

James 1:19-27 (Teaching)

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Preacher: Spencer Baumgardner

[0 : 00] Good morning.

Good morning. We will continue in on and on in chapter one. We will be able to wrap up this chapter this morning if the teacher is not too long wind.

Last week we finished with verse 18 in James chapter one talking about how it was a God's own will that he began us with the word of truth.

And because of that we should be a kind of first for those creatures. And that's where we wrapped up last week. So we'll begin in verse 19 this morning in James chapter one.

It says, Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

[1 : 15] This verse begins with, Wherefore, beloved brethren, and he's already called them brethren once in this chapter in verse two. Here he has the word beloved.

And I think personally that James did this because he done it to somewhat ease the stab of everything he was about to say.

James kind of gets a little coarse here in these next few verses. He gets a little bit rough with what he's about to say. So he not only calls them brethren, but he says, Beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath.

Swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath. And these things all go together. But he continues, for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. And y'all have heard me say it more than once since I've been here.

And you'll hear me say it many times in the future. Once again, God and His sacred word here gives us not only the what, to be swift to hear, so to speak, and slow to wrath, but it gives the why in the next verse four.

[2 : 26] You can substitute that word for with because. For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. So we are to be swift to hear, and so to speak, and so to wrath, because the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God.

But we're to be swift to hear. There's too many Christians. There's too many worldly people. There's too many people all together that aren't this way. And I'm one of them.

And if you're honest with yourself, you probably are too, to be swift to hear. Sometimes people will come to us and need nothing more than a sympathetic ear, a compassionate ear for them to spill their heart to.

And what do we do? Well, that's the very next line, slow to speak. We'll interrupt them. We'll not even listen to their whole story before we start offering advice.

Not even getting the whole picture of what they're trying to tell us. And before you know it, that'll work not only wrath within us, it'll also work wrath within the person who came to us, whom we're addressing.

[3 : 41] So that's a twofold working there. But we should be swift to hear, we should be quick to listen to people, regardless of if you want to, regardless of if I want to.

We should be willing as Christians to listen to people's stories. Like I said, too often, too often we'll jump in with our own advice. Somebody will come to us and they'll be talking about how something that we may name as silly in our own lives, but it's something that has eaten this person alive on the inside.

It could be something just ridiculous. Somebody comes to you and says, you know, I've got a problem. I hate a particular color. And we'll start in on a rant.

As soon as they finish, start in on a rant of how we hate the color black or we hate the color brown. And we'll give every reason in the world as to why we hate that particular color, but their color's pink.

I'm just giving this as an example. We didn't listen to their whole story. So anything that we had to say is going to be of no benefit to them, because we went off on our own rant about what we can't stand, about what works our nerves, and about what eats us up on the inside, and they're still sitting there needing help.

[5 : 00] Needing help with their problem. I said that was a pretty drastic example. I think it gets the example across. We need to be willing to listen to the whole story.

We need to be swift to hear them and slow to speak and slow to rap. When these people come to us, whether it's a fellow Christian, or whether it's somebody just as lost as the proverbial ball in high weeds, we need to be swift to hear them, hear their story, and slow to speak, slow to speak out.

Listen to their whole story. And if we listen to the entire story, to the entire account, whatever it is that they're giving us, then whatever we might have to say afterward will be more beneficial than if we just cut in halfway through what they're saying and start giving our own advice.

We like to give advice. And the advice that we give is often based on experience, but our experience may not relate to their experience. So therefore, the advice that we give ain't going to be a whole lot of benefit to that person.

To be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to rap, for the wrath of man, worketh not the righteousness of God.

[6 : 24] They may come to us, and they may tell us a story that just bowls our blood. And our blood may boil because their blood's boiling over something that took place.

I think I've said here before that abortion is a pet peeve of mine. You want to raise my blood pressure? Let's start talking about it. But, and shame on me for being that way, I should be slow to rap.

And I realize that. But that's a pet peeve of mine, and I've got several other pet peeves. But I'm going to be slow to rap, for the wrath of man, worketh not the righteousness of God.

What is the, what's James trying to get across here? Think about how many times you that have children, your children have disobeyed you. Don't it make you mad?

Made me mad. My boys were growing up. They're above adults now. But if my children disobeyed me, it upset me. And why was that? It shouldn't have been that way.

[7 : 25] Yes, they should mind. Yes, they should obey. But did I obey every time my parents asked me to do something, or asked me to not do something for that matter? Absolutely not.

Absolutely not. So why would I expect my children to act any differently? Now, you think about the righteousness of God. You think about the context that we're talking about here. Be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath.

The wrath of man, worketh not the righteousness of God. Somebody comes to us with whatever it is, and we begin getting angry.

Or whatever the account is. How often should God have struck me down with a bolt of lightning? How many times in the past should God have just snuffed me out of this world?

In his wrath, but in his mercy, and in his long suffering, and in his patience, he didn't do those things. And we, as the children of God, we that have been born again, bought by the blood of Jesus Christ, and God is shaping us, and molding us into the image of His beloved Son, we should try our best to act in the same manner.

[8 : 39] Not hurl insults, not be hateful, and not condemn people, not be wrathful. It's not our place to condemn people. It's our place as Christians to tell people that they're already condemned, according to this book, all of us are.

But we don't do the condemning. God has already done that. So be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, and the wrath of man, worketh not the righteousness of God.

The righteousness of God is holy, God is righteous, God is sinless, and yet He looks down on us a fallen creature, a sinful creature, and shows mercy.

And we need to show that same mercy to anyone that comes to us with whatever problem, whatever issue that it is, and we need to be willing as Christians to give an ear to that.

Is that something I need to work on? I'm pointing a finger at you all. I'm pointing a finger straight at me. That's something I need to work on, and if we're all honest, all of us need to work on that.

[9 : 43] Wherefore, lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

Now, don't get caught up with this word superfluity. It's not something that we say daily, but all it means is in abundance. So it says, wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness.

Now, some people have taken this verse, a couple of subdenominations have taken this verse, and said, well, Ben's James is telling us to lay apart superfluity of naughtiness, which is abundance.

That means a little bit of naughtiness is okay. A little bit of sin is okay. I've heard people say this. Folks, that's not what he's saying. And if you read in the context of the entire line of this verse, he says, wherefore lay apart all filthiness.

And then he says in superfluity of naughtiness, all is all, and abundance is abundance, and superfluity is superfluity. I understand that. But when it begins with all, we need to lay aside all these things.

[10 : 57] Lay aside all wickedness, all wrath, all malice, all these things, and receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls.

Receive with meekness. Most people relate meekness with humility, and that's a part of meekness. That's a big part of meekness.

But it says to receive the engrafted word which is able to save your souls. James here lockens the word, and we can rightfully assume that the word he's talking about is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Although he was writing part of the New Testament as he penned this letter, he had to have been talking about the gospel, the engrafted word.

But he was likening it to a living thing, to something that was alive, it being engrafted. He would have understood this.

[11 : 58] James would have understood this in his day as a graphing plant or a tree branch, or transplanting one crop from this field to another field.

That's how James would have understood this. We in modern times would understand it better as like skin grafts or organ transplants, something like that. But it's something that's alive.

It has the idea of life within it, something that can grow. That's what the engrafted word is.

The engrafted word, when it gets inside of us, well even before it gets inside of us, it is alive. But once it gets inside of us, it should grow, and it should nourish us.

And it should continue doing these things because of the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. This word is able to save the entire world.

[13 : 01] This word has the power to do so, along with the blood of Jesus Christ, and along with the drawing of the Holy Spirit, and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, all of which this living word tells us about, it is a living word.

And it is engrafted in. If you're here this morning, you're saved, and you're born again, it has been engrafted, and your body has been engrafted into your heart.

And because it is, because it's been engrafted, it should be growing, and you should be growing right along with it. We should be doing these things. Peter talks about the word of God, talking about desiring us to sincere milk.

Sincere milk, but folks, you can't stay on the milk and grow as a Christian. You've got to graduate to the meat at some point. You've got to graduate to something you can chew up.

If you're sitting in church for 10 or 20 or 30 years, and you're still depending on the milk, something's bad wrong. Something's bad wrong if that's the case. You should be on meat by that point.

[14 : 07] You should be able to take the deeper things of Scripture. You should be able to read the more complex things of Scripture. There's nothing complex about the gospel of Jesus Christ. You're a sinner and God's a savior.

That's the gospel. That's the gospel. I understand the death of burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ according to 1 Corinthians 15 verses 1 through 4. But the gospel in a nutshell is that you're a sinner and God is the Savior.

And God sent His beloved Son to take your workplace on the cross that you deserved and I deserved. And Jesus Christ did that. He was dead, buried, resurrected, and now He's ascended to the Father, making an intercession for all who believe in Him.

That's the gospel. There's nothing complex about that. But there's some complex things in this book. And it truly saddens me as it should you for people that have been in church all their lives, some of them 50-plus years, that know so little about the Word of God.

And that's a sad state to be in. It's a truly sad way to be. They should be the ones teaching.

[15 : 22] The writer to the Hebrews even addressed that. He addressed that himself when he wrote to the Hebrews. He said, this is my mom's turn, I can't quote it word for word.

But basically he said, y'all should be the ones teaching right now. And you're still right back here. I'm going on. You can stay here with the baptism, you can stay here with the simple things, but I'm going on.

I'm going to go on teaching, and I'm going to get into the deeper things of God. That's how anybody should be that's been in church that long.

Some may not have the gift of teaching, some may not want to teach. I ain't saying everybody's been in church for X amount of time should be teaching. They should know more about the word of God than what they do.

Be ye doers of the word, and not hear it only to see it in your own selves. That goes back to what was just said. People get comfortable. Just go into church and hear in a sermon, maybe hear in a few songs, and go on home and say, well, we had church.

[16 : 31] And that might be a church service. It may be, it may not be. But be ye doers, and not hear it only. Deceiving your own selves.

James throws that in there, and he does it rightfully. Because if you are a hearer only, and you are not a doer, you're deceiving yourself. The church is not just a place that we congregate.

It's not just the place within these four walls or anywhere else out there, or any other four, or eight walls, or anything else. The church is the people.

The church is the blood-bought believers in Jesus Christ. That is what makes up the church. So if you're of the mind that church is only meeting on Sundays, or meeting on Wednesdays, or meeting during a revival, or whatever, I don't care if you go to church every time the doors is open, or you go to a revival meeting that takes place.

If you are a hearer only, you're deceiving yourself. And that's not my interpretation of what the Scripture says. That's what the Scripture says. Be ye doers.

[17 : 43] Be ye doers of the Word, and not hear it only. Deceiving your own selves. Folks, there is, it's one thing to be deceived by a fellow human being.

It's one thing to be deceived by a demon. But there's something extraordinarily pathetic and sorrowful about someone who's caught up in self-deception.

They have deceived themselves. There's something particularly bad and wrong with self-deception. I said it's one thing to be deceived by somebody else.

We've all probably heard the expression, we want shame on you, we want to be deceived by shame on me. We'll get fooled by people. But to deceive yourself is generally because you want to be deceived.

You don't want to give in to the ingratitude word. You don't want to be submissive. That's part of meekness, is submissiveness. You don't want to be submissive to the things of God, to the Word of God, to what God allows His Scripture as to what we should be.

[18 : 52] And that's why we have so many hearers in the church houses today and not doers of the Word. What is a doer of the Word? It's doing what God says.

I mean, it gets no more simple than that. And you might say it was venture, and I was supposed to follow all the commandments, you're to strive to do so.

You're to strive to being Godly. You're to strive under perfection as our Scripture teaches. You won't be perfect here. I won't be perfect here. None of us will be.

We're to strive for those things though. But the hearers only say, well, this is what we're supposed to do. We're supposed to go to church. We're supposed to hear the music.

We're supposed to sing along. We're supposed to hear the sermon. We're supposed to shake the pastor's hand. We're supposed to go on home and wait for the next sermon. What did the doers do? The doers spread the gospel.

[19 : 51] The doers witness. And the doers help those that are in need. James gets into that when he starts talking about things of that nature here in just a few more verses.

If any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like into a man beholding his natural face in a glass, for he beholdeth himself and goeth his way, and he goes right away, forgeteth what manner of man he was, but whoso loopheth into the perfect law of Liberty continueeth therein.

He beeth not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the Word. This man shall be blessed in his deed. So James Lackens, here only, says for if any be a hearer of the Word, the word and not a doer. He's like unto a man beholding his natural face in the glass where he beholds himself and goeth his way straight straight away forgeteth what manner of man he was. Now you gotta keep in mind the glass that he's talking about of course is a mirror. The mirrors at the time James was rotten they say like mirrors we got now. Mirrors we got now show basically a verbatim image of what's in the glass or the mirrors. Back then most back in this day most mirrors were just polished metal. It's kind of like looking at your reflection in a in a murky pool of water.

There was nothing perfect about the reflection that would show them back at you. But he says he beholdeth himself and goeth his way straight away forgeteth what manner of man he was. He just takes a real quick glance at himself the hearer does. He looks he says all right I'm good. And it says that whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty continued therein he being not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the word this man shall be blessed in his deed. So the hearer only just takes a real quick glance goes on his way but the doer is the one that looks into the perfect law of liberty. What's the perfect law of liberty? There's a whole lot of theological debate over what the perfect law of liberty is. And I said a little while ago the ingratitude word we can pretty rightfully assume is the gospel. And I can pretty rightfully assume that the perfect law of liberty is that same gospel. It can't be talking about the law of the Old Testament. That's not the law of liberty. That was the law to show us that we were in bondage. The shows we were in bondage to sin.

It wasn't the the rule book that God gave us saying saying be perfect or be holy for I'm holy. It was to show us just how holy God was and just how unholy we were. The perfect law of liberty has to be the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus said himself that we should hear the hear the truth and the truth should make us free. Yes. Free is liberty. If we're free in Christ we are free indeed. That's liberty. That is liberty. So who so who so looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continue it there and folks make some continuance in this thing. Yes. And that ain't once again that my interpretation is what the Bible says and this ain't the only place that it says it.

[23 : 26] He that endureth unto the end shall be saved. He that continues therein. There's some continuance in this thing. Yes. So you know we can lock them this to people that they may come to church. They may come to church three or four weeks and then go to the altar make a profession across stay in church for a month two months six months maybe even a year. The sooner or later the hearers only they will fall out. They'll go right back to their old ways. It was like a dog returning to the bombing or a sow returning to the minor. That's the hearers only that act in such a way but the ones that the ones that are the doers the doers of the word. The ones that will continue therein and continue to continue therein. He being not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the word. This man should be blessed in his deed. The hearers won't be blessing their deed. It don't matter once again a third church for a month or six months or a year. Whatever deed they might do they won't be blessed in it. That's the word of God. They will not be blessed in that.

But the the doer of the word this man should be blessed in his deed. It doesn't say the one that is successful in his word. It says the doer of the word. There have been a lot of sermons I've preached and a lot of lessons I've talked and I felt like I just fell flat on my face with it.

And I'm sure brother Byrne can relate to that. You feel like you is flapping your gums for no good reason. You feel like you stumbled all over your words, stumbled all over the congregation, didn't make sense. Many times I've done that and y'all might just agree with me on that.

But it doesn't say that I have to feel successful in that work. God tells me to do that. God tells me to go forth. That's what something that the church cannot get in their head. Once again the hearers of the word. They're the ones who just go in they hear it and they go on about their way. They look in the mirror and they go on their way. But the doers, they're the ones that do. What is doing the word? Let's look at it. If any man among you seemed to be religious and brotheleth not his tongue but to see with his own heart, this man's religion is in vain. If any man among you who was James writing to, we can roughly assume that he was writing to believers in Christ or at least a church-type body at this time. But he says if any man among you saved or lost, if any man among you seemed to be religious and brotheleth not his tongue but to see with his own heart, he's going back to deception just like he did in verse 22 and it's self deception to see with his own heart. He's not talking about the other people in the church. Shame on me being a believer in Christ if I deceive someone. If I purposely deceive someone, shame on me for that. But James says if any man among you seemed to be religious and brotheleth not his tongue but to see with his own heart, this man's religion is in vain. It doesn't matter what he practices. It doesn't matter how many services he attends. It doesn't even matter if he preaches or teaches. If he brothels not his tongue and James would have understood this back in this day, we don't have quite the understanding that he would have had. But he understood what a brothel was for. A brothel was something that you threw over a horse or maybe even a camel to direct it, to keep it under control. And in fact, half of chapter three of this same book that we're in right now talks about the tongue. It talks about the wickedness of the tongue and what the tongue is capable of. James gets into more depth in chapter three.

Lord will and we'll get into that in the next few weeks. But if any man among you seemed to be religious and brotheleth not his tongue but to see with his own heart, this man's religion is in vain. Folks, this goes back to the very first verse that we read. Wherefore remember the little brother and brother. Let every man be swift to hear slow to speak and slow to read. For slow to speak, that means we somewhat try to control our tongue. We need to brothel our tongue.

[28 : 16] And according to that verse, verse 19, brothels you were telling long enough to hear what's going on, long enough to hear what the other person has to say. But in this verse, he's just talking about broadening the tongue. He says, but to see with his own heart. This man that he's talking about, this example, he may have been told by somebody in particular. I'm personally persuaded that many of the examples that Paul gave in his writings where a person wasn't named, that he was talking about individuals that he had heard about within the church. I think this could be, this very well could be the same situation here. He may have been addressing something that he had heard going on within a specific congregation. But to see with his own heart, this man's religion is in vain. God help me that my religion is not in vain. Now, I may or may not have heard me say it, but there's a big difference between being religious and being born again.

However, religion has its place. It does. But we can't depend on religion to get us home. We can't depend on religion to get us to heaven. We depend on Christ to get us to heaven.

You read, even in the Old Testament where religion, I mean, God ordained religion. God ordained the sacrifices. God ordained certain things over in the Old Testament, but it got to the point where the Israelites were depending on those things that they were doing.

They were depending on how often they sacrificed or how much they sacrificed, or they were depending on the rituals that they performed. They were depending on everything except for God. They weren't depending on the one who had gave them those ordinances. They were depending on the ordinances themselves. That was bad religion. That was a bad practice of religion. You read in the Old Testament for yourself, God said, I hate your face days. I won't smell your incense. Your incense is a stench in my nostrils. These were religious practices that the Jews had. And God said, He hated them. And this was the part of the religion that He had ordained Himself, but they had come to depend on that instead of on Him. So this man, James is talking about here, he says, Me among you seem to be religious, rather than I his tongue, but as soon as his own heart, this man's religion is in vain, just like the Israelites I was just talking about.

Their religion was in vain because they were depending on the ordinances and the rituals and all these other things. They weren't depending on God. It's all in vain. Your religion undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep Himself unspotted from the world. And once again, there's people out there that have severely twisted and distorted this verse saying, Well, if I go and visit the orphans and I go and visit the widows, I'll go to heaven. No, that's not what this verse is saying.

[31 : 49] It's not what this verse is saying at all. So pure religion undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep Himself unspotted from the world. Well, if you compare this with the verse right before it, where it talks about the man that doesn't bridle his tongue, his religion is in vain, and then we get into what religion is, what's it speaking of? It's speaking of the visit of the fatherless and the widows in their affliction and to meet people's needs, to go to the needy, to help the needy. Now, I'm not saying that every church in the area should build a hotel for the homeless. I'm not saying that every church in the area should spend every dime that they've got and forget the electricity and the water bills to help the needy. I'm not saying that at all, but I will tell you this, and I hope it doesn't offend anybody, there will be no need for the welfare state in our country if the church would be the church.

There will be no need for zero. Most churches, and I'm sure this one as well, have a 501c3 status, a tax exempt status. You know how that status was given when it was originally started? Because Uncle Sam said, well, you're feeding the homeless, you're clothing the naked, you're taking care of the widows, you're taking care of the orphans, you need that money to do that, you don't need to pay taxes, you use that money to keep on doing what you're doing, and now the church isn't doing it. The church is blowing that money.

Folks, I'd rather have five people in a shack by the side of the road that wanted to be the church as to have the most exquisite building, the most beautiful stained glass windows, the most wonderful pole pit, the biggest sound system. I would rather have a shack with five people that wanted to be the church as to have a building like that with a thousand people and the people that wanted to be here are not doers. I don't know how many of you all knew that about 501c3 status, but that's exactly why it was given, because back then the church was the church, and the church is not the church now, the church is enacting like the church. Like I said, God doesn't grade us on the success of our work. He doesn't grade me on how many people get saved when I preach, or how many people hit the altar, or how many people pray a prayer of repentance, or anything else because of anything that I've done. God just expects me to do the work.

You look at Jesus crossing the Gospels. Jesus was always, follow me and go. Follow me and I will make you fishers of men. He didn't say follow me, sit down there and do nothing. Follow me and I will make you fishers of men. Before, there at the end of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus Christ said himself, he said, go into the world and preach the Gospel. He didn't say sit on your tail ends and don't do anything. He said, go into the world, preach the Gospel, help the need, do these things, be a doer of the Word, not hearers only. Not everybody's called to preach, not everybody's called to teach, but every one of us are called to be a witness to Jesus Christ.

Whether you are male, female, boy, girl, old man or old woman, every one of us are called to be a witness of Christ if we were born again. There's no exception in that. It's a visit to the Father of the Son of the windows and their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

[36 : 07] This trance is all over certain theologies that are out there to keep himself unspotted from the world, to keep himself. The responsibility lies on us. I understand when I got saved, the Holy Spirit entered me and he cleaned out every sin. He washed me clean with the blood of Jesus Christ. He got back into the deep crevices. He cleaned out all the cobwebs and he lit it up inside my heart. I understand how that happened. I don't understand why it happened because I wouldn't have done it had I been God, but I understand how it happens. But it says to keep himself unspotted from the world.

In other words, when sin starts creeping in, it's because you want to creep in. James addressed this earlier in his letter. We talked about that last week. Every man is tempted when he's drawn away of his own lust and entice. When lust has conceived to bring forth sin and sin, when it is finished bring forth death. That sin enters in because it's been dwelling in there. It's been growing in there. And if we allow it to, that sin will grow bigger and more desirable than the engrafted Word of God which should be growing inside of us. And to keep himself unspotted from the world, to keep himself. So in other words, when it comes down to the end of this thing, when we stand before God in judgment, we can't point the finger at God and say, you were supposed to keep me unspotted from the world. We can't do that, folks, because that responsibility falls on you and it falls on me. I am just as susceptible to temptation as you are.

Every one of us are. Brother Vernon and I briefly talked about that this morning. Every one of us are susceptible to temptation, but the thing is not giving it a temptation.

And if that engrafted Word is growing, is inside of you and it's alive and it's growing as it should, then that Word has all power to help you to overcome that temptation, to overcome that sin, to say, no, I belong to the King. I don't belong to this world. I don't want any part of that sin anymore. It may be something that you loved back before you were born again. In fact, that's the case with most of us. I don't get tempted by demons with drugs because I was never into drugs.

I could have cared less about drugs, but there's other temptations out there that I was into. That's what they test me with because they knew how much I enjoyed it when I was out in the world.

[39 : 08] But it falls on me to keep myself unspotted from the world. And it falls on you to keep yourself unspotted from the world. I ain't saying God doesn't have power to do so. I'm saying God laid that responsibility on you. God has got all power to do whatever he wants to. He is all sovereign.

He is almighty. He can do what he wants to. That responsibility falls on you to keep yourself unspotted from the world. That wraps up James chapter one.