

Faith in Action – James

James 1:1-11

“Joy in the Midst of Trial” – August 9, 2020



Introduction

James is a letter written by the half-brother of Jesus ([Galatians 1:19](#)) who, after Jesus' resurrection, served as a leader in the Jerusalem church ([Acts 15:13-21](#)). James was concerned the church, scattered because of persecution, continue to follow Jesus and make Him known. He wants us to understand what life looks like under the rule of Christ, giving clear instruction on things such as suffering, riches/poverty, speech, caring for orphans & widows, quarrels, humility, making plans, favoritism/partiality, and more. As we launch into James, pray God gives us grace ([James 4:6](#)) to be doers of God's word ([James 1:22](#)) who love Jesus above all and look forward His return ([James 1:12](#)).

Pray

Before you begin, take some time to ask God to help you understand His word, to reveal what needs to change in you, and for the grace to follow Him in response. To help, use [Psalm 119:33-40](#) as a prayer for God to open His word up to you.

Sermon Outline

- I. Count it joy (1:2-4)
- II. Ask God for wisdom (1:5-8)
- III. Look at life with an eternal perspective (1:9-11)

Read & Discuss

- 1) Read [James 1:2-4](#)

It's not natural for us to count it joy when in a trial, but that's what James calls us to do. He's not saying trials are enjoyable in and of themselves – nor is he calling for 'positive thinking'. The reason for this joy is what it produces: steadfastness (v3 – the ability to bear up and stick with it under the weight of difficulty). Consequently, the 'full effect' of steadfastness in our life – *becoming more like Jesus*. Can you accept and even rejoice in God's good purposes for trials in your life? What does the fact that God *can* use painful trials for good say about Him?

Additional Reading: Romans 8:28, Genesis 50:20, Hebrews 12:1-3

- 2) Read [James 1:5-8](#)

But I don't know what to do in this trial! It hurts! As a 'brother' (v2), James understands the challenge of remaining steadfast and tells us to ask God for wisdom (not mere knowledge, but the ability to live skillfully in God's world; an ability rooted in the love and knowledge of God [see [Proverbs 9:10](#)]). How we view God will determine whether we run to Him or rely on

self. Thankfully James reminds us who God is: *the giving-God*. He gives generously (not stingy), He gives 'to all' (not holding favorites) and He gives 'without reproach' (holding our past mistakes over our head to shame us). Do you see the heart of God? Do you believe this is who He is?

If v5 shows us how God gives, James reminds us how to ask in vv6-8. To ask in faith with no doubting means coming to God with a single-mind, a mind that is decided ahead of time: *whatever God says is wise, whatever God commands in His word I'm ready to follow*. What makes having a double-mind feel 'safe' or more attractive sometimes? In other words, what are you afraid God might say such that you want to have the emergency exit?

Additional Reading: Matthew 7:7-11, Matthew 13:44

3) Read [James 1:9-11](#)

What does the *world* say about the poor/lowly and the rich? Now compare that to James' assessment in v9-10. How does having an eternal perspective help us to endure trials and avoid the seduction of prosperity that leads to hard-heartedness? Take a moment to reflect on the image of image in vv10-11: *a beautiful flower that withers under the heat of the sun*. What are we to learn from this illustration?

Additional Reading: Matthew 19:16-30, Psalm 49:16-20, Romans 8:18

Prayer of Response

- 1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?
- 2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand*, *believe*, *desire*, or *do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <https://fbcum.org/sermons-new/>

*Next week's sermon text: we turn to James 1:12-18 "The Trial of Temptation"
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