



# James

Living Right in a Wrong World!

## Living Right Through Trials!

**James 1:1-4**

Message #1 of 13 – S658

**Sermon given on September 12, 2021**



**Sunday Morning Service**

**Pastor Rick Lancaster**

# Living Right Through Trials!

*James 1:1-4*

## Opening Comments

- Turn to **James 1**
- I have been alive long enough to know that there is something wrong in this world
- And that has been true for a very long time
- There is always something wrong
- There is huge racial tension – but this is not the first time the world has experienced that
- There is a pandemic – not the first one
- Politics are very contentious right now – not first time
- The culture is divided over issues of sexuality and gender
- Solomon – the wisest man on earth said **Ecclesiastes 1:9**

**That which has been *is* what will be, that which *is* done is what will be done, and *there is nothing new under the sun.***

- Some will look at this world and say it is worse than it used to be
- Others would look at it and say it is better
- Who is right and who is wrong?
- You may have heard me say that everyone has a right to be wrong
- But it is stupid to stay wrong when you can be right
- God is right – always – His ways are right – always – His Word is right – always
- The world is wrong because it rejects the only source of what is right – God and His Word **Psalm 119:160**

**The entirety of Your word *is* truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.**

- If someone rejects what is right – how can they be right?
- Today, we begin a new series through the letter from **James - Living Right in a Wrong World!**
- God created us to be in intimate, communion fellowship with Him
- He calls us to walk in loving, caring fellowship with other humans
- He gave us His Word so that we know how to do that right

- His way is the only right way to do it and His Word is the only source of figuring out how to do it right
- Any other way or other source of how to do it is wrong
- And it doesn't matter how sincere someone is – wrong is wrong!
- We have three goals in this study:
- First – **Know God better**
- The better we know God – the more right our life can become
- Second – **Know God's Word better**
- We can't live right if we don't know what God says is right
- Third – **Know God's Will better**
- Living right is about doing what is right – doing what God wants
- James is a great book to help us with that
- Key verse of the book **James 1:22**

**Be doers of the word, and not hearers only...**

- Let's pray and then get into this powerful letter
- **Pray**

### **Teaching**

- **Living Right Through Trials**
- The letter by James is the first of what are called the General Epistles or letters
- Includes 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2, & 3 John, and Jude
- The author is James, the younger half-brother of Jesus
- Same mother, Mary, different fathers, James – Joseph, the husband of Mary – Jesus, who was eternally God the Son was incarnated by God the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit so that He could save us
- Bit of trivia – literal translation of James' name would be Jacob
- It is believed that the translators used James in deference to King James who commissioned the translation
- At first James did not believe that Jesus was who He said He was
- All that changed after the crucifixion and resurrection
- James went on to become the leader of the church in Jerusalem
- Which was almost exclusively comprised of Jews who believed in Jesus

- The Jewish religious leaders tolerated the Christians for a while
- But then they began persecuting the Way – the Church and it scattered
- That is who James is writing to

- **James 1:1**

- This letter was written before Paul’s ministry to non-Jews had produced much fruit – maybe first book of the NT written
- James doesn’t take much time preparing his readers for the topic he wants to address
- He is writing to people who are trying to live rightly – to please God
- His readers are living proof of something Paul would write later **2**

**Timothy 3:12**

**Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.**

- If you have ever seen fish swimming upstream
- **Insert picture of bear and salmon**
- It is much harder to swim upstream than it would be to find a quiet pool or go with the flow of the stream
- There are also dangers along the way
- It is harder to live the right way than to live the wrong way like the rest of the world
- You have to go against the flow and face whatever dangers are ahead
- James was writing to people who were dealing with the dangers of living right in a wrong world

- **James 1:2**

- One of the things that makes this letter unique is the tone
- Over half the verses in this letter have an imperative tone to them
- James is calling them to action – to obedience to God and His Word
- ‘count it all joy...’ – ‘count’ = consider or reckon
- ‘trials’ = an external adversity which provides a testing towards an end.
- This could be something small like having your car break down
- Or it could be big, like losing your job
- Or it could be huge like what the Everett family is going through right now
- We are going through our own trial with our oldest son in the hospital

- James says we should think about those things
- When we do, our usual response is not joy, right?
- We start asking questions: ‘Why is this happening?’ ‘How is it going to turn out?’ ‘What do I do now?’

- Peter says something about this also **1 Peter 4:12-13**

**Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.**

- While we are living in a wrong world it is not strange when ‘fiery trials’ show up in our lives
- Peter says we need to look past this life to the hope we have in heaven
- Our current trials will be replaced by rejoicing with Christ
- Neither Peter nor James says that we should enjoy trials
- A normal person does not enjoy pain, suffering, persecution
- Jesus is greatest example of this – in the Garden of Gethsemane he was not enjoying the idea of going to the cross and bearing the sins of the whole world – **Hebrews 12:1-2**

**Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

- Saying that our attitude in the midst of suffering should be joy
- Not fear or anger or resentment or discouragement or despair
- James has a temporal reason for joy in the midst of trials
- **James 1:3**
- James is looking to the future fruit of trials – patience = endurance, perseverance - Patience for what? For trials!
- If we live in a wrong world and trials are not strange in a wrong world, we should want to be able to endure them and not be wrecked by them, right?
- Our first preference would be to avoid them entirely
- Jesus says that is not how life in a wrong world works **John 16:33**  
**These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.**

- Going through a trial in faith prepares you for the next one – a next one is coming
- And if your faith is tested in this trial, you will be able to endure the next one better and that is something that we can rejoice in
- James adds another reason to rejoice in our trials
- **James 1:4**
- All humanity has a problem, and it is the same problem for everyone
- We have a nature inside us that is drawn to sin
- This is why the world is wrong – most people are following that nature and not following God
- The sin-nature is incapable of doing what is right
- Once someone receives Christ as their Savior, they are given a new nature – one that seeks to please and obey God and His Word
- But the old sin-nature is still there
- James says that patience in faith through the trials of living in a wrong world are part of how God is perfecting us
- Paul in his teaching about the role of the church tells us what the goal is **Ephesians 4:13**  
... till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...
- God’s goal is your perfection – He is working on us – and He will finish it **Philippians 1:6**  
...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ...
- And one of the tools God is going to use is the trials that are inevitable as we live in a wrong world
- But notice the beginning of verse four the word ‘let’
- This implies that we must let the refining work of trials have the right impact upon us
- This also tells us that we can hinder the work God is hoping to accomplish in us to perfect us to be more like Jesus
- Hindering God’s work costs something
- We will close with **Three Costs of Hindering God’s Work through Trials**
- First – **Costs God’s Glory!**

- It glorifies God when through faith, believing and trusting God in our trials that we endure through them
- When even in the pain of our difficult circumstances we rejoice in hope of what God will do
- When we remember, believe, and act like we believe **Romans 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.**
- Don't fret and worry about things you can't change – trust God
- We can't do anything to directly affect our son's situation
- We are totally helpless, but we are not hopeless – God is in control
- Second – Hindering God's work through trials **Costs Our Growth!**
- In a wrong world, trials are inevitable – they cannot be avoided
- You can't hide from them; you can't be good enough to escape them
- You are going to have to go through them – you might as well benefit from them – one of God's tools for growth **1 Thessalonians 4:3**  
**For this is the will of God, your sanctification...**
- If you hinder the work of God by faith through trials, you will not grow and you will not be as prepared for the next trial as you could be
- Third cost to hindering God's work in trials **Costs Our Witness!**
- As you go through trials, others are watching
- Your life bears witness to the truth of God's Word
- By watching my life, especially as I go through trials, others see that God's Word is true
- It is true – it is always true – But some people may not ever read the Bible
- The only way they can see the truth of God's Word is by my faith being lived out in their view
- Our faith is a light of right in the darkness of a world that is wrong
- Trials are a part of living in a wrong world
- By faith we can endure and at the same time let them see Jesus
- James is going to continue this topic – that is for next time
- Living right in a wrong world can be hard – easier when we trust God
- Let God make you more right through faith in what He is doing – even when it is painful, and you don't understand – trust Him
- **Pray - Communion**