



James

Living Right in a Wrong World!

Living Right without Doubt!

James 1:5-11

Message #2 of 14 – S963

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Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

Living Right without Doubt!

James 1:5-11

Opening Comments

- Turn to **James 1**
- Today, we continue the series: **James - Living Right in a Wrong World!**
- Most people in this world are living their lives apart from God
- God created this world to operate according to His will and Word
- If you reject God and His Word, you cannot live a right life
- All of the wrong things we see going on in the world are because people have rejected the only source of what is right – God and His Word
- Last week James jumped right into a big topic – trials
- Trials are a natural consequence in a world that has rejected God and His Word – they are inevitable – no one can escape them
- James told us to think about trials in a way that is not natural
- To look past the discomfort or pain of the trial to the fruit God will produce in us through the trial
- To trust that He is with us through it and that He will use it
- The first hurdle to counting it all joy in our various trials is faith
- We must first believe God and put our trust in Him
- But that is not all we have to do
- James will continue by telling us we need something, and we need to ask for it, and we need to ask for it the right way
- It is possible to live right in a wrong way world
- But you are not going to figure it out without help
- Let's pray and learn better how to do that
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Living Right without Doubt!**
- Let's start by reading verses 2 to 4 because they will give us the context for our text this morning

- **James 1:2-4**

- The context is having the right perspective and attitude regarding the trials that come into our lives
- Trials, difficult things and circumstances are inevitable in a wrong way world
- Our attitude is to be joy – not that we are happy about the painful thing that we are experiencing but that God is with us and using it to perfect us and make us better able to face the trials coming in the future
- It is God's desire that we would be perfect and complete, lacking nothing = Be like Christ!
- Some people would ask the question, 'How do you do that?'
- How do you trust God and look past your trials to the joy of what God is doing?
- For most people we are going to need something we don't have

- **James 1:5**

- While I believe it is appropriate to apply this verse on a general basis, its context is in the area of trials
- If you don't know how to 'count it all joy' or how to let God do the work of perfecting and completing you – then you lack wisdom
- What is wisdom?
- Chuck Smith used to say, "Knowledge is seeing a black, cat-sized animal with white stripes and knowing it is a skunk. Wisdom is staying away from it."
- Wisdom is not natural – you aren't born with it – must be grown
- Wisdom is grown through three different factors: knowledge, perspective, and experience.
- In all three we are painfully inadequate compared to God.
- We don't know everything we need to grow through our trial
- We can't see every perspective of our circumstances
- Our experience is limited with what we have gone through in life
- God is not limited in any of those things – infinite in all of them
- Many of the things that come into our lives may not make sense to us.

- We must never forget that God doesn't think the same way we do
Isaiah 55:8-9

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

- If we want to understand better, we must seek God's wisdom, not ours or man's **Proverbs 9:10**

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

- If you try to figure it out on your own, you will never grow through your trials and you will have to face the next without the strength you need to endure it
- No matter how wise you might become in life, God is still wiser, and you need His wisdom
- Ask for it – God is waiting to give it – it is a promise – claim it!
- But you should note that it is a conditional promise – you have a part
- **James 1:6**

- People have asked me if God hears the prayers of unbelievers
- Yes, God hears everything – He just doesn't respond to the prayers of unbelievers – except prayers of repentance and salvation **Hebrews 11:6**

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

- 'Ask God' = praying
- Three things that we must believe if we want God to respond to our prayers
- First – **We need help!**
- God is not going to help you if you think you can solve your problem on your own
- If you don't believe you need God's wisdom – He is not going to give it
- Second – **God is real!**
- God identifies Himself as 'I Am' – the eternally existent, self-sufficient, All-powerful God
- To have God answer your prayers, must believe that He exists and that He is able to give you what you need (maybe not what you want)

- Third – **God is willing!**
- When we have the right attitude about trials, God produces patience within us to endure the trials we are facing or will face in the future
- Sometimes people question whether or not God is willing to answer their prayers – especially if it has been a while
- God’s delays have nothing to do with His willingness
- To have God answer your prayers, must believe that God is willing even when He seems to be taking a long time
- One of the meanings of the word ‘patience’ = to remain under
- It has the sense of being under a heavy weight and choosing to remain there
- Trials can feel heavy and oppressive
- Having the right attitude will give us the strength to remain under that weight until God does what He is already planning to do
- It is our faith in God that gives the strength to endure the trial
- James warns us to watch out for doubts

Doubt: “a feeling of uncertainty or lack of conviction.”

- Faith is what we know and believe about God.
- Faith is what we use to trust God. Faith and doubt cancel each other out.
- Where faith exists, doubt is eliminated.
- Where doubt exists, faith is weak or nonexistent.
- God can do anything He chooses.
- He chooses to respond to us based on faith.

James 1:7-8

- Since God chooses to respond to us based on faith, doubt gets in the way of God’s response to our prayers
- If you doubt whether God can or will, then He probably won’t.
- Later James is going to say the problem is in the heart **James 4:7-8**

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

- God is seeking wholehearted devotion, worship, and obedience.
- Doubt is a sign that God does not have your whole heart
- The antonym of doubt is trust.

- The more you trust God and the less you doubt – the more likely God is to respond to your prayers
- Then James says something that doesn't seem to fit
- **James 1:9-11**
- The poor are more likely to trust in God because they have nothing else to trust in
- The rich are more likely to trust in their riches rather than God
- That is why Jesus said it is hard for a rich man to get into heaven
- Earlier I said that one of the keys to having God respond to your prayers is that you acknowledge that you need God to help you
- It has been said that the ground is level at the foot of the cross
- The lowly are raised up and rich are brought lower
- The world is going the wrong way not because of doubt but because of unbelief
- Unbelief is sin because God has revealed Himself to the world

Romans 1:20-21

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

- Doubt might be sin in the heart of a believer if God has revealed Himself enough to convince you of the truth
- Here is a practical example of doubt in the life of a believer
- The Bible has a lot to say about forgiveness **Ephesians 4:32**
And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.
- Forgive other believers – cancel the debt incurred when they sinned against you
- When I forgive someone, I set myself free from what they did to me
- In a way that is similar to the freedom I experienced when God forgave me of all my sins, I can also be free from other people's sins
- Jesus made it clear to us that this is not optional for a believer
- A Christian who has been forgiven of all their sins is commanded by God to forgive others of all their sin

- Not so they can be free or justified or released from consequences but so that you can be free
- If a believer says they won't forgive someone, and not just another believer, but anyone, they are disobeying God – consequences
- If a believer says they can't forgive, that is doubt – a lack of faith
- They are doubting God's holiness – after all, a holy God would not forgive an evil like that
- Or they are doubting God's goodness – God would not just overlook the hurt done to them
- Or they are doubting God's love – if God knew how I was hurt He wouldn't ask me to forgive this
- Or they are doubting God's command – He must expect 'them' to do something to earn my forgiveness
- As natural as all those excuses are – they are wrong, founded in doubt
- Doubt hinders your walk with God
- Doubt acts as a barrier to your prayers
- The answer to doubt is trust – only by trusting God more can you eliminate doubt
- You might say, 'I do trust God!'
- If you have doubts, you don't trust Him enough
- If you have doubts, or are struggling to believe God about something, especially a trial in your life
- Humble yourself before Him and ask Him to help you
- Get to know Him better through prayer, through His Word, and in fellowship with His people
- Seek to experience Him more through obedience to His Word, through worship, through prayer, through service to Him
- Strive to see things from His perspective rather than from yours
- And don't be afraid or too prideful to ask for help from the people God has put into your help to give you wisdom and support
- Living right in a wrong world may be hard but it is possible
- Doubt makes it harder to live right in this wrong way world
- Let's choose to trust God more day-by-day
- **Pray**