

SCATTERED

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

Message Series // SCATTERED (James 1:1-4)

Message Date // September 13, 2020 (Scotty Priest)

BIG IDEA

During this season of life in 2020, most of us can use the word “scattered” to describe how we feel. Schedules have been scattered, along with finances, jobs, emotions, living situations, and more. We can feel disorganized, alone, and messy. As we lean into this time of looking through the biblical letter of James, we will know that we aren’t alone in feeling scattered. James, the half-brother of Jesus and pastor of the Jerusalem church in this time, is writing to all the Christians that have been scattered out from Jerusalem because of persecution. He writes with a heart to remind them, in the midst of all the unknowns, to live out their faith in a real and practical way. These same words, written almost 2,000 years ago, can also help ground us today as we seek to live out the ways of Jesus in the midst of feeling scattered.

“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings. Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of various kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” - James 1:1-4

DISCUSSION

James begins his letter by addressing the pain and struggles the scattered Christians are facing, and he encourages them to “consider it pure joy”. If we could be honest, depending on the trials we are facing, this statement can seem pretty calloused...mainly because our world treats hard things as bad things. However, if we can see it through the lens God’s ultimate plan in us and in our world, facing struggles with joy can be a powerful lens. Why do we normally view hard things as bad things? How can approaching tough things through the lens of joy be powerful in your life?

In **verse 2**, James uses the word “whenever”. In other words, it’s not a matter of ‘if’ we will go through tough times, but ‘when’. Share some of the toughest struggles you have had to work through...or are currently working through.

Read **verses 3-4**. The hard truth is that growth and comfort cannot coexist, because in order for us to grow, we have to get uncomfortable. As James writes...it’s through struggle that we build endurance, perseverance, resilience, and strength. What growth has God done in your own life through the different pains and troubles you’ve been through?

NEXT STEPS

Jesus says in **Matthew 7:14**...“*They way is hard that leads to life.*” Read also **Romans 8:28**. In trying to use the illustration of weeds with a positive spin...weeds can grow anywhere and everywhere. The truth is that we can grow personally through anything and anywhere, especially when we see it through the lens of God’s work in and around us. What is one next step you can take to choose joy in the midst of tough and uncomfortable circumstances, trusting that it’s an opportunity God is providing to grow?