

The Disciple's Walk: It's A Journey

James 1:1

Introduction:

- A. Welcome and scripture reader
- B. We kick off a series in James.
- C. The James Prayer and Practice Challenge.
 - 1. Scan the QR code and download this document each week. Or pick one up each week.
 - 2. Each day:
 - a. Read the chapter for the week.
 - b. Pray the prayer of the day.
 - 3. What's the benefit?
 - a. We will know James because we will have read it 14 times in 10 week.
 - b. Helps us pray through the text.
 - c. Aids in creating spiritual rhythms in our lives that help us grow.
 - 4. Podcast on James
 - a. Every Tuesday evening that will run all the way through May.
 - b. Deeper discussion of the text.
- D. Our challenge today is to get to know this small but powerful letter.

I The Flyover

- A. It's a letter whose principles transcend time and context.
 - 1. Sounds a lot like the sermon in the mount.
 - 2. James is easy to apply. There are so many situations we find ourselves in that James addresses.
- B. Here's what writes about how a disciple walks:
 - 1. Chapter 1: In trials and temptations; listen and practicing the word of God
 - 2. Chapter 2: What how we judge and discriminate; show mercy; faith and obedience.

3. Chapter 3: Watch what you say and how you say it. Be wise.
4. Chapter 4: Get along with one another. Walk in humility before God, with others, about your future.
5. Chapter 5: Treat people well. Be patient when you suffer. Pray.

C. His opening statements says a lot about himself, his recipients and his challenge. James 1:1 breaks down in three points.

II The Writer: The Skeptic Who Became A Saved Servant. "James" 1:1a

- A. James describes himself as a "servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ". That phrase is packed with meaning.
- B. James was the younger brother of Jesus.
 1. At first, like rest of his family he was skeptical.
 2. We see this alluded to a few times in scripture. John 7:5; John 3:21; 31-35
- C. However, a resurrection changes things.
 1. 1 Corinthians 15:7 – appeared to the apostles and James.
 2. More than a brother but...
 - a. Lord – I am your servant. You are the one to whom I submit and follow. I am dependent upon you.
 - b. Messiah – You are the Son of God, the promised Savior of the world.
- D. His life changed from skeptic to saved servant and he never looked back.
 1. Became a prominent leader in the church in Jerusalem.
 2. Shepherded them through tough times of persecution
 3. Helped them navigate tough changes like the Gentiles be accepted.

III The Recipients: They Were Scattered But Secure "To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations" 1:1b

- A. Ever lost something of value?
- B. James was in a similar situation. He had lost something of value. His people.
 1. After the death of Stephen in Acts 7, the Bible says "*on that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.*"

2. These are the folks to whom James writes.
3. There worlds had been turned upside down. They had to leave to new places figure out how to make life work in new places.
- C. However, their security was not in a where they lived but who lived in them.
- D. This changed how they lived wherever they were.

IV The Challenge: Even Though Sad, Celebrate - “Greetings”- 1:1c

- A. This verb is used a lot in the New Testament, but James is the only one writer that uses it in a greeting.
- B. This word used as a greeting is intended to encourage great joy.
 1. Given their circumstances this type of greeting makes sense.
 2. It could be translated rejoice or a more informally, “cheer up”.
- C. The idea, is that even though you are facing difficulties it does not steal your joy.
- D. Thus, the greeting becomes a challenge.
 1. That even though you’re sad, celebrate.
 2. Rejoice. Lean into joy.
- E. Joy isn't the absence of pain.
 1. It's a posture of healing, a way of saying that the difficulty or trauma doesn't get the final word.
 2. It is through joy we are sustained in difficult moments.
- F. We derive joy from:
 1. The Holy Spirit inside of us. It is a fruit of the Spirit. Despite what is happening around us, it does not need quench the Spirit's work in us.
 2. Our secure relationship with God. That is why worship is a response to difficulty. It keeps us connected. In worship we see the face of God.
 3. Our relationship with people. In the people of God we see the face of Jesus. That's why isolation in difficult times is dangerous. That's why showing up is so important.
- G. This posture of rejoicing is one of hope and healing and unique to the people of God.

V The Take Home and The Challenge

A. From Skeptic to Secure Servant.

1. At some level all of us can identify with the faith journey of James.
 - a. Grew up around Jesus but at some point made him Lord and Savior.
 - b. Skeptical and unsure but at some point made him Lord and Savior.
 - c. Some are still skeptical and unsure and need to make him Lord and Savior.
2. A resurrection changes everything.
 - a. Resurrected dead life.
 - b. Hope of a resurrected body and eternity.
3. Be a James to someone.
 - a. Reach out to the scattered
 - b. I pray we grow to be a church full of "Jameses"
 - c. There are "Jameses" in your life. That are concerned for you.

B. Though Scattered We are Secure

1. We generally relate to the scattered recipients.
2. We are scattered people from our homeland
3. Our geography does not determine our morality

C. Even though we experience sadness, we can still celebrate.

1. Joy is not some intangible element in our life.
2. It's a fruit of the Holy Spirit that sustains us and positions us for growth and healing.

Conclusion:

- A. I said at the beginning, this one verse says a lot about James, his recipients and their situation.
- B. It also says a lot about us.
 1. Where are you in your faith journey?
 2. How are you living as a "scattered" person of God?
 3. Where is your joy?
- C. Offer invite...