

Faith Obeys

Lesson for Sunday, October 8, 2023

INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ What makes for a good day at church? *Allow for a discussion...*
 - Here is what you are looking for: Does what we do with what we hear at church have any effect on if it was a good day or not? Or are we too often content with attending, listening, and then returning home unchanged?
 - A good day at church should be seen in the changes made in the hearers once they return home!
- ⇒ Today's passage is familiar to most Christians – James 1:19-25. It addresses the fact that believers should never want to be content to simply hear God's Word and not act on it.
 - The question we are considering: How do we respond to the truth of God's Word?
- ⇒ CONTEXT: Last week we saw that the key words in verses 2-18 were trials, temptations, and tribulations.
 - In today's text, the key word is "the Word."
 - Begin by reading through today's text and underlining each time you see "**the Word**." (Verses 21, 22, 23 – you can also point out that in verse 25 "the perfect law of liberty" is a reference to the Word.)

BIBLE STUDY:

1. We receive the Word **humbly** (vs. 19-21)
 - a. Verses 19-21 are a paragraph in the original language. This means we need to look at the entire paragraph to make sure we are interpreting and applying this section accurately.
 - b. The admonition of James is seen in verse 21 when he exhorts his readers to "receive...the engrafted Word."
 - c. The rest of the paragraph instructs us on how we are to receive it. James gives us three specific challenges:
 - d. First, be **quick** to hear (vs. 19a).
 - i. This sounds easy enough until one considers our normal reaction in the majority of conversations: we love to talk!
 - ii. ILL: Do you watch the national news channels? They typically have more than one guest debating two sides of an issue, and they are usually talking over each other! We do the same thing in our daily interactions.
 - iii. James says that when we come to hear from God's Word, come with listening ears. Sit still and listen.
 - iv. Discuss: Why do you think it is so hard for us to sit still today?
 - e. Second, be **quiet** and lower your defenses (vs. 19b).
 - i. James instructs us to come with open hearts and open minds, ready to hear what the Word has to say.
 - ii. James is telling us to approach God's Word with **humility**. Don't come to the Bible with your defenses up, which leads to anger and resistance.
 - iii. We can't come to God's Word thinking, "Here's what I want it to say!"
 - iv. If we are honest, we are often not quick to hear and slow to speak. Instead we loathe to listen and are anxious to argue!
 - f. Third, remove your **moral filth** (vs. 21).

- i. The phrase “lay apart” literally carries the idea of taking off a garment.
 - ii. James tells us to put aside the sinful and selfish ideas of the world and to come humbly to the Word.
- 2. We remember the Word **constantly** (vs. 23-25)
 - a. In verses 23-25, James gives an example we can all relate to.
 - i. Most people look in a mirror several times a day.
 - ii. What are we looking for? Anything that needs addressing in our physical appearance!
 - iii. For the Christian, God’s Word is a spiritual mirror. Don’t walk around all week spiritually disheveled! Look in the Mirror!
 - b. Verse 25 is a challenge for us all! Don’t be content with a little word from God for your day! Dive in deep! Looking deeply will prevent forgetfulness. James is exhorting us to not forget the Word!
 - c. If you have time, look at Deuteronomy 6:4-9 where this point is clearly made. *The Word of God should be central in the life of the Christian.* Discuss: What does that mean? What does that look like in a practical sense?
 - d. If all we do is listen to the Word when we come together on Sunday, then we are like the fool in verses 23-24. We listen and leave, and by the end of lunch it’s all gone.
- 3. We obey the Word **wholeheartedly** (vs. 22)
 - a. This is the central verse in this passage, this chapter, and the entire book of James!
 - b. James’ message is easy to understand: You have not really **listened** if you haven’t **obeyed**.
 - c. God’s Word evokes action! No action means no acceptance. Those who accept Jesus obey Jesus.
 - d. James gives a warning: Don’t be blind to your spiritual condition!
 - i. As we consider what James is saying, we must acknowledge that it is easy for us to have spiritual blind spots.
 - ii. Do not quickly dismiss what James is saying. Is it possible that you are deceiving yourself?

APPLICATION:

- ⇒ Scripture memory! It helps us literally not forget the Word of God!
 - Most say, “I can’t do that!” But Psalm 19:10 says God’s Word is more precious than gold. The real question is: Do we value Scripture?
 - Challenge them to memorize verse 22.
- ⇒ Discuss how to make the Word of God a daily part of one’s life. Get specific. As the teacher, share what you do in this area of your life.