10/11/2026: The Ministry of Reconciliation

> James 5:19 My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, 20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of: their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

Introduction:

The Evangelistic Harvest is always urgent. The destiny of men and of nations is always being decided. Every generation is strategic. We are not responsible for the past generation, and we cannot bear full responsibility for the next one; but we do have our generation. God will hold us responsible as to how well we fulfill our responsibilities to this age and take advantage of our opportunities. – Billy Graham

1. Who are we talking about?

James 5:19 My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth.

Someone who had genuinely given their heart, surrendered their life to Christ, but today, they are not living for God. Only God can see the heart. But Jesus said:

> Matthew 7:16By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?

By the evident fruit in their life, there is no evidence of Christ living in them. This is what James means when he uses the word Wander – to go astray.

> Matthew 18:12“What do you think?” If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off?

The concept here is that a sheep in the flock, in the family, may wander away or drift away.

Some walk away:

> Galatians 1:6I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7which is really no gospel at all.

> Galatians 3:1You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified.

Some have not believed the scriptures they choose a particular path and then look for scriptures to justify, and the reality is that they are IN ERROR. The Word of God does not contradict itself unless you are taking scripture out of context to make a case.

> Matthew 22: 29Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.

James is clearly talking about someone who was a believer, but they have wandered away, not living a bible centered life, a God centered life.

2. What's the Big Deal?

Or we could ask, "What is the DANGER? What is at Stake?

> James 5:20 Whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death. (ESV)

Not physical death, eternal death (Hebrews 9:27, Romans 6:23, Revelation 21:8). James is talking about the second death, eternal damnation. HELL. Jesus talked more about HELL than He did about PRAYER, or FAITH or LOVE.

The modern church mindset cannot reconcile the mercy and love of God with the reality of Hell, and eternal separation from God. But, because in His righteousness, Jesus understood that sin must be judged, but in His Love, He did not want anyone to be there. So, he warns people about HELL.

3. What is hell?

A. Place of Torment

B. Place of Darkness (Matthew 8:12, 22:13, 25:30, II Peter 2:17)

C. Place of Disgusting Stench and Worms (Mark 9:48) One commentary suggests, 'the mention of worms may be a reference to the gnawing of the conscience, the eternal knowledge of the fact that – 'it didn't have to be this way…'

D. Place of eternal banishment.

E. Place of weeping and wailing (Luke 13:28)

F. Place of gnashing of teeth.

G. Place unique to each person

4. Who is Responsible?

Our scripture today says 'someone' and 'whoever,' so it is ANYONE and EVERYONE. If you are saved, you are responsible for sharing the Good News.

> II Corinthians 5:18All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.19 And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.

5. What will be the Result?

> James 5:19My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, 20remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.
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> II Corinthians 5:18-19, Roman's 6:23, Ephesians 2:3-5, I Timothy 1:12-16, Romans 10:9,13)

6. Closing:

There is no one too far. There is no one unworthy of your time and effort. We have a responsibility, not to the past, and not to the future – but to NOW.

QUESTIONS:

1. Are you a quitter? How many times have you started something and then quit? Why? Why did you start- why did you quit? If you have children, how are you raising them? Must they "stay" once joined? Do you set a time limit, or what is that based on?

2. If there were some kind of budget crisis in the kingdom of God, so that all non-essential personnel got sent home, what would happen to you? How important is your job in the church? Would you be one of the ones who got sent home, or would you be part of the skeleton crew that stayed on to keep things operational? What would you do if God came up to you and gave you a job offer for some position in the kingdom that was critically important?

Our scripture today told us we have a job that involves saving lives. In the last two verses of the book, James lets us know about a job opening in the kingdom, and in verse 20 he tells us that anyone who does this job will save people from death. Have you ever thought of it this way? Is this job an essential part of our job, or an "other duties as assigned" part? Why?

3. I saw this quote: Christian's are "Couriers of God's mercy-filled heart". What does that mean? Are you? How do we live that out? What does it look like daily in your life?

4. Look around your world. Can you identify 5 people who have "wandered"? Can you identify 5 people who have never committed/started? What can you do, right now- this week- this month? We will come back to this in a month-did we stay accountable to the job given to us?