

## Receiving the Word in Trials (James 1:19-27)

Michael L. Riddle

1. Third lesson in a series from the book of James. This first chapter has as it's theme – enduring trials.
2. There is a need to receive wisdom and instruction from God's word and this is highlighted esp. during trials.
3. James gives us some instructions for receiving the word in trials.

Discussion:

### I. **Swift to Hear, Slow to Speak, Slow to Wrath (:19-20)**

- A. "So then" – he's continuing the discussion on trials and giving more specific teaching on what is expected of the Christian in trials – building on the foundation from Js. 1:1-18
- B. These three things are instructed in the midst of two admonitions to receive the word of God (**Js. 1:18, 21**)
- C. The need for wisdom to go through trials (**Js. 1:5-7**)
  - a. We get it by asking God
  - b. It will be granted through the study of God's word!
  - c. God's word is what brought us forth (**Js. 1:18**) – so we should go to it for wisdom, especially in trials!
- D. The way in which we ask determines if God grants it (**Js. 1:6**)
  - a. In the interest of our faith (genuinely seeking God's wisdom to deal with the trials)
  - b. In a spirit of doubting (not really caring what God has to say and doing what we want regardless)
- E. So these three things could be characterized as qualities which are needed for us to receive the word of God in trials
- F. Swift to hear
  1. Ready to hear the word of truth (:18)
  2. We need wisdom to endure trials and grow in them, so we need to eagerly seek God's word
  3. Don't be double-minded and doubt his word
  4. This is true generally before God – **Eccl. 5:1-2**
- G. Slow to Speak
  1. It's been said "God gave us 2 ears and 1 mouth for a reason"
  2. We should listen more than we speak
  3. This is especially true when it pertains to receiving God's word – Do not be quick to speak against God's word
- H. Slow to Wrath
  1. Many are quick to anger when God's word doesn't line up with what they want or it calls out their sin
  2. This is a result of the double-minded man
  3. This is how the Pharisees responded
  4. For the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God (**Js. 1:20**)
    - If we want to be right with God, we must be slow to wrath

- This is speaking of the system by which God makes men righteous (**Rom. 1:17; Phil. 3:9**)
- Put away wrath & listen to God's word!

## II. Lay Aside Wickedness & Receive the Word (:21)

- A. Therefore – again building off of what has been said – swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath → Receive the word (:18, 21)
- B. In order for us to receive the word, we must lay something aside
  1. The reason we might be tempted to be filled with wrath about God's instruction through His word is b/c sin is present in our life
    - Either seeking to justify sin
    - Of sin we are not willing to give up
    - Either way – we will not escape the wrath of God (**Rom. 1:18-32**)
  2. Need to purge our self of sin and be ready to receive the word properly (**Col. 3:5-9; 1 Pt. 2:1-2**)
- C. We must then receive the word with the proper attitude – meekness
  1. The opposite of wrath, true humility before God and man
  2. Vines: “It is that temper of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting; it is closely linked with the word tapeinophrosune[humility], and follows directly upon it...”
  3. So, we accept His word as good (**Js. 1:16-18**); without disputing or resisting
  4. In opposition to the double-minded man, we accept God's word with single-minded determination.
  5. We should look to God's word not to learn facts or win debates, but to save our soul and help us endure.
- D. The word of God here is described as the “implanted word”
  1. The word of God needs to be implanted or imprinted upon our heart if it is to save us.
  2. Planted like a seed in the soil of our heart (**Luke 8:4-15**)
  3. His word written upon our heart (**Heb. 8:6-13**)
- E. Which is able to save our souls
  1. Only when we are convinced of this will we be those who will truly apply His word to our lives, especially during trials
  2. There is true power in the word of God!
    - **Rom. 1:16** -
    - **1 Cor. 1:18, 23-24** -
    - **Heb. 4:12** -
    - **Jn. 17:15-17** -

## III. Once we Receive the Word – Live By It! (:22-27)

- A. The only way we can benefit from God's word and it can save our soul, is if we obey His word
- B. If we do not Obey God's word, we deceive ourselves (like the double-minded man that knows what he will do before asking God for wisdom)
  1. Illustration (**:23-24**): We use a mirror to inspect our appearance to ensure we are presentable. If we look and see there is an issue, but don't fix it and rather walk away and forget what we saw – it does us no good!

2. So with God's word (:25): Some look to God's word, find some issue in their life that needs correcting, then go away without making a change – it does them no good!
3. Rather, we must receive the word and reflect it in our life and continue in it – only then will we be blessed in our doing
  - Blessed points back to :12, 5
  - Jesus taught this in – Mt. 7:21-28
  - Eternal life to those who obey – Heb. 5:9
- C. God's word = the "perfect law of liberty" = "word of truth" = "implanted word" ; which we are to be swift to hear. Law of liberty – Jn. 8:31-32 – able to set us free from the bondage of Sin
- D. Laying the foundation for James 2 – concerning faith and works, faith without works is dead. We must be doers of the word = doers of the work.
- E. Must lay aside our thoughts/opinions and accept God's word and DO what it says!
- F. Practical application of this (:26-27)
  1. Bridle the tongue
    - Points back to the command to be 'slow to speak' (:19)
    - More on this in James 3
    - The point: if we seek God's word, we must live it out in our deeds and in our words
  2. Visit Orphans/Widows
    - Part of the keeping of the word is showing compassion for the poor/helpless (Gal. 6:9-10)
    - One way we do that is by visiting those in need, to encourage them to endure their hardship
    - In so doing for them, we are actually doing for Christ (Mt. 25:31-46)
  3. Keep self unspotted from the world
    - Points back to laying aside all wickedness (:21)
    - Continual process

Conclusion:

1. We need to receive God's word, especially in trials
2. Let us prepare our hearts to receive His word, to do it, and to teach others also (c.f. Ezra 7:10)
3. Only when we obey His word can we reach haven!