

7-9-23

Sermon: Double Mindedness

Scripture: James 1:1-18, CTW Psalm 1

Hymns: 51, 776, 779

Theme: Last week, I introduced you to James, brother of Jesus, one of the most influential people of the bible. Today we start the process of digging deeper into the Book that God had him contribute to the Bible. When Peter and Paul sought wisdom and guidance in the growth of the early church, they both came to this man. James begins his letter, showing us why.

I. God builds our character with Perseverance

Why was James so influential? It was not because he was Jesus' brother. It was because people knew the depth of James' character. While we have many traits that make up a person's character, I believe the most outstanding attribute of James was confidence. He gained that confidence with perseverance.

A. James wrote concerning perseverance in verses 3 and 4,"(3) because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. (4) Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be complete, not lacking anything."

James' letter to the church was written before Paul wrote his letter to the Roman Church and this is what Paul had to say about perseverance:

Romans 5:3-5 "Not only so, but we rejoice in our suffering, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; (4) perseverance, character; and character, hope. (5) And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us."

And Peter wrote in **2 Peter 1:5-8** "For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith Goodness; and to Goodness, knowledge, (6) and to knowledge, self-control, and to self-control, perseverance, and to perseverance, godliness, (7) and to godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, love. (8) For if you possess these qualities in increasing

measure, **they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive** in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

B. James told us that perseverance develops our faith. Paul tells us that we cannot develop perseverance without trials. Peter tells us that we have to persevere to be effective and productive in our knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The common thread among all these is that they all agree that when things in life are going great, things are different. In short, we are told that God **allows the trouble in our lives** and in the life of the church to **build** perseverance and faith. **Please take a moment to think of how this has been true in your own lives.**

We cannot know the **depth of our character** until we see how we react under pressure. When life is running smoothly and we face no trials, we tend to forget the basics of our belief. We slowly stop praying and giving thanks for what we have.

That is when we think we are really walking with the Lord. And the truth is, that God allows us to be tested just as he allowed **Job** to be tested. **Job persevered** and his character was never in question by God.

When you have persevered, and it has finished its work, you find that you are more mature in your faith. Not lacking anything.

II. Next James tells us in Verse 5 that an important part of our faith is Wisdom...or more plainly, Common Sense.

(5) "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."

How could James say this? The answer is found in **Matthew 21:21,22** Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. (22) If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

A. James knew from his experience with his brother that what Jesus said was true. There was no need for him to doubt it and he lived his life as such.

Both Jesus and James knew that when you lead a **God-centered life**, your prayers will be answered, and your requests will be given to you.

B. The key word here is God-centered not self-centered. When we are in line with God's purpose and we are actively building his church and actively doing His will, there is not a request that we could ask of God that he would not grant.

III. Now James tells us to check our alignment.

"(6) But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. (7) That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; (8) He is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does."

A. We must believe and not doubt. We must have the belief inside us that **we are His creations**. We are part of His loving family. He is not only our God, but He is truly our Father.

Just as a father loves his children and cares for his own, so God cares for us. When we ask, He will not only answer our request, but he will grant our request **if it is within the plans He has had for us since before we were born**.

This is not a blank check to say that He will give us all a million dollars when we ask, it is a statement that when we are in His loving fold and we are truly loving Him, He will provide for us in ways beyond measure.

We must put away our doubt and our attitude of "why in the world would God help me!?" when we ask Him.

B. We have to display our confidence in God by not allowing our minds to waver like the waves of the sea. How are we to have a strong foundation of faith if our minds waver? God's Word is the truth.

It is not like the advice we often get from friends, family and sometimes even strangers where it is open to disobedience. It is the Law and we are to show our respect and love of God and His son by obeying it.

“(9) The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position. (10) But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wildflower. (11) For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls, and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich man will fade away even as he goes about his business.

C. Wealth, power, politics, and social status mean nothing to God. He regards the poor with as much, if not more love than he regards the rich. I am not saying that this is always the case, but more often than not, a poor person spends more time in prayer and giving to charities with his time or what little resources he has than does the rich man who has many resources.

The rich man has already received his reward while the poor man stores his up in heaven. God does not let a man buy his way into heaven. The only way to get there is through belief.

This is where the poor man has an advantage. He relies more on God for the daily things of life and is almost constantly under a trial of some sort or another and yet he perseveres.

While the rich man complacently lives his life based in his money, the poor man lives his life developing a faith that is beyond measure.

The poor man builds his Crown of Life while the rich man who depends on his own wisdom and worldly knowledge reaps a reward in Hell.

In Verse 12, James reminds us that “Blessed is the man who **perseveres under trial**, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the Crown of Life that God has promised to those who love him.”

D. In verse 12, James refers to life as a test. I have often said that life on earth is just preparation for eternal life and this is one of the verses that points that out. Blessed is the Man who PERSEVERES UNDER TRIAL.

To him belongs the life everlasting. To him belongs the reward in heaven. His love of God has proven his faith. His life has been a glory to God.

Verses 13-15 take this subject further: "When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; (14) but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. (15) Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."

Think about it, when we watch the television, we are faced with temptation at every turn. We are filled with greed for a new truck, or to go shopping for clothes or whatever else appeals to our personal desires.

Is that God's fault? Did he place that desire in our head? NO! God is righteousness. He cannot tolerate sin. How could he tempt you with it when He has NO part in it? The temptations we face come from our own desires. They spring up from our own sinful natures.

All sin begins with an evil thought, and it becomes sin when we dwell on it and act on it. And when we have told that one little white lie, how many more will be needed to cover it up?

Pretty soon a sin that seemed harmless snowballs into an avalanche and wrecks our spiritual life if not all of our life.

Romans 6:23 reminds us "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

When we do succumb to temptation and it becomes sin, unless we confess and repent of it, it will give us what it has earned for us, which is death.

IV. James finishes this section with a reminder: "Don't be deceived!"

It is only through the forgiveness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that we can be forgiven and be given the gift of eternal life.

"(16) Don't be deceived my dear brothers. (17) Every good and perfect thing is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. (18) He chose to give us birth through the Word of Truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created.

A. Just as sin is from inside of us, all the resources we have to battle it are from heaven above. While the sin may change, and the temptations differ, the father does not.

God is, was and always will be Our Father **when we claim Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior.** He is unchanging. His plan has been in place since before the beginning of time. He gives all that is good and perfect in our lives.

Temptation can come in the form of something that **looks good and pleasing** like it could have come from heaven. We need to use the wisdom that our perseverance has brought us to **test all gifts and thoughts.**

B. We know what the biblical standards are. They are unchanging. Unlike life, there are no 'gray areas' in God's word. If something does not hold up to the biblical truth, then it is sin and that carries with it the penalty of death.

When we accepted Christ as our Lord and Savior, we became his brothers and sisters.

Sin starts the process of separating us from our Father. James asks, "Is that what we really should spend our time with?"

We are to offer our lives as a sacrifice for all those that we will harvest into the family of God.

We will persevere, we will be effective and productive members of Jesus Christ's holy body.

Amen? Let Us Pray...