

Daily Bible Study

“You & The Word Of God” Part ~ 1

James 1:19-21

March 26– April 1, 2023

THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY –As we continue our study of James this week we take as our text, **James 1:19-21**: “*So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*” The title of our study, “**You & The Word Of God**” sums up the main point in the next couple weeks of our lessons and it also summarizes this last portion of this first chapter in the Epistle; namely, **James 1:19-27**. The theme is about The Word of God and the relationship and response of the person to it. It is not hard for us to see that the connection between these verses and what has preceded. James here speaks of Scripture and refers to it as, *the word of truth (18) ... the implanted word (21) ... the word (22) ... the word (23) ...* Figuratively also as “*a mirror*” (23)...and finally, *the perfect law, the law of liberty (25)*. This section has everything to do with you, The Word of The Living God and your reception and reaction to it. Remember that James has been presenting to us proofs that we can identify in the lives of genuine Christians and he is giving practical evidences of what a true believer looks like and how they live. This section will discuss the attitude a genuine believer has to God’s Word. One of the most reliable evidences of genuine salvation is a person’s desire or lack of it for Scripture and the God of Scripture. In **Psalm 42:1**, David says it like this, “*As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God.*” Real Christians hunger and enjoy God’s Word. There are tangible evidences you can see in the life of genuine believers and in these next two lessons we will elaborate on those evidences.

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, teach me this week from Your Word. Help me to not only recognize the proper attitude I should have to Scripture but to actually see it in my life.*

TUESDAY – **James 1:19-20**: “*So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*” As James starts out this verse he says, “*So then, my beloved brethren...*” He is here not only expressing his heartfelt and deep love for these *beloved* people but also is reminding them (*So then...*) of the truths he has previously taught. He has just taught them of the power of *The Word of truth* which God has used in bringing them from death to life in salvation. And he also refers to the fact that God saves His children to be a *kind of firstfruits* among people. They have been saved to be different and display the power of God in salvation to a world completely enslaved and blinded by sin and selfishness. So James starts with a compassionate reminder to

these saints. James wants them to know he loves them for love breaks down barriers both intellectual and spiritual that no amount of fact and reason may do. He is about to speak to them concerning an important issue, their attitude toward and with The Word of God. And as the verse continues, He gets to the first of three important commands for the believer who is willing to receive God’s Word with submissiveness. First, he says, *be swift to hear*. The Word of God is more necessary to us than our food. We should be eager to read it and hear it taught. We are told it is more precious than gold, it’s a lamp to our feet, a light to our path. Nothing, absolutely nothing, should be more important to us than taking in God’s Word. But sadly in our age there is a lack of listening. Adlai Stevenson once opened an address to students at Princeton with these words: “I understand I am here to speak and you are here to listen. Let’s hope we both finish at the same time.” How true is that? Many church goers quit listening long before the pastor gets through preaching. James says *be swift to hear*. Be a careful listener. Be diligent to listen not merely hear God’s Word. Oh how much can be deduced of a person’s character by how they listen. We see this wisdom given in the Old Testament as well. **Proverbs 17:28**, “*Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; When he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive.*” We learn by listening not speaking. **Proverbs 29:20**, “*Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.*”

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, help me understand You love me, want what’s best for me and therefore want me to listen to You as You speak to me from Sacred Scripture. May I see the Bible for exactly what it is, The God of the universe talking to me.*

WEDNESDAY – **James 1:19-20**: “*So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*” Yesterday we saw that God wants us to listen, be quick to hear. James didn’t start by giving a read the Bible in one year plan to these believers but instead told them to be diligent to be an attentive listener. So often The Word is read but not heard. The bookmark is moved forward but there has been no active listening. The second command that James now mentions for a believer to receive God’s Word submissively is that he needs to be *slow to speak*. This obviously goes hand in hand with the first command. You can’t listen carefully while talking or for that matter, even thinking about what to say. God knows this and James is trying to teach it. One should be careful not to be thinking about our own thoughts while someone else is trying to express God’s. STOP THE DISTRACTIONS. PAY ATTENTION to God’s Word while it is being taught. Many sermons and mere discussions are fruitless for the simple reason one party is paying more attention and thinking about what they want to say rather than keeping silent both inside and out. What is also in view here is the fact that when we do listen and in appropriate time, respond with speaking, what we say is carefully thought out. This command is also directed to those of us who God has gifted to teach His Word. We need to be careful that we are speaking God’s Word and not our mere opinions and preferences. James will say more on this in this later (**James 3:1**). This is why there is a danger in letting anyone at all just get up

and “share” something in church or elsewhere with God’s people. Many people, often celebrities and athletes that come to Jesus are given an open microphone and encouraged to publically speak. And often it goes beyond them giving their testimony of coming to Jesus and turns to giving counsel and advice on areas of Christian doctrine that they are not biblically or experientially prepared. Paul, in **1 Timothy 3:6** when he is giving the qualifications necessary to be a pastor says the preacher should not be a *novice (new convert)*, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. The Apostle then goes on in **1 Timothy 5:22** to say, “Do not lay hands upon anyone too quickly and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin (NASB).” We need to be careful who is allowed to speak to God’s people when we are handling God’s Word. I remember a thought John MacArthur once shared concerning the necessity of ordaining preachers with vigorous and exhaustive Bible study and questioning. A paraphrase of his comments would be, “We don’t let someone practice medicine without a license, how much more should we require one for preachers. One is caring for merely the body, the other for the very soul”. I end today with a line from the front page of our church website that sums up what our elders believed to be our job here at FBCS. “*I am content to live and die as the mere repeater of scriptural teaching, as a person who has thought out nothing and invented nothing, as one who never thought invention to be any part of his calling, but who concluded that he was simply to be a mouth for God to the people, mourning that anything of his own should come between.*” **Charles Haddon Spurgeon**

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father God, please help me to be not only swift to hear but also slow to speak. Help me to shut up and listen and keep quiet inside my mind and heart while You are speaking through Your Word. May I understand this is a command to be followed and may it be reflected in how I listen with attentive focus to the teaching and preaching of Your Word.*

THURSDAY – James 1:19-20: “*So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*” The third point James makes concerning the believer who would receive God’s Word in submission is that they would be *slow to wrath*. When the Word of God is accurately preached, we will often find that it hurts like the sword that it is (**Hebrews 4:12**). It often pierces and cuts us so how do we respond when this happens? The word used here by James for anger is *orge* which speaks of a deep resentment and agitation of the soul. This is not a blow up temper but rather a smoldering anger against the conviction of the truth of God’s Word and the implications it has that go contrary to the hearers excuses and selfish thinking concerning a behavior or attitude. Do we become resentful and seething when we hear the Word and we are convicted that WE ARE WRONG? This again is the attitude of someone who would not be receiving God’s Word with submission. We know best, not God, and when He has the audacity to confront our sin and selfishness we get angry inside. Some fail to appropriate the Word of God because they are angry at the one who is delivering it. Perhaps they have seen a flaw in the preacher or disagree with something he has done. Just as *slow to speak* does not mean never

speak but rather speak with due thought and care when the time is right, so *slow to anger* is not the same as never be angry. James tells us that *the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God*. James is writing about us and to us: your anger does not bring about the righteous plans of God. It usually does not forward God’s righteous purposes and when the hostility is toward the truth of His Word in reality it is anger toward God Himself. Paul would tell us there is however a proper place for anger like there was in Jesus life. Paul states, “*Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your wrath*” (**Ephesians 4:26**). There is such a thing as righteous anger without sinning as displayed by Christ. But James and Paul would tell us that anger and sin are often never far apart. Human anger is most often not a pure emotion but is usually laced heavily with sin, self-importance, self-assertion, intolerance, and stubbornness. We all would confess that righteous anger is something to which we have not often attained. When we have an angry spirit, we usually don’t have an attentive one. When anger and quick speaking are in listening is out. Those who would listen to God and His Word must train themselves to be listeners and cultivate a slow thoughtful tongue and a calm spirit. All three of these commands help us in our receiving and hearing God’s Word submissively.

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, keep me from being resentful when You step on my toes in Scripture. Help me to not be angry at the message or the messenger which is ultimately You.*

FRIDAY & SATURDAY – James 1:21: “*Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*” James reminds us that an uncontrolled tongue and temper drive a man deep into sin and far from God. *Therefore* we need to be clean in order to receive God’s Word and have it enter our heart and life. *Lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness* says James. He uses the word *filthiness* figuratively to describe all moral uncleanness (**Revelation 22:11**). This word is closely related to the Greek word used of wax in the ears which impair ones hearing. In the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) the word appears in **Zechariah 3:3-4**. The high priest stood before the angel of the Lord and was dressed in filthy clothes and the angel commanded the filthy clothes to be removed for they represented sin, and he was given clean clothes. James likewise orders his readers to *lay aside all filthy* clothes that soil their souls. Then, *receive with meekness the implanted word* (notice *The Word* had already like a plant taken root in their souls). Believers receive the Word *in meekness*, with humility. Instead of stubborn, resentment and resisting anger they must demonstrate gentle humility. The result is The Word when faithfully proclaimed and attentively received is able to save those who hear it. The Greek verb *save* (sozo) implies not merely the salvation of the soul but the restoration of life. Jesus healed the woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years and said to her, “*Your faith has saved you.*” To *save*, then, means to make a person whole and complete in every respect. And that is what the Word of God is able to do for the believer.

Suggestion for Prayer: *God, help me lay aside my filthy clothes and receive Your saving Word.*