

Looking In the Mirror

“Seeing the Trial for What it Is”

James 1:1-4

*God Commands Me in His Word – Love Him with All my Heart, My Soul, My Mind
- and to Love One Another as Myself*

Introduction: Let me take a moment to introduce this Book to you

A. James is the half- brother of Jesus.

1. Now I want you to soak that in for a moment that is no small thing.

➤ My sister was a couple years ahead of me in school and so when I got to High School I was not known by my name with the teacher as was known as Tammy’s little brother.

- Which is no big deal other than we were not exactly the same as a matter of fact we were nothing a like she was a good student, did her work, never got in trouble, didn’t talk back, all the teachers love her she was the model student.

- And me well not so much!

■ One teacher in particular Mrs. Hodges she loved my sister she called her the perfect student that is not what she called me. She pulled me aside one day and said I can’t figure out you are as bright as your sister (I made straight A’s in her class) why do you have such a smart mouth and so disrespectful and here it comes “Why can’t you be more like your sister?”

- How many times do you think Mary may have said that to James maybe she didn’t at all but it would have been real noticeable that Jesus was different

2. James probably resented Jesus His whole town did the Bible says that he was without honor in His home town His own people rejected Him!
- B. But some time shortly after the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, James the earthly brother of Jesus seen Him for who He truly was and believed.
1. That is who's epistle we are studying his slant, his view of things was from a perspective that only he could see and so God inspires him to write.

Read TEXT

Transition: Now the first to verses tell us who the writer is and to whom he is writing:

- *James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad:* Greetings. James 12:1
 - Notice now that James does not introduce himself as Jesus' brother but rather a servant.
 - Church I think it is a dangerous thing to promote ourselves using our relationship with Jesus!
- We should as James writes claim ourselves simply as bond-servants, willing servants to God and to Christ!
 - A. Before we look at our text this morning I want to look at the hinge text for this series:
- *22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. 25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.* James 1:22-25

- We will much deeper at this text in a few weeks but here it is if we only see ourselves only measure ourselves against what we see in the mirror then it is easy to forget who we were but when we see ourselves in relation to how we live out God's Word we will can truly enjoy the blessing that God has for our life!

A. Now James jumps right in to something that is so common to all believers' trouble in the Book of Job it says that life is short and full of trouble!

1. Trials are so very common they are addressed over and over in scripture James begins with a very what could be considered a very confusing statement.

- Count it Joy when you have trials in your life!

I. **Joy in Trials** verse 2

A. The word joy here in the original language is "chara" it means cheerfulness or with calmness.

1. That where the confusion seems to be how can it be expected of us to encounter trials with calm cheerfulness?

- What if we did not consider the trial a punishment from God but just what it is a strengthening of our faith!

- What if facing a trial brought us closer to God causing to depend more on Him?

- Causes us to seek Him, trust Him, lean on Him!

B. We live in a messed up sinful world there are going to be trials and difficulties.

1. I struggle with that don't you!

- Can I share for just a moment?

- Now listen before I say this let me say I am full aware that I am not this all great and likeable guy not perfect by anyone's measurement.
- But do you ever wonder why someone just doesn't like you I mean you haven't done anything to them at least that you know of on purpose and they just don't like you.
 - That church is my greatest trial and you might say well they just need to get over themselves!
 - But the truth is I need to get over myself God is teaching me humility who am I that everyone should like me Jesus was perfect and hardly anyone liked Him who do I think I am?

C. Count it Joy when you encounter various trials

1. See too often we lose our joy because we can only see what's in the mirror do you know how many more people I have been able to tell about the power of God because I have a son born with cerebral palsy, since I was diagnosis with Parkinson's, I could go on with the trials in my life but they pale in comparison to yours because they are yours!
 - But we must count them all Joy because it is in the midst of the trial when we are leaning hard on Jesus looking to His Word for direction that He shapes us and strengthens us and prepares us to bring Him glory which should bring joy to our hearts!

Transition: What if the trial is seen to increase us not discourage us or to break us!

A. The purpose of the trial is to test our Faith!

II. A Test of Faith Verse 3 READ

- A. We must be careful not to take this out of context this testing is not to see if we will fail or not.

1. Think of it more in terms of conditioning!

- A body builder puts his muscles to the test every day in the gym not for the purpose of seeing them fail but to see them get stronger and to grow!

- God is not going to tempt us to sin, He is not going to try to trick us in to not having faith in Him that is not in the remotes thought what this text is saying.

- He is testing our faith through trials to build up our endurance so that we are able to run the race set before us!

B. We have a lot to do we have a lot of life to live for Him and it won't be easy!

1. Paul compares it to an athlete running a race I will do the same athletics is a great example. For instances!

- A Marathon is 26 miles when you are getting ready for a marathon you do not start out your training the first day by running 26 miles.
 - But you do have to push your body everyday test a little more each day it will hurt and it will be sore but in the end it will be able to endure the 26 miles.

- Listen to the writer of Hebrews: *Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.* Hebrews 12:1-3

C. There is a purpose for the testing it is to build up endurance!

1. Coming to church on Sunday morning getting a boost or listening to a praise song on the radio those things are needful and are a blessing.
 - But it is the testing of our faith that builds us and strengthens us that we are able to keep going under any circumstances for Christ sake and His glory!

Transition: There is a reason for the testing of our faith that is the reason that we can count it all joy!

- A. As we approach each day with its new set of trial and difficulties we can face it with peace and with joy knowing that God is doing a good work in us.
- Paul said: *3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, 5 in view of your [c]participation in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 1:3-6

- God is working in us and on us to make us all He desires us to be and uses trial and test to shape us and strengthen to run the race before us with endurance!
- You know when you feel like you can't go on but you do because you trust God then the trial is doing what God intended for your life He is shaping for His Kingdom!
 - Now the last thing in the text this morning I want to point out is that the life that we live is not a sprint but often we approach scripture that way we want a quick fix and we want it now.
 - Look in the mirror and you will see what I often see a man that is in a big hurry!

- But God in God economy, can you understand that there is no hurry why would there be a hurry when we live in eternity.

- So we must see the life we live not as a sprint to get all I can as quickly as I can but as an endurance I will endure whatever I have to endure for as long as I have to endure as long as my God is glorified in it!

III. Living an Enduring Life Verse 3-4

A. When we live life in faith it produces endurance and that is what completes us and perfects us!

1. Church when we believe God we can get through anything!

- Nothing can separate us from God!

- Paul wrote to the Romans: *38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Romans 8:38-39

- That church will keep you running the race!

- Faith that nothing can overcome you nothing can defeat you because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world: That will keep you running!

- Faith will allow you to smile when trials come your way because you know in your heart God is working on your life He is shaping you not only for His glory but for your good!

B. When Faith produce endurance then verse 4 says that we lack nothing!

1. This is not a reference to material things!

- Does me that because I go through a trial and continue to believe God I am going to get a new car!

- No, you might go right into another trial in your life I have seen people who go from one struggle to the next but they never lose faith as a matter fact it seems the worse it gets for them the faithful they become!
- You know what I believe I believe God said draw nigh to me and I will draw nigh unto you!
 - C. Life is not a sprint forget the quick fixes that are being spouted out in the name of Christianity.
 - Count it all joy when you encounter all kinds of trials knowing that God is working on you he is shaping you.

Closing: Over the years I have been accused of trying to mold my children and even other people children into something that they are not.

A. That is true!

1. When I was a youth pastor I had a parent approach me and tell me that I was brain washing their child and they wanted their child to decide for themselves!

= Listen church I stand guilty as charged.

- *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.* Romans 12:2

B. Church here is the walk away with thought God does not test our faith with trials and difficulty to trip us up and to fail.

1. He test us to build trust and faith so that we are able to bring glory to Him with our lives!
 - How could we not find Joy in any opportunity to bring Him glory!