

- I) V12 INTRO: But above all my brethren **do not swear** either by heaven or by earth or James has just exhorted his readers to wait patiently for Jesus to return
- II) They were undergoing difficult times and their faith was being stretched
James had identified two of the sources of stress that they were undergoing
- III) In Ch 4, he addressed church wars that had begun to erupt
There were some who were infected by the world's priorities
- IV) Some had made **friends with the world** system and it produced strife in the church
Jas 4:4-5 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?
- V) He had made it clear: to **love the world** is to be an enemy of God
To be in love with the world system is to reject Jesus, revealing a divided heart
Lu 16:13 **No servant can serve two masters**; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.
- VI) He then addressed the false promises of material wealth
He pointed out that the unrighteous rich were in fact taking advantage of the poor
- VII) Their lives had been built on sinking sand and would soon be completely lost
Mt 7:26-27 Everyone who hears these words of mine **and does not do them** will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain **fell**, and the floods **came**, and the winds **blew** and beat against that house, **and it fell**, and great was the fall of it.
- VIII) This is why Jesus warned us against a life built on greed
Lu 12:15 Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.
- IX) The unsaved rich valued wealth and mistreated the poor, and would be judged
Inescapable hardship, trouble, and calamity would soon come upon them
- X) **JAMES MADE IT CLEAR**

- I) The pursuit of wealth **for its own sake** is a dangerous ambition
Pr 23:4-5 Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint. Cast but a glance at riches and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.
- II) Soon the Romans would sweep in and all that they had hoarded would be lost
In the face of this, **what should the believers do?**
- III) They should live for Christ, and do so with **integrity**
- IV) One of the qualities of a believer **that has great impact** is **integrity**
Integrity is the state of being whole and undivided
It is the quality of being **honest** and having strong **moral principles**
- V) Having integrity means having truthfulness in our thoughts, words, and actions
Ac 24:16 I always take pains to have a **clear conscience** toward both God and man
- VI) Why does James close this section with this exhortation?
It is because **a person's speech** clearly reveals their **spiritual condition**
Mt 12:34-35 Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For **out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks**. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things
- VII) James had earlier spoken to this
Jas 1:26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but **deceives his own heart**, this one's religion is useless
- VIII) Straightforward and honest speech reveals our faith and character
Eph 4:25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.
AVOID FALSE OATHS AND EVASIVE SPEECH
- IX) V12 Do not swear either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath
During this time there were various formulas that were used when taking oaths
- X) Each thing sworn upon was intended to reveal how sincere the oath was
We see this in Matthew 5

I) In the sermon on the mount, Jesus spoke about oath taking

Mt 5:34-37 But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by **heaven**, for it is God's throne; or by **the earth**, for it is his footstool; or by **Jerusalem**, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by **your head**, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one

DEVELOP

II) Jesus was not forbidding us from **taking an oath**

We do this when we make our wedding vows, are sworn into public office, are giving testimony in court, become an American citizen or are sworn into military service

III) We see Jesus' response, when standing before the high priest

As he questioned Jesus, he initiated a question that would be seen as an oath

Mt 26:63-64 (At first) Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, "**I adjure** You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus said to him, "You have said it yourself; nevertheless, I tell you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven

IV) The taking of an oath is to heighten awareness of the seriousness of the matter

This is intended by the thought of including God's presence in the situation

WHAT IS JAMES SAYING?

V) Be of such integrity, that your *word* is respected as being true and dependable

Let your word stand firm, and be careful to keep it when you give it

VI) God is a **God of truth**,

Dt 32:4 He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.

Ro 3:4 let **God be true**, but every man a liar. As it is written: That You may be justified in Your words, and may overcome when You are judge

Since God is truth, your word **should be good enough** if you are a Christian

FACT

VII) Christians, of all people, are to be the most honest, with the most integrity

A man's greatness is determined by the height of his character

Pr 22:1 A good name is more desirable than great riches

VIII) Our **word** is our bond: Our yes should be yes, and our no should **really mean no**

- I) God commands us to be people of integrity: people who keep our word
Eph 4:25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.
This reveals that we are truly children of God, because our God does not lie
- II) Warren Wiersbe: The Integrity Crisis
For...centuries, **the church** has been telling the world to admit its sins, repent, and believe the gospel. Today...**the world** is telling the church to face up to her sins, repent, and start being **the true church** of that gospel. We Christians boast that we are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, but perhaps the gospel of Christ **is ashamed of us**.
- III) Because many have failed to be Christlike, the Church has lost her credibility
If we lie about **little things**, then who would believe us when we share **the gospel**
- IV) Some say they won't attend church because it is filled with hypocrisy
Quote: The Church is like Noah's Ark: if it weren't for **the judgment** on the outside, you could never stand the smell on the inside.
IT NEED NOT BE THIS WAY
- V) We need to seek the Lord and be careful to pursue **Him daily**
We need to read scripture, fellowship, pray, attend studies, witness
- VI) We need to keep a close watch on our own lives
Pr 4:23 Keep your heart with all diligence; for out of it spring the issues of life
- VII) We seek God through His word and prayer and decide to walk closely with Him
Ps 86:11 Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.
- VIII) With that said, James now returns to where he began his letter
He had begun his epistle by teaching about trials (1:2-4)
He now refers to four things: Suffering, singing, sickness and sin
FIRST
- IX) V13 Is anyone among you **suffering**? Let **him** pray
Suffering: Afflicted in any way; enduring evil and undergoing hardship
- X) He had already referred to suffering in Jas 5:10
They were to use the prophets as examples of faithfulness in suffering

- I) Affliction, suffering, and tribulation is part of following Christ
- II) This is part of being a Christian and Jesus prepared His followers concerning this
Mt 10:22 You will be hated by everyone because of Me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved
Jn 15:20 Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, **they will also persecute you**. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.
Jn 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the world **you shall have tribulation**: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.
Ac 14:22 We must **through much tribulation** enter into the kingdom of God
- III) The believers were already suffering afflictions and needed to be encouraged
Some were hauled into court, were mocked for their faith, were losing everything
- IV) Concerning affliction in the life of the believer, we know that God works through it
- V) Affliction is not pointless, but is actually performing a work in our lives
Ro 5:3-5 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation works *patience*; and patience, *experience*; and experience, *hope*: and hope makes not *ashamed*; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.
Ro 12:12 Rejoicing in hope; *patient in tribulation*; continuing instant in prayer;
- VI) For believers, times of affliction are not pointless because we learn through them
We can see them as God working to purify our lives and refine our faith
Is 48:10 Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the *furnace of affliction*.
- VII) Afflictions equip and prepare us to minister to others through our experience
2 Co 1:6 If we are distressed (afflicted), it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.
- VIII) Our times of difficulty are in fact the times that work to draw us closer to God
Ps 119:67 Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word

- I) This helps us understand V10-11, as we experience God's compassion and mercy
It is then that we receive a deeper insight into the love and compassion of God
Ps 147:3 He **heals the brokenhearted** and binds up their wounds.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

- II) V13 Is anyone among you **suffering**? Let him pray
What do we do when suffering? We pray for God to strengthen us and deliver us
The natural response is to complain (V9)

- III) Instead of grumbling, we pray and we hold on to our faith in God
We know that God will use whatever we go through for our good
1 Pe 2:19 For it brings favor if, mindful of God's will, someone endures grief from suffering unjustly.

WHY PRAY?

- IV) Prayer reveals our dependence on God and faith that He hears us as we cry
As we go through the affliction, we can do so knowing He is with us
Ps 34:4 I sought the Lord and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears
Ps 91:15 He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.

SECOND

- V) V13: Is anyone cheerful? Let him **sing psalms**
In the life of a believer, singing and praising God is the response of a joyful heart
Singing **psalms** is singing, accompanied by a stringed instrument (like a harp)

- VI) Singing praises to God has always been part of **true worship**
People love to sing, and sing for all occasions and sing all kinds of songs

- VII) Of all people, we have the best reason to sing and worship and **praise** God
The word **praise** is used 160x's in the psalms *alone*

- VIII) **Praise** speaks of adoration or thanksgiving to God, and is natural for us to do
Ps 100:4 Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise:
be thankful unto Him, and bless His name.

Heb 13:15 By Him therefore let us offer **the sacrifice of praise** to God continually,
that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and
admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace
in your hearts to the Lord

- I) Singing praise to God is not restricted to times when things are going well
EXAMPLE
- II) In Ac 16, Paul and his friend Silas were preaching the gospel in Philippi
While ministering they encountered a demonized woman and cast the demon out
This outraged her masters, and they arrested them for troubling the city
- III) The magistrates ordered them beaten with rods and threw them in prison
They fastened their feet in the stocks, securing them so they could not escape
- IV) How did they react to this kind of treatment
Ac 16:25 At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and **singing hymns** to God, and the prisoners were listening to them
PRAISE CAN LEAD TO CONVERSIONS
- V) This led to the conversion of the Philippian jailer, and his household
Ro 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.
- VI) V14 Is anyone among you **sick**? Let him call for the elders of the church and let James now refers to **sickness**: (To be weak, feeble, without strength, powerless)
WE NEED TO REMEMBER
- VII) Being a believer does not insure you against illnesses
We live in a fallen world and are still subject to sicknesses, like everybody else
- VIII) In scripture, faith filled believers are mentioned as having to contend with illness
2 Ki 13:14 Elisha had been suffering from the *illness from which he died*
NOT EVERYONE IS HEALED
- IX) Timothy dealt with infirmities, so Paul gave him instructions concerning them
1 Ti 5:23 No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your **frequent infirmities**
- X) 2 Ti 4:20 Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus *sick*.
- XI) Paul himself suffered with various ailments
2 Co 11:30 If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my **infirmity** (illness; ailment; disease; sickness)
- XII) Many commentators say Paul may have had trouble with his eyesight

- I) Gal 4:14-15 And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus. What then was the blessing you *enjoyed*? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have *plucked out your own eyes* and given them to me.
Gal 6:11 See with what *large letters* I have written to you with my own hand
- II) In the case of Paul, it does not seem that he received a healing of his sight
This does not mean that believers should not pray, but that we pray trusting God
- III) V14 Is anyone among you sick Let him call for the elders of the church
When a Christian is sick he should ask for prayer
When a believer has been undergoing affliction and is weak, they need prayer
- IV) James says call for the elders and let them pray over him, anointing him
- V) **First:** Call for the elders (which demonstrates his faith)
Second: They pray over him, in faith believing the Lord can heal him
Heb 11:1 Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see
- VI) **Third:** They anoint him *with oil*
In Scripture, oil often represents two things: **Medicine** and the **Holy Spirit**
- VII) **Oil** used as medicine is revealed in the story of the good Samaritan
Lu 10:34 (The Samaritan) went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in **oil** and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him
- VIII) Oil is used to represent the Spirit (Prophets, priests and kings were anointed)
Jesus is the Christ, meaning the Anointed One
Ac 10:38 God **anointed** Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.
- IX) The Spirit also anoints us to serve the Lord
2 Co 1:21-22 He who establishes us with you in Christ and has **anointed us** is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

- I) V15 And the prayer of faith **will save the sick** and the Lord will raise him up
The **prayer of faith** is prayer offered up in faith, revealing confidence in God
- II) **Will save the sick**: To save a suffering one (from perishing); to make well, heal
The elders anoint, and pray with faith that God is able to heal the person
- III) The word **save** is the Greek word *sozo*, which means to be made whole, or well
It is used of salvation but is also used in reference to being healed
Mt 9:20-22 And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment. For she said to herself, "If only I may touch His garment, **I shall be made well** (*sozo*)." But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; **your faith** has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour.
- BRIEFLY**
- IV) Why did she touch **the hem** of His garment (shawl, thrown over His shoulders)
Mal 4:2 But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with **healing in His wings** (hem; corner of a garment) and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves.
- V) We are to pray for healing, and pray that God will perform it **as we pray in faith**
This is not a guarantee but **a command to exercise faith** and commit it to the Lord
- VI) **Obviously**, this falls under the category of praying according to the will of God
God makes the determination to heal, we simply pray that He will do so
1 Jn 5:14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that **if we ask anything** according to His will, He hears us.
- FINALLY**
- VII) V15 And if he has committed sins he will be forgiven
In this context he makes it clear that some sins can lead to **physical problems**
- VIII) You see an example in the healing of the man brought to Jesus by four friends
He was paralyzed, and his friends broke open a roof and lowered him on a mat
Mt 9:2 Some men brought to him a paralyzed man, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the man, "Take heart, son; **your sins are forgiven**."
- IX) There is a commandment to pray, and a promise of sins forgiven
The healing is up to the Lord, but the forgiveness of sin is guaranteed