

THE BOOK OF JAMES

“The Testing of Your Faith”

Scripture Reading: JAMES 1:2-4

-) **SLIDES 1-6.** Bible Jeopardy!
-) **SLIDES 7.** Read today’s Scripture text.
-) **SLIDE 8.** We continue today in our expository study in the Book of JAMES. This is week #2. I have titled today’s message *“The Testing of Your Faith”* (1:3).
-) We began this expository study last week with an introduction of James, the author of this book, and how we now know he was a half-brother of Jesus Christ. And this morning I want to add one more fact to what we must understand about this letter James has written.
-) **SLIDE 9.** If I was to give a summary of this entire book of what James is telling his readers, it would be this. “You say you’re a Christian? Prove it.” This entire book will be a test. A testing of our faith. James wants us to know that if we are going to claim Christianity, then we must live Christianity.
-) Every Christian should say that they want to grow and mature in their faith—that they want to become more Christ-like. Do we really? Are we really willing and ready to face whatever it is, whatever it may be to walk the Christian walk?
-) **SLIDE 10.** Jesus gives us a reminder of what life is like. MATT 5:44-45. Folks, we are going to have good days and we are going to have bad days. Some of this good and bad may be under our control, and some may not. Things happen.
-) **SLIDE 11.** JAMES 1:2-3. The first test of our Christianity that James gives us comes in the form of trials. Know this. We will have trials. So, how must a Christian respond to trials?

-) **SLIDE 12.** JAMES 1:2-3.
-) **SLIDE 13.** A Christian considers it all **JOY** when they encounter trials. What?
-) One way James may have been looking at trials is in the light of persecution. Remember at that time, Christians were being persecuted by the Jews and by Herod. And many of the Jews who converted to Christianity dispersed to foreign lands to escape this persecution.
-) But we know that our trials today come in many various forms. And none of them are pleasant, are they? So, let's be real and honest here.
-) We experience sickness. We experience death in our families and with our friends. We lose a job and can't pay the bills. Our children take wrong turns in life. The car won't start. The roof of our house is leaking. The furnace quit working and I cannot afford a new one. My spouse just left me for another partner. And this list can go on and on.
-) And we presently live in a country that is so divided that no matter what you think or what you say, someone will hate you for it simply because they disagree with your way of thinking. Thank you social media for bringing the human condition out in the public where everyone can see it.
-) And we have come to the point in time where if your way of thinking is a Biblical way of thinking (and the Christian has the mind of Christ – Biblical worldview), then you are the hater. So, BGCC, if you think and act Biblically, expect trials. And expect persecution. Just like those first-century Christian converts did. Because it's just around the corner.
-) Wait a second Mike. You are telling me that I must consider it all joy when these things, these trials, happen in my life? I'm to be joyful because my furnace quit working in the middle of winter and I cannot afford to have it fixed or buy a new one?

-) I'm telling all of us to be joyful because the Word of God is telling all of us to be joyful. But, be joyful in what?
-) Listen. The text never tells us to be joyful in the trial itself. A leaky roof or my friend contracting Covid or my car that refuses to start is not what's bringing me joy. Actually, those things, in themselves, are bringing me pain and sorrow and heartache. Right? So, where's the joy? We need to understand this about this passage.
-) **SLIDE 14.** James is telling us to be joyful in what that trial **PRODUCES**, not in the trial itself. Let's look at the text.
-) **SLIDE 15.** JAMES 1:2-4. Our trials test our faith and it's the test not the trial that brings us joy. The test. Are you really a Christian or not? And the world is watching.
-) When we go through trials, too often we are overly consumed by that trial. It becomes our lives. It becomes us. And we become it. We take on the identity of our trial. And sometimes we love wallowing in that misery.
-) But, Christian, where is our identity? Too many times in our Christian walk we forget who's we are; we forget that we were bought at a price; we forget that the worst thing that could ever happen to a human being, which is dying and going to hell, will never happen to us. We become far too complacent in our Christianity, both in good times and bad times. And we forget that our identity is in Jesus Christ and not in our trials.
-) Listen, I am not happy that I have a sickness. I am not happy that my furnace is shot. I am not happy that my spouse left me for another partner. And this list goes on and on. But what are these trials doing with our faith? Are they driving us closer to God, or are they pushing us away from God?
-) **SLIDE 16.** A trial in the life of a person who claims to be a Christian will serve its **PURPOSE**. It will unveil our true identity.

-) Again, the trial will either drive us closer to God (“*Lord, these are tough times. I need you. Help me get through this.*”); or the trial will push us away from God (“*Lord, you can’t be real, because if You were, I wouldn’t be going through this.*” The trial will serve its purpose.
-) And folks, this is the dangerous part of the health, wealth, and prosperity (Word-faith) gospel preaching that is so prevalent on TV. These charlatans tell their people that God wants you well, He wants you wealthy, and He wants you to be without trials.
-) So, what happens to these people when they have been fed this really bad doctrine for some time, and then bad things start happening? “*The preacher told me this wasn’t supposed to happen. Either my faith must be really weak or maybe God isn’t real, or I didn’t send the preacher enough money.*” Or who knows what else they may question.
-) Then they have doubts about God and they have doubts about their faith, all because they have been fed a pack of lies that the Christian life is one without trials. There couldn’t be anything further from the truth. James tells us that trials will happen and they have a purpose.
-) **SLIDE 17.** JAMES 1:3-4. James is telling us that as we go through trials, the true Christian will endure and his/her faith become perfected, but only if we pass the faith test.
-) Let’s ask that question again. What are these trials doing with our faith? Are they driving us closer to God, or are they pushing us away from God?

SLIDE 18. And let’s make sure we understand this. Our trial may well be difficult. And our trial may never go away anytime soon. JOB 5:7. We will experience trials. But if our trials test our faith, and if we pass that test, then we have the assurance of knowing Who has us; Who will protect us; Who will guide us; and Who will be with us every step of the way.

-) The Christian says these trials are not going to shake my faith. On the contrary, it will be my faith that gets me through these trials. I know who is sitting on the throne. And I will endure. And I will persevere. Because I will pass this test.
-) **SLIDE 19**. MATT 13:22. Explain. Our trials will test our faith.
-) Nobody wants trials in their life. I know I don't. But when they happen, and they will happen, remember that it is your faith that is being tested. You are being molded into Christ-likeness. And that is what bring us joy.
-) Either invite David forward or tell story of William Carey.
-) How is God going to use your trial to put His glory on display?

1/9/2022 at Beech Grove Christian Church

His name was William Carey. He was born on August 17, 1761, in Northamptonshire England. In 1779, at the age of 18, Carey went to work for the local shoemaker, Thomas Old. Two years later he married Old's sister-in-law Dorothy Plackett. William and Dorothy Carey had seven children, five sons and two daughters; both girls died in infancy, as well as their son Peter, who died at the age of 5.

Twelve years later, in 1793, William Carey decided to be a missionary in India. So he packed up his belongings, his wife, and his 4 children, and with his 3rd grade education set off to do missionary work in India.

When he arrived in India, he was considered an outcast because he was not Indian. That made life difficult for him and his family. But Carey moved on. He decided to translate the Bible into the native Indian languages. But first he must learn them.

A few years later he decided that if he's going to get the Word of God out, he had to build a printing operation. He gets a printer from England to come over and together they build a printing operation. They bring in reams of paper that were very difficult to get. They finally get the presses rolling.

The printing types were made out of lead. They design and mold them in all the various Indian language symbols and markings. And there are many more types in the Indian languages than you would find in English. It's a very arduous task to do all of this for these new languages.

They start the printing operation and before you know it they have up to 200 people working there.

Inside the building are all of the original translation sheets that he's worked on-all his original translation work. One night a fire comes and burns the entire plant to the ground. All the letters and characters of lead melt. All his life's work, the original copies of everything are gone forever.

Immediately after the fire, they all got together and praised God because they were about to see God put Himself on display. When William Carey was asked, "Why did this happen?" he responded with, "I don't know. Maybe God had a conversation with Satan and he's trying to prove His point one more time." Within a year the facility was at full operation and they were printing Bibles and sending them everywhere.

Later on Carey was asked: "Why would God, Who could prevent such a thing, allow such a thing to happen?" Carey's response was, "We saw God do things that, if it hadn't been for the fire, we never would've seen Him do."

Before Carey is done 34 years later, he has translated the Bible into 18 languages, none of which he knew when he got arrived in India. He became the greatest living scholar in Sanskrit because Sanskrit's the basic language for all other Indian languages and dialects.

Every missionary then and now that has ever gone to that area of the world is dependent upon the work of William Carey.