WHY DO WE STUDY SCRIPTURE EXEGETICALLY?

-Last week, before we ever really began studying James, we talked about **exegesis**.

-We said that when we study the Bible **exegetically**, we're not beginning with what *we* ***want*** the Bible to say.

-We're asking:

- **What does the text actually say?**
- **What did the author intend to communicate?**
- **What did it mean in its original context?**
- **And how should that truth transform us today?**

-We looked at Romans 12:2, the word **transformed,** and how James's experienced his **conversion**.

-We're **not** studying James just so that, **five chapters from now**, we can say: "I know more about **James**."

-We want to be **transformed by the Word of God**.

-But that **raises** an important question: **Why Scripture?**

-Why should this **book** have the **authority** to transform the way I **think** and **live**?

-Paul gives us an **answer** in 2 Timothy 3:16–17.

-And I want us to **slow down** and look **carefully** (exegetically) at what he says.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

1. "ALL SCRIPTURE"

-Paul begins: **"All Scripture…"**

- Not ***some*** Scripture.
- Not simply the **parts** we enjoy.
- Not simply the **promises**.
- Not simply the words of Jesus printed in **red**.

-All Scripture.

-Paul begins with the Greek word, ***Pas*** **(πᾶς)**

-We **translate** it into English as "All" or "Every".

-When you see the word in Greek writing, it's **emphasizing the noun** that follows it…

-Which in our case is the word **Scripture** or in the Greek, ***graphē* (γραφή).**

-It means **writing** or **Scripture**, and in the New Testament it is used for **sacred** Scripture.

-In Paul's immediate **context**, Timothy had been taught the **"Holy Scriptures"** from childhood…

2 Timothy 3:15 And how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

-Paul's primary reference would have been the **Old Testament** Scriptures Timothy knew.

-But the **New Testament** also shows the **category** of "Scripture" beginning to include the **Apostles' writings**.

-Peter, for example, refers to Paul's letters alongside **"the other Scriptures"**

2 Peter 3:15–16 [15] Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. [16] He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

-Which by the way…the New Testament Scriptures weren't **formally authorized as canon** until the **late 4th Century**.

-There were several "**councils**" that gathered, including the **Council of Rome in 382**, the **Council of Hippo in 393**, and the **Council of Carthage in 397**.

-The word "Canon" refers to an **official**, authoritative list of books accepted as **genuine** Holy Scripture.

-**Canonization** is the **historical** process by which a religious community **decides** which books meet the standards to be included in that **official list**.

-The word Canon originates from the Greek word ***kanōn***, which literally means a **"measuring rod"** or "**rule**."

-So, when Christians **affirm** the **authority** of **Scripture**, we aren't just saying: "These are some really **helpful** religious writings."

-We're saying something much bigger: **Scripture occupies a place of authority for the people of God.**

2. "GOD-BREATHED"

-This may be the **most important word** in the passage.

"All Scripture is **God-breathed**…" or in Greek: ***theopneustos* (θεόπνευστος)**

-It combines the ideas of **God** (***theos***) and **breath/spirit** (***pneō***).

-Think of it this way…the same **breath** the breathed **life** into **man** in **creation**…

Genesis 2:7 Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

-Is the same **breath** giving **life** to **Scripture**!

-Notice that Paul **isn't** just saying Scripture is **inspiring**.

- We talk about inspiring **music**.
- An inspiring **speech**.
- An inspiring **story**.

-That's **not** what Paul means.

-The **emphasis** is on the **source** of Scripture.

-Scripture comes from God.

-God worked through real **human authors**.

- James sounds like James.
- Paul sounds like Paul.
- Luke sounds like Luke.

-They wrote within their **own historical settings**, using their **own vocabulary** and **personalities**.

-As Christians, we **believe** that through the **work** of the **Holy Spirit**, what they wrote is **God's Word**.

-That is why **exegesis matters**.

-If Scripture is **God-breathed**, we don't get to **make it say** whatever we **want it to say**.

-Our **responsibility** is to discover what it **actually says.**

-Or we fall into the **trap** Peter wrote in 2 Peter 3:16…which **ignorant** and **unstable** people **distort.**

-We don't **stand over** Scripture and **decide** what is **true**.

-We place ourselves **under Scripture** and allow it to **shape** what we **believe is true**.

3. "USEFUL FOR TEACHING"

-Then Paul gives **four examples** of what Scripture **does**.

-He uses the word "profitable", which in the Greek ***ōphelimos*** **(ὠφέλιμος) o-fel'-ee-mos**

-It's comes from the Greek word ***ophelos*** **(ὄφελος)** or to profit.

-The first example Paul gives is **Teaching**

-The Greek word ***didaskalia (*διδασκαλία) *did-as-kal-ee'-ah***

-Teaching answers: **What is true? Or right?**

-Scripture teaches us about:

- God.
- Humanity.
- Sin.
- Salvation.
- Jesus.
- The Holy Spirit.
- The Church.
- Holiness.
- Eternity.
- And how God's people are supposed to live.

-That's one reason we **move slowly** through **books** of the Bible.

-We want **Scripture** to **establish** what we **believe**.

- Not **culture**.
- Not **social media**.
- Not my **feelings**.
- Not even the **pastor**.

-Our **authority as pastors**, when we **preach** and **teach**…

-Ultimately comes from **correct exegesis** and **faithfully communicating** Scripture.

4. "REBUKING"

-This one isn't quite as **comfortable**.

-Greek: ***elegmos* (ἐλεγμός)**

-It carries the idea of **exposing** or **identifying** error.

-If teaching says: **"Here is what is right,"**

-Then rebuking says: **"Here is where you're wrong."**

-And we need **both**.

-Sometimes we **approach Scripture** looking for **affirmation**:

-But sometimes **Scripture** says, you **need to change.**

-James is going to do **plenty** of that!

-James is going to confront our:

- Speech.
- Anger.
- Favoritism.
- Pride.
- Selfish ambition.
- Our treatment of people.
- Our relationship with money.
- Even the way we make plans.

-That's not Scripture being **cruel**.

-That's Scripture **doing its job**.

-Teaching shows us what is **RIGHT.**

-Rebuking shows us what is **WRONG.**

5. "CORRECTING"

-Then we move into the idea of **correcting**:

-The Greek: ***epanorthōsis*** **(ἐπανόρθωσις) ep-an-or'-tho-sis.**

-It carries the idea of **restoration to an upright condition**, setting something **right** again.

-I really like Paul's progression here.

-Scripture doesn't merely tell us: **"You're wrong" a**nd leave us there.

-Scripture says: **"You're wrong, and here's how to get right."**

-That's correction.

-If rebuke **identifies the problem**, correction **redirects us toward truth**.

-There's **grace** in that.

-God doesn't **expose** what is **wrong** simply to **condemn** us.

-He wants to **restore** us.

-Teaching shows us what is **RIGHT.**

-Rebuking shows us what is **WRONG.**

-Correction shows us how to **GET RIGHT.**

6. "TRAINING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS"

-Now Paul is telling us that Scripture is used for **"training in righteousness**."

-The Greek word here for training is ***paideia* (παιδεία) pi'-di'-ah**

-This is the language of **education, discipline, instruction,** and **formation**.

-This is taking a baby and **educating** them from **childhood** through becoming **adults**.

-My own **children** are all **adults**, but I am still "**training**" them.

-This isn't merely **learning information**...this is **formation**.

-It's teaching them **morality**, ambition, **goals**, vision, **spirituality**...

-This training implies **repetition**.

- Practice.
- Discipline.
- Growth over time.

-Nobody goes to the **gym once** and says: "**Well, I'm trained**."

-Training is a **process**...and so is **discipleship**.

-And **what** are we being **trained** in? **Righteousness**.

-That Greek word is ***dikaiosynē* (δικαιοσύνη) de-kah-yoo-soo'-nay**

-Which is **doctrine** that helps us **attain** a life **approved** and **acceptable** of God.

-It's our integrity, **virtue**, purity of life, **rightness**, correctness of **thinking**, feeling, and **acting**

- **Teaching** shows us what is **RIGHT.**
- **Rebuking** shows us what is **WRONG.**
- **Correcting** shows us how to **GET RIGHT.**
- **Training in Righteousness** teaches us how to **STAY RIGHT.**

2 Timothy 3:16–17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

7. "SO THAT..."

-And now we get to **verse 17**.

-And Paul is about to give us the **purpose**.

-Everything he just said in **verse 16** is moving somewhere.

-God **gave us Scripture** for a **reason**.

- Teaching.
- Rebuking.
- Correcting.
- Training in Righteousness.

-So that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

-That's the **destination**.

8. "THOROUGHLY EQUIPPED"

-Paul uses two **closely related ideas** here:

- being **complete**
- fully **equipped**

-The Greek word for complete is ***artios* (ἄρτιος)**

- **Literal sense:** Fitted **together** properly, **put in order**, or made **whole**.
- **Functional sense:** Having a special **skill**, readiness, or **competence** to meet every demand of a situation.

-The Greek word for equipped is ***exartizō* (ἐξαρτίζω) ex-ar-tid'-zo**

-This word just adds the **prefix "ex"** onto the Greek word for complete...**intensifying** the **meaning**.

-In classical Greek and **historical documents**, this word was most used to describe **fitting out a ship for sea**.

-loading it with **sails**, oars, **provisions**, and a **crew** so it was **100% ready** for a long journey.

-Functionally, it means bringing someone or something to a **state of absolute readiness** so they can successfully **complete their purpose**.

-It isn't just about **looking** complete; it is about being **operationally capable**.

-The idea of what Paul is saying here is this:

-God's Word **prepares** us with what we need to **accomplish** the work God has **called** us to do.

WHY ARE WE STUDYING JAMES EXEGETICALLY?

-Because we believe: **ALL Scripture** is **GOD-BREATHED**

-and therefore, it is useful for:

- **TEACHING** — showing us what is **right**.
- **REBUKING** — showing us what is **wrong**.
- **CORRECTING** — showing us how to **get right.**

- **TRAINING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS** — teaching us how to **stay right.**

-So we can be: **THOROUGHLY EQUIPPED**

-And **live out** the faith we **profess**.

-And that means we're **not studying** James simply to ask: **"What does James MEAN?"**

-I want us to ask… **"Since this is the God-breathed Word of God, what needs to change in me based on what James says?"**

-That's where **exegesis** becomes **transformation**.

-And that's where **Bible study** becomes **discipleship**.

INTRODUCTION TO JAMES, PART 2: JAMES AND HIS WORLD AT 30,000 FEET

-With this **understanding** of Scripture in place, I want to go back up to **30,000 feet** tonight.

-Last week we asked, **Who is James?**

-Tonight we're going to ask four more questions:

- **Who was he writing to?**
- **When did he write it?**
- **What was happening historically?**
- **And why did he write it?**

-Because if we're **serious** about understanding what God has said, **context matters**.

James 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.

-**Last week** we asked our first big question: **Who is James?**

-We **traced** his remarkable **journey**:

- **James the brother**
- **James the Skeptic**
- **James meets the resurrected Jesus**
- **James the believer**
- **James the leader**
- **James the martyr**

-Tonight, I still want us to understand the **landscape**.

-Because **every book** of the Bible was written in a **context**.

- **Someone** wrote it.

- They wrote it **to someone**.
- They wrote it **at a particular time**.
- Something was **happening** in their world.
- And there was a **reason they wrote it**.

-Understanding those things **doesn't diminish** the **inspiration** of Scripture.

-It helps us understand what the **inspired author** was **communicating**.

-And remarkably, **James begins answering** those questions in his very **first sentence**.

1. WHO WAS JAMES WRITING TO?

-Look again at James 1:1:

James 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.

-Those **few words** tell us quite a bit.

A. "The Twelve Tribes"

-This is unmistakably **Jewish language**.

-"The twelve tribes" immediately takes us back to **Israel** and the **twelve sons** of **Jacob**.

-But James **ISN'T** simply writing to **ethnic Jews**.

-He's writing as a **Christian leader** to people who **confess** Jesus Christ as Lord.

-James 2:1 makes that explicit: ***My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ.***

-The **audience** appears to have been **predominantly Jewish Christians**.

-And that helps **explain** some things we're going to **encounter**.

-James **assumes** his readers know the **Old Testament**.

-Throughout the letter he refers to:

- Abraham
- Rahab
- Job
- Elijah
- the Law
- the prophets

B. "Scattered Among the Nations"

-This word "**scattered**" becomes extremely **important**.

-The Greek is ***diaspora* (διασπορά) dee-as-por-ah' or di-as-por-ah**

-We still use the word ***diaspora*** today to describe people **dispersed** from their **homeland**.

-James isn't **primarily** writing to Christians comfortably **established** in **Jerusalem**.

-They're **scattered.**

-Which **raises** another question: **Why are they scattered?**

-The Book of Acts gives us some **important background**.

-After Stephen is **killed**, Saul begins to **persecute** the church.

Acts 8:1 On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered…

Acts 11:19 Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch…

-Now James doesn't say, *"I'm **writing specifically** to the people scattered in **Acts 8."***

-But Acts shows us that **Jewish Christians** were being **dispersed** from Jerusalem and Judea during this **historical period**.

-**Imagine** you are one of them.

-You didn't move because you got a **better job**.

-You didn't relocate because you wanted **nicer weather**.

-Some had been **displaced** because **following Jesus** had become **costly**.

- They've left **homes**.
- They've left **communities**.
- They may have lost **economic stability**.
- They're trying to follow Jesus in **unfamiliar surroundings**.

-And then James **writes** them a **letter**.

-Suddenly the **opening** of verse 2 makes much **more sense**:

James 1:2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,

-James **isn't** writing about **hypothetical trials**.

-He's writing to people who **understand** what **trials** feel like.

-**Scattered**…but not **abandoned**!

3. WHEN DID JAMES WRITE?

-We cannot give an **exact year** with certainty.

-But we can **establish** some **boundaries**.

-As we discussed last week, James was **martyred** around **A.D. 62**, so the letter **predates** that.

-Many evangelical scholars favor an **early date**, often somewhere in the **A.D. 40s**

-Potentially before the **Jerusalem Council** recorded in **Acts 15**.

-Where they **decided**, and **James declared**...no circumcision needed for salvation.

-If that early dating is **correct**, James could be one of the **earliest books** of the **New Testament**.

-We're most likely reading **Christianity** when it is still very **young**.

-Jesus' **crucifixion** and **resurrection** aren't ancient history.

-They're **recent** events.

-People who personally **knew Jesus** are still **alive**.

-The apostles are actively **leading the church**.

-The **missionary expansion** recorded in Acts is **underway**.

-And the New Testament as we know it hasn't yet been **assembled**.

Why do some scholars favor an early date?

-There are several reasons.

- The **audience** appears heavily **Jewish-Christian**.
- The **church organization** reflected in the letter seems **relatively simple**.
- And James doesn't discuss the **major controversy** over Gentile **circumcision** that dominates the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15.

-If James **wrote before** that council, the **silence** regarding **circumcision** makes perfect **sense**.

4. WHAT WAS HAPPENING HISTORICALLY?

-Let’s **paint a picture** here for a moment:

- **Forget** modern Christianity for a moment.
- There are no church buildings on **every corner**.
- There are no Christian **bookstores**.
- There are no **study Bibles** or Bible studies.
- There is no New Testament **bound together**.
- Christianity isn't **culturally powerful**.
- It's a small and sometimes **misunderstood movement** centered around the **claim** that:

- **Jesus** of Nazareth was **crucified**, **rose** from the **dead**, and is **Lord**.

-And James's readers are **living** right in the **middle** of it.

A. The Church Is Growing

-Acts describes **explosive growth** following **Pentecost**.

Acts 2:41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Acts 2:27 And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 4:4 But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.

Acts 5:14 Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.

Acts 9:31 Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

Acts 16:5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

-**Thousands** are coming to faith.

-AD 112, Pliny the Younger wrote a letter to **Emperor Trajan**

-About **80 years** after the **resurrection**, a **Roman governor**, and not a Christian, wrote the **emperor** concerned about how **extensively Christianity had spread**.

-He said it had reached the **cities**, **villages**, and even the **rural countryside**.

-So many people had turned to Christ that **pagan temples** had nearly been **deserted**.

-But **growth** brings **challenges**.

B. The Church Is Being Persecuted

-**Stephen** has been **killed**.

-**Saul** has been **hunting** Christians.

-**Believers** have **scattered**.

-Eventually **James** himself will be **killed**.

-Following Jesus has **consequences**.

C. The Church Is Spreading

Here's the **irony**: The persecution **intended** to **stop** the Gospel actually helped **spread** the Gospel.

Acts 8:4 says: Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

-They scattered the **believers**…they **accidentally scattered** the Gospel.

-The church didn't simply **survive** being scattered.

-God **used** the scattering to **advance** His **mission**.

-More irony…Jesus had **instructed** the **believers** to be **witnesses** in Jerusalem.

-But **didn't** tell them to **stay there**…

-He said go to **Judea** (region), **Samaria** (places you DON'T want to go), and the **EOE**

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

-But what got them to move out of **Jerusalem** (home)?

Acts 8:1 On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

D. There Are Economic Pressures

-James repeatedly addresses **rich** and **poor.**

-James 2 confronts **favoritism** toward the **wealthy**.

-James 5 **condemns** wealthy landowners who **withhold wages** from laborers.

-James's **readers** are apparently **living** with both **economic vulnerability** and **vitality**.

E. The Church Is Learning How to Live Like Jesus

-With Christianity is **expanding**, and these believers are **learning**:

- What does **following** Jesus **look like**?
    - What does Christianity look like when I'm **suffering**?
    - When I'm **angry**?
    - When I'm **tempted**?
    - When someone has **more money** than I do?
    - When I **disagree** with someone?
    - When I **want something** I don't have?
    - When I've been **mistreated**?
    - When I'm **making plans** for tomorrow?
    - When I'm **sick**?

-That's the **world** James is **writing** into and suddenly his **letter feels** incredibly **modern**.

5. WHY DID JAMES WRITE?

-James doesn't give us a **single purpose** statement like **John**.

John 20:31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

-So we will look at the **entire letter** and ask: **What problem is James trying to address?**

-And I think our **series title** captures it.

FAITH THAT WORKS

-James is writing to believers whose **profession of faith** needs to become the **practice of faith**.

-They **believe** in Jesus.

-James wants to know: What **difference** is your **belief** in Jesus **making**?

-Can you **answer that question** about **yourself**?

-Throughout these **five chapters**, James keeps **moving faith out** of the **theoretical** and **into** everyday **life**.

BRINGING THE 30,000-FOOT VIEW TOGETHER

-Here's the fun part…we haven't even left **verse 1** yet.

James 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.

- But now we **know** something about the **man holding the pen**.
- We **know** something about the **people receiving the letter**.
- We **know** something **about their world**.
- And we **know** something about **why** this **letter needed to be written**.

-Now we're ready to come down from **30,000 feet**.

-Next week, we can begin **walking** through James **verse by verse**.

-And James **doesn't ease** us into it.

-He starts with: **"Consider it pure joy…whenever you face trials of many kinds."**

-Because **first**, James **wants us to know** our **faith works** is when **life doesn't.**