



THE WORD

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Reference: James 1: 18-25

(18) Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. (19) Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; (20) for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. (21) Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. (22) But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. (23) For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. (24) For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. (25) But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

Proposition

In order for our souls to be saved, or reformed (for progressive sanctification to take place) we have to receive the Word that has already been engrafted through regeneration.

1. Why is progressive sanctification (the saving of the soul) important?

Answer: **Because it's a witness to the world.**

"The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians: who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, walk out the door, and deny Him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable." – Brennan Manning

Our mission on this earth is to BECOME LIKE CHRIST!

Why? - so the world can see him and be drawn to Him!

If you've been reading James with us, you'll realise that he's discipling us, showing us practically what this PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION looks like... You'll also notice that a lot of what he talks about has got to do with PEOPLE / OTHERS!

Partiality - to do with PEOPLE

Feeding the poor - PEOPLE

The things we say to - PEOPLE

His message is to keep immersing yourself in the truth of the Gospel and reflecting that truth in your lifestyle when dealing with others!

2. What does James mean when he refers to the IMPLANTED WORD?

It's important to note that JAMES uses different phrases to refer to the same concept in this passage.

In verse 18 he says that... God "brought us forth" by THE WORD OF TRUTH.

- Brought forth = begat, breed forth (by transformation), regenerate.
- Born again (John 3:3, 1 Pet 1:3), made alive (Col 2:13, Eph 2:5), born of God (1 John 5:1, 1 John 3:9).

In verse 21 he says... "Therefore, lay aside... and receive with meekness the IMPLANTED WORD which is able to save your soul.

Answer: James is referring to the GOSPEL

Referring to the Gospel as the Word of God or the Word of Truth is well documented in scripture.

- 1 Peter 1:23-25 (ESV)

(23) since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; (24) for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, (25) but the word of the Lord remains forever." And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

- Ephesians 1:13 (ESV)

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

- Colossians 1:5 (ESV)

because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel,

Quote from John Piper: "The Gospel! God sent his son into the world. The God man. Really man. Really God. Really human. Really Divine. He lives a perfect life, fulfils the whole law. Dies in the place of sinners, intentionally! Absorbs ALL THE WRATH OF GOD against those who believe in him. Takes away ALL THEIR GUILT! Forgives ALL THEIR SINS! Rises from the dead triumphant over death and hell, and satan, over sins. Rules with power from on high. WILL COME AGAIN, give eternal life, raise from the dead all those who've trusted in him. There is NO BETTER NEWS!"

James says God regenerated us by means of the GOSPEL, therefore we must receive the GOSPEL, by living in a way that reflects the GOSPEL!

3. How do we receive the WORD (that is able to save the soul)?

Answer: By living in a way that reflects the GOSPEL!

James says "Be doers of the WORD" or "Live in a way that reflects the GOSPEL/TRUTH"

Jesus in Mark 4:20 explains it like this: "But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold."

BE DOERS OF THE WORD / REFLECT THE GOSPEL WITH YOUR LIFE!

In James 2:12-13 he says: "So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty (The Gospel). For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. (In other words, if you have opportunity and are justified in passing Judgement, DON'T! – BE MERCIFUL) Mercy triumphs over judgment."

We live out the Gospel

- By realizing that we are all just as broken.
- By extending the same grace and mercy toward our neighbour as we would desire for the worst version of ourselves.
- By realizing that our personal salvation is not just for us, but also for our neighbour.

Conclusion

If we refuse to engage in the discipline of PROGRESIVE SANCTIFICATION (saving the soul), we might be doing more against the Gospel than for it; or worse, we might be self-deceived!

- (1) The gospel that saves us, is also the gospel that sanctifies us.
- (2) Sanctification happens as we obediently follow Christ, living out the Gospel.
- (3) Obedience to Jesus cannot happen if you have not been "brought forth" (born again)! We saw how James carefully writes that we were born of God by means of the Gospel.

Response

If you're reading this and you realise you need Jesus to rescue you, I would like to invite you to respond by surrendering your life to Christ. We saw earlier that when someone is born again, it's by God's will, by means of the Gospel, because He loves you.

He loves you so much that he sent his Son to die in your place on a cross. Jesus died so that, if you believe in him, he could take away your sin and give you eternal life. What is required from you? To repent, turn away from sin and selfishness, and surrender to Jesus by following him.

If you know this is for you, please kneel wherever you are and make this your prayer of surrender:

"Dear Heavenly Father. I know you're calling me to surrender today. I might not even fully know what that means. But I know that I'm lost, and I need you to rescue me. So, I'm kneeling and praying this prayer to say I repent. I turn away from sin and selfishness. Today, I'm putting my trust in your son, Jesus Christ to save me. Amen."

If you prayed this simple prayer, I encourage you to connect with a community of Christ followers. If you don't know someone who follows Jesus, contact us. The Bible says that there is rejoicing among angels when one sinner repents.

APPLICATION

1. What stood out to you from this message? What is God speaking to you about?
2. How do we receive the Word that is able to save the soul? (By living in a way that reflects the gospel/doing the Word)
3. "Our mission on this earth is to become like Christ, so the world can see Him and be drawn to Him! Has the gospel taken root in your life and is it bearing fruit? Explain.

Assistance

If you need prayer or assistance, please contact our pastoral care line 072 986 4368 or one of our pastors directly.

To join a community group, contact Marli (072 986 4368) or Jen (084 308 5185) or one of our community group leaders directly. Link: <http://christiancentre.co.za/community.html#groups>