seeing the heart. Mat. 12:34 ...for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh...

B. Lies and hypocrisies are spoken from a heart filled with lies and hypocrisies. Truth and wisdom is spoken from a heart filled with truth and wisdom.

- 1) James says, 'the tongue is not tamable' he didn't say it cannot be controlled!
- 2) The book, 'The Day America Told the Truth' says that 91 percent of those surveyed lie routinely about matters they consider trivial, and 36 percent lie about important matters; 86 percent lie regularly to parents, 75 percent to friends, 73 percent to siblings, and 69 percent to spouses.
- 3) Lying is indeed an accursed vice. It grows with a child's growth, and once the tongue has got the knack of lying, it is difficult to imagine how impossible it is to correct it.
- 4) Some try to justify lying by saying, "Everybody does it." "It was only a little white lie." Austin O'Malley said "those who believe it is all right to tell little white lies soon grow color blind."
- 5) Again, another may reason, "My surroundings forced me to lie all the time." Jesus had difficult surroundings constantly, yet told the truth.
- 6) "Well, Rahab did." We could argue the points of Rahab's lie all day long and not come to an agreement. The Bible is perfectly clear when it says that a lying tongue is an abomination to God.
- 7) We are encouraged to "Put away lying, speak truth to your neighbor" (Eph. 4:25). If lying cannot be controlled, then why did the Holy Spirit command we put it away?
- 8) Is your tongue being used to promote truth or lies and hypocrisy?

V. LIVE THE SAME WAY YOU TALK (13-17):

A. Meekness and wisdom is seen by the way we live, (good conversation KJV).

B. People will see what kind of persons we are or are not, by the way we live (14).

C. We don't need to show how wise we are in the ways of the world (15).

- 1) It can be a blessing to not know all the sinful things that go on.
- 2) I don't mind being naïve about such things!

D. If we fight among ourselves, it will just confuse those foreigners before whom we are living our Christian lives and it will do great harm (16).

VI. WE WILL CATCH FAR MORE FLIES WITH HONEY THAN WITH VINEGAR (17-18).

A. The best use of our tongues is to share the gospel:

- 1) Paul was not ashamed of it (Rom. 1:16).
- 2) We are encouraged to speak of it in truth and love (Eph. 4:15).
- 3) Jesus commanded that we spread it over the whole world (Matt. 28:20).
- 4) Many disciples have died for "obeying God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).
- 5) The gospel cannot be supplemented or short changed (Gal. 1:6-9).

B. It speaks not only of having faith, but having obedience (Jas. 3:17, 18).

CONCLUSION:

A. By our words we shall be justified, and by our words we shall be condemned.

B. Do we use our tongues to offer power and strength or disease and discouragement.

D. Our tongues should promote life, hope, truth and the gospel!

JAMES 4

INTRODUCTION:

1. It is specifically written to the "Twelve Tribes Who Are Scattered Abroad"
2. Thus it is a practical manual for Christians in any culture.
3. In a sense, Christians are always foreigners in a strange land.
 - a) "This world is not my home, I am just passing through."
 - b) John 17:14-20 *"They are not of the world."*
 - c) 1 John 2:15-17 *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. "*
4. To be a successful Christian in a world to which we do not belong:

I. THE RESULT OF BEING SELFISH: (See 3:18)

A. Verse 1 - Infighting will destroy your influence with those who are without.

1) Colossians 4:5

2) Galatians 5:15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

3) *Where do all the fights and quarrels among you come from?*

4) *They come from your desires for pleasure, which are constantly fighting within you.*

B. Verse 2 - 3 - God is not going to help selfish Christians.

1) Because you ask in the wrong way.

2) With the wrong motivation.

3) You lust and do not have.

4) You murder and covet and cannot obtain.

5) You fight and war.

6) Yet you do not have because you do not ask.

7) When you do ask, you do not receive, because you ask from the wrong motivation.

8) You ask God for things to satisfy your own sinful pleasures.

C. Verse 4 - You don't win converts by compromise.

1) People aren't impressed with so-called Christians who act just as they do!

2) (Spiritual)Adulterers and adulteresses!

3) Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?

4) Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5

5) The Scripture says "The Spirit of God who dwells in us wants us to serve Him only"?

D. Turn It Around: 6-12

1) Vs. 6 The grace God gives is greater than what the world offers.

2) God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble.

3)Therefore:

a) Submit to God (give yourselves to God)

b) Resist the Devil and he will flee from you (Stand strong against and he will run away)

c) Draw near to God and He will draw near to you

d) Cleanse your hands you sinners

e) Purify your hearts you double-minded (Trying to follow God and the world)

f) Lament and mourn and weep! (Repent)

g) Change your laughter into crying, your joy into gloom!

h) Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

i) Do not speak evil of one another (Do not be hypercritical of one another).

j) Whoever criticizes a Christian brother or judges him, criticizes the Law (he follows) and judges it.

k) If you judge the law of Christ, then you are no longer one who obeys the Law, but one who judges it.

l) God is the only lawgiver and judge.

m) He alone can save and destroy.

n) Who do you think you are, to judge your fellow-man? 12b

E. Change now, don't assume you have plenty of time:

1) Now listen to me, you that say, *"Today or tomorrow we will travel to a certain city, where we will stay a year and go into business and make a lot of money."*

2) You don't even know what your life tomorrow will be!

3) You are like a puff of smoke, which appears for a moment and then disappears.

4) What you should say is this: "If the Lord is willing, we will live and do this or that."

5) But you're too proud, for that so you boast about what YOU are going to accomplish;

6) All such boasting is wrong. Luke 12:16-21

F. So then, the person who does not do the good he knows he should do is guilty of sin.

Conclusion:

1. James 4 teaches that selfishness among Christians does not favorably impress the lost

2. Selfish Christians cannot expect to receive anything from God.

3. Because they ask for the wrong things for the wrong reasons.

4. It is the humble and the meek that will win souls to Jesus!

JAMES 5

INTRODUCTION:

1. It is specifically written to the "Twelve Tribes Who Are Scattered Abroad"
2. Thus it is a practical manual for Christians in any culture.
3. In a sense, Christians are always foreigners in a strange land.
 - a) "This world is not my home, I am just passing through."
 - b) John 17:14-20 *"They are not of the world."*
 - c) 1 John 2:15-17 *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. "*
4. To be a successful Christian in a world to which we do not belong:

I. DON'T DEFAULT PEOPLE FOR RICHES:1-6

- A. Wicked, fraudulent rich will receive God's vengeance.
- B. They became rich by withholding the wages of their laborers.
- C. Whether or not they realized it God was watching (4)

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF ENDURING PATIENCE:7-12

- a. It takes a crop a certain amount of time to produce (7).
- b. Think how short your waiting time may possibly be: The Lord could come at any time (8)
- c. Don't turn on each other, do not be impatient, do not quarrel with one another (9);
the great Judge, who will set all things right, who will punish the wicked and reward the good, is at hand: he should be conceived by you to stand as near as one who is just knocking at the door.
 - 1) The coming of the Lord to punish the wicked Jews was then very nigh, when James wrote this epistle;
 - 2) Whenever the patience and other graces of his people are tried in an extraordinary manner, the certainty of Christ's coming as Judge, and the nearness of it, should establish their hearts.
 - 3) The Judge is now a great deal nearer, in his coming to judge the world, than when this epistle was written, nearer and therefore this should have the greater effect upon us.
- d. The prophets as an example of patience (10) : Hebrews 11:32-40
- e. The perseverance of Job is given as an example (11)
- f. Do not secure an oath by things you can't control (12)

III. EFFECTIVENESS OF PRAYER 13-18

- a. If you are suffering pray
- b. If you are cheerful sing
- c. If you are sick call for the elders of the church to:
 - 1) Pray over you
 - 2) Anoint you with oil
- d. The prayer of faith will save the sick and the Lord will raise him up.
- e. For the Christian prayer is the avenue by which he communicates to God that he has sinned.
- f. Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other
- g. Fervent, effective prayers get results (16)
- h. Elijah as an example.

IV. SAVED TO SERVE - TURNING OTHERS FROM A SINFUL COURSE 19-20

- a. It is important that we help each other.
- b. Gal 6:1
- c. One can wander from the truth so as to be eternally lost! (20)