

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

James 1:19-25 | Pastor Bruce | Hope City Church

CENTRAL QUESTION

When people look at your life, whose reflection do they see?

I. Opening: A Word That Keeps You

- The church has ministries for every age. The one thing the ministers always bring is the Word.
- He does not sugarcoat it. He says he is not a hater. He wants to give people what sets them free.
- He also wants the Word to keep them until Christ returns, and he quotes “He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.”
- The message sat on his heart for three or four weeks. It became real when he had to live it.
- Preachers often end up living what they are about to preach.

II. The Text

Key Text: *James 1:19-25*

- Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath. The wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God (vv. 19-20).
- Lay aside filthiness and wickedness. Receive the engrafted word with meekness, which is able to save your souls (v. 21).
- Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves (v. 22).
- A hearer only is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror, walks away, and forgets what he looked like (vv. 23-24).
- Whoever looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, a doer of the work, will be blessed in his deed (v. 25).
- He gives the title, “Mirror, Mirror on the Wall,” and says the mirror image also appears in Scripture, in the book of James.

III. Who James Was

Key Text: *James 1:1*

- James was the half brother of Jesus. They shared the same mother, Mary.
- James calls himself a bond servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. Pastor Bruce reads this as putting the Father and Jesus on equal terms.
- James was not always a believer. In John 7:5, Jesus’ brothers did not believe in him. In Mark 3:21, those close to Jesus said he was out of his mind.
- Something life-altering happened to James.
- If you leave the altar with the same personality, words, behavior, and anger, go back to the altar. Real change reaches all of these.

IV. What a Mirror Can and Cannot Do

- Everyone has a mirror somewhere in the house. He uses light examples: shaving, straightening a tie, checking for a missed spot, a lit vanity mirror.
- A mirror only reflects what stands in front of it.
- It cannot make you taller or younger, and it cannot remove wrinkles or imperfections. It shows what is there.
- He says this word is for the body of Christ and for Hope City.

V. Guard Your Temper and Your Mouth

Key Text: James 1:19-20

- James speaks to our inner being.
- It is in our nature to want what we want. He calls it selfishness and uses a toddler's stubborn "no" as an example.
- Watch your mouth and your temper. Speaking in anger makes you look foolish and brings no honor to God.

VI. Doers, Not Hearers Only

Key Text: James 1:21-24

- If the Word is not engrafted in you and part of you, what comes out of you will be you.
- A professed Christian who is in the Word should reflect Jesus, not himself.
- Church activity, singing, and preaching count for little if the reflection out in the world is not Christ.

VII. Pastor Bruce's Own Test

- For three or four weeks his life felt like a pressure cooker: deadlines, constant calls, and problems with the church building work.
- He describes a run of breakdowns and repair bills, including a dump truck and hay equipment, plus a fire and rain at the wrong time. He says he spent thousands of dollars.
- At his breaking point he put his head on the steering wheel and told God he would still worship and still be a reflection of him.
- That night, looking in the mirror after a shower, he sensed the Lord say he was a reflection of him. He had not cursed, let himself go, or thrown wrenches.

VIII. Someone Is Watching You

- Parents can yell from the bleachers at a ball game and use words they should not.
- A small child was repeating profanity, and his grandmother asked where he heard it. You reflect what you are around.
- People in bars and jail cells can quote Bible verses. He describes two men discussing the Word who lived otherwise. He told one that quoting it means little if you do not live it.
- Some people will only ever see Jesus in you.
- Vague, passive-aggressive social media posts aimed at a few people reflect you, not Jesus.

- If you are angry, bring it under God.
- Do not live up to preacher standards. Move up to the standard of the Word. He expects people to do their best and live by what the Lord says.

IX. Let the Word Show You and Fix You

Key Text: *James 1:23-25*

- It may sound far-fetched that someone would forget his own face. But a mirror shows every imperfection, and social media filters hide them.
- He jokes about a stray hair he would never see without a mirror.
- You can deny what you see, or you can work on it.
- James says to look into the Word, see the imperfections, and let the Word fix them. Then you become a doer and not only a reader or hearer.
- A temper meets “slow to speak” in the Word, and the Word can correct it.
- Most people do not read the Word enough to let it work on them.

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

1. James says a hearer only forgets his own face. What have you heard from Scripture lately that you have not acted on?
2. Where has the Word shown you something like a short temper or careless words that you have been slow to let it change?
3. Pastor Bruce chose to worship and hold his tongue when everything went wrong. What is testing your reactions right now, and what would a reflection of Jesus look like there?
4. He said some people will only see Jesus in you. Who is watching your life at home, in public, or online, and what do they see?
5. How often are you in the Word? What one change would give it more room to work on you?

Scripture References: James 1:1 | James 1:19-25 | John 7:5 | Mark 3:21