

Faith Works

James 1:1b + Overview

Proposition: The Challenges In Our Life Are Met By Faith In The Transforming Gospel Inside Out

I. The Challenges Believers Face (1b-2a)

A. The Challenges Of WHO We Are: Facing Racial And Religious Persecution (1b)

^{1b} *To the twelve tribes*

B. The Challenges Of WHERE We Are: The Difficulties Of Immigration (1c)

^{1c} *in the Dispersion*

C. The Challenge To HOW We Are: Rejoice In Hardship (1d-2a)

^{1d} *Greetings* [Gr. *Chairo* = rejoice]. ² *Count it all joy* [Gr. *Chara*], *my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,*

II. The Change Faith Produces (James 1-5) – Faith In The Gospel Of Christ ...

A. Produces Growth (1:2-18)

- Testing Produces Growth (1:2-12)
- Temptation Is Replaced By Grace (1:13-18)

B. Produces Godliness (1:19 – 3:18)

- Good Words Instead Of Angry Behavior (1:19-21)
- Godly Obedience Instead Of Not Being Transformed By Scripture (1:22-27)
- Gracious Love Instead Of Favoritism (2:1-13)
- Godly Works Instead Of Empty Faith (2:14-26)
- Guarded Tongue Instead Of Destructive Words (3:1-12)
- Godly Wisdom Instead Of Selfish Ambition (3:13-18)

C. Produces Humility (4:1 – 5:20)

- Humility In Disputes (4:1-12)
- Humility In Opportunities (4:13-17)
- Humility In Finances (5:1-6)
- Humility In Frustration (5:7-12)
- Humility In Prayer (5:12-18)
- Humility In Wandering (5:19-20)

Discussion:

1. How has a recent hardship given you greater faith, wisdom and/or perspective?
2. How does pride manifest itself in the church? Why do people need to project foul speech, angry responses, divisive attitudes and demonstration of riches? How does the Gospel cure these aspects of pride?
3. What challenges do we face as a church? How could we grow from these challenges?

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James 1:1b + Overview

Introduction:

- “You are what you eat!” – what we consume will eventually work itself out if we don’t work it off
- The point is what we are on the inside is going to be manifest on the outside
- But for many of us, Christianity is an “outside – in” experience
- James is trying point out to believers that the Gospel transforms us from the “inside – out”
- For those of us who may have grown up in a “save face” culture, a “shame-based” culture where we have to “bring honor to us all” – we are used to covering up

Proposition: The Challenges In Our Life Are Met By Faith In The Transforming Gospel Inside Out

I. The Challenges Believers Face (1b-2a)

James 1:1b To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.

A. The Challenges Of WHO We Are: Facing Racial And Religious Persecution (1b)

^{1b} *To the twelve tribes*

- “the twelve tribes” is a reference to the Christians of Jewish heritage
- James was a Jewish author writing to a Jewish audience (1:18; 2:2,21; 3:6; 5:4,7)
- James was a leader in Jerusalem – particular after many of the Apostles spread out as missionaries.
- Anti-Semitism (or a hatred for the Jewish people) has been disproportionate for the small amount of people
 - Today, 2 million Jews in a tiny piece of land is Israel are surrounded by 250 million who want to wipe them out
 - From the Pharaoh in Egypt enslaving Israel to the invasions by Babylon and Assyria, the Jews were a hated people
 - I believe the hatred for God’s people is devilishly inspired because of the hope of the Savior/Messiah that was promised to Israel
 - That’s why Herod committed infanticide in Israel to eliminate the King who was coming that would be greater than him
 - In modern times, from Hitler to the Arab/Israeli conflict, the Jews have been hated people
- Then when the Christ came, the Jewish leaders called for His crucifixion
- Since then, Christians were persecuted by the persecuted Jews, as well as the Roman empire

1 Corinthians 1:21-24 ²¹For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. ²²For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³but we preach Christ

crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Christians Were Persecuted By Rome Because They Were Considered:

- **Atheists** – because they didn't worship the Roman Emperor as god
 - Emperor Nero initiated persecution of Christians because they refused to bow before the emperor as God
- **Cannibals** – because they partook in Communion where they would eat their Lord
- **Incestuous** – because they would hug their “brothers” and “sisters in Christ”
- **Rude & Arrogant** – because they wouldn't participate in pagan feasts, gladiatorial events and demeaning of women and slaves like the rest of the Romans
 - Shelley: “One simply could not reject the gods without arousing scorn as a social misfit. For the pagan every meal began with a liquid offering and a prayer to the pagan gods. A Christian could not share in that. Most heathen feasts and social parties were held in the precincts of a temple after sacrifice had been made, and the invitation was usually to dine “at the table” of some god. A Christian could not go to such a feast. Inevitably, when he refused the invitation to some social occasion, the Christian seemed rude, boorish, and discourteous.” (p. 39)
 - “... everywhere the Christian turned his life and faith were on display because the gospel introduced a revolutionary new attitude toward human life. It could be seen in Christian views of slaves, children, and sex.” (p. 40)
- **Jinxes** – because they would not worship one of the many Roman gods, the Roman people were punished for the Christian's refusal to worship their god
 - Ie. The Romans would believe that the Christian's failure to worship the rain god would make the god cease the rain, thus the harvest

B. The Challenges Of WHERE We Are: The Difficulties Of Immigration (1c)

^{1c} *in the Dispersion*

- “*Dispersion*” = *en te diaspora* (in the diapora) = scattered, the Jews who lived outside of their homeland
- *Diasporia* = *dia* (across) + *speirein* (scatter)
- Many of the Jews dispersed to other regions kept in touch with James
- James letter was written to the Jewish Christians dispersed from Jerusalem (*diaporia*)
- James was most likely writing to the Jewish believers of the Western dispersion who once lived in Palestine, then were scattered throughout the Roman empire because of persecution or lack of jobs.
 - Peter wrote to the eastern dispersion (1 Pet 1:1)
- “In the wake of the destruction of the northern kingdom by **Assyria** (722 BC; see 2Ki 17:5–6) and the exile brought against the southern kingdom by the **Babylonians** (587–538 BC; see 2Ki 25:1–12), the Jewish people were dispersed” among the nations. The term diaspora (GK 1402) could variously refer to the place to which the Jews had been scattered, the scattered people themselves, or the state of being dispersed abroad.”
Guthrie, George H.. Hebrews, James (The Expositor's Bible Commentary) . Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

- The Jews were also forced to flee by the **Romans** in A.D. 63
- Chuck Swindoll: "Having been 'dispersed abroad,' they were **disoriented, disillusioned,** and probably downright **depressed**. They were bearing the brunt of criticism, brutality, and unjust treatment." *Swindoll, Charles R.. Insights on James, 1 & 2 Peter (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary Book 13) (p. 20). Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Kindle Edition.*
- E.g. Construction will disperse FBC to most likely Carlmont HS – it will be hard, like when we were a church plant. We'll have to set up, clean up and not have all the rooms.

C. **The Challenge To HOW We Are: Rejoice In Hardship (1d-2a)**

^{1d} *Greetings* [Gr. *Chairo* = rejoice]. ² *Count it all joy* [Gr. *Chara*], *my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,*

- John MacArthur: "... [James] expected what he wrote to gladden his readers' hearts by giving them means to verify the genuineness of their salvation." (*James, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Moody, 1998, p. 13)

II. **The Change Faith Produces (James 1-5)**

Faith In The Gospel Of Christ ...

A. **Produces Growth (1:2-18)**

1. **Testing Produces Growth (1:2-12)**

James 1:3b-4 the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

James 1:12a ²Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial,

- We grow in trials
- E.g. weight lifting – muscles grow by being broken down
- E.g. tough year – things I wished I could get out of, but realized God wanted me to grow through this
- Deepen my perspective about God's grace and mercy
- Deepen my love for the church, leaders, and my family
- Deeper appreciation for my salvation

2. **Temptation Is Replaced By Grace (1:13-18)**

James 1:13a ¹³Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God,"

James 1:17 ¹⁷Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

B. Produces Godliness (1:19 – 3:18)

- When the Gospel is not a reality for us, we fake our Christianity
- We project a holographic image like Princess Leia to Obiwan Kenobi
- We try to make Christianity about what we do, how we talk, what we know
- We make it external, not internal – outside to inside, not from the inside out

1. Good Words Instead Of Angry Behavior (1:19-21)

- We get selfishly angry because we set up expectations we expect others to full
- If the church or a friend or a spouse doesn't fulfill our expectations, we get angry
- When the Gospel fill us, we know what we deserve, we know what God graced us withb

James 1:19b-20 be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

2. Godly Obedience Instead Of Not Being Transformed By Scripture (1:22-27)

James 1:22 ²²But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves

James 1:27 ²⁷Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

3. Gracious Love Instead Of Favoritism (2:1-13)

James 2:1 My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.

4. Godly Works Instead Of Empty Faith (2:14-26)

James 2:18 ¹⁸But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

5. Guarded Tongue Instead Of Destructive Words (3:1-12)

James 3:6 ⁶And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.

6. Godly Wisdom Instead Of Selfish Ambition (3:13-18)

James 3:13-14 ¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth.

C. Produces Humility (4:1 – 5:20)

- Pride projects our insecurity and insignificance
- The Gospel gives us security (eternal, not separated from His love) and significance
- When we're satisfied, we're givers. When we're not satisfied, we're takers.
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- I can't say "I don't deserve this"
- I can say "I deserve worse" – "I deserve hell"
- As bad as people think me to be, I'm far worse

1. Humility In Disputes (4:1-12)

James 4:10-11a ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. ¹¹Do not speak evil against one another, brothers.

2. Humility In Opportunities (4:13-17)

James 4:15-16 ¹⁵Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

3. Humility In Finances (5:1-6)

James 5:5 ⁵You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.

4. Humility In Frustration (5:7-12)

James 5:11 ¹¹Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

5. Humility In Prayer (5:12-18)

James 5:16b The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

6. Humility In Wandering (5:19-20)

James 5:19-20 ¹⁹My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, ²⁰let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

Discussion:

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