

James: Faith at Work

"The Paradox of Cultural Placement"

James 1:9-12

Sunday, May 24th, 2026

~ A paradox is when something or someone with qualities or features that seem to conflict with another. Some examples include: "Giving is receiving; Less is more; Deep down, you're really shallow; We're fighting a war for peace."

> James doesn't verbatim say something that is a paradox, but the concept he describes here is indeed a paradox.

~ Is James being a scatter brain? Does he hop from one topic to another? I believe the answer is No! Let's remember that James is taking his readers from vs. 2 all the way down to vs. 12.

~ James is saying = Whether you are rich or poor, any and every person has something to boast in. It may be physical or a cultural status. We all take pride in something

I. The Paradox of these People (v. 9-10)

a) The _____ Who are Rich; The _____ Who are Poor

~ James once again, uses analogous language to help paint a picture. Seen in both verses where James uses such words as lowly, boast, exaltation, rich, and humiliation.

> Notice the boasting in both of these people = the lowly brother is to glory (boast) in his exaltation; and the rich is to do the same in his humiliation.

~ Christians have a reason to boast. Not in self, but in Christ who became to us wisdom and saved his people. We are co-heirs... notice Romans 8:17 - "*if we are his children, then we are heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.*"

~ There seems to be Biblical continuity here. We are glorified, we will be exalted at the right time... but all of this is because of, or connected to our suffering for Jesus.

cf. - 1 Peter 1:4

> At the heart of the gospel message is a declaration to everyone, especially the poorest of people. In the gospel, Christ makes you wealthy.

II. The _____ of the Rich (v. 11)

b) Their Wealth & Accolades are _____

> The paradox of what the Scriptures teach and what the world teaches. In this world, to be wealthy is to have won the game.

~ cf. Isaiah 40:6-8 / James uses imagery from flowers and grasses that are in modern day Palestine. They sprout up flourish from February until May... only to be destroyed by the wind & scorching heat.

> The Rich Young Man in Mark 10; note vs. 23 = "*Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!"*"

** The text doesn't say wealth is bad. What we do it is what ultimately causes our demise.

III. The _____ Given to the Faithful (v. 12)

> A Man Well Acquainted with Suffering...

Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:7-9 - " *We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;*"

** List of sufferings found in 2 Corinthians 11 ...**

~ How do we endure? How can persecuted Christians make it through trials and be faithful until the end?

The answer is simply that God will _____ you.