

James 1:9-18

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[0 : 00] Ah, pushed the wrong button. I'm not used to pushing the red button. Sorry. Good morning, everyone.! It's good to see so many new faces here today. My name's Robert. Please turn with me, if you could, to the book of James in the New Testament.

If you don't have a Bible, feel free to raise your hand. There's some Bibles in the back. We can get one to you. Also, if you don't have a little piece of paper like this that starts out with Psalms for Forgiveness and Help in Temptations, raise your hand again and we'll get you one of these. A little different group of Psalms than what we handed out last week.

But, we'd love to give you one of those. So, let me start with a word of prayer. Heavenly Father, Lord, we thank you for just who you are, Lord. We thank you that we can confess and that you forgive, Lord.

We thank you that we have that power through your work on the cross, Lord. We have salvation in Jesus Christ, Lord.

We thank you that there is no other name in heaven by which men can be saved, Lord. We thank you for the tremendous love that you have for us.

[1 : 27] Lord, we thank you that we can come to you through faith. Lord, that you respond to our prayers and faith, Lord. Lord, today as we learn and we reflect on temptation, Lord, pray that we would just be encouraged greatly in the cross and that we have been crucified with you, Lord.

That our sin no longer has power or control over us, Lord. And that you have given us a great eternal purpose. Lord, we pray that you would give me wisdom, Lord, that you would communicate through me.

And that we would be encouraged in what you have done for us on the cross. And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Okay, I can hear myself a lot, so it's kind of weird. Sorry.

Last week we looked in James, starting in James chapter 1. And we've heard a lot about, we learned a lot about our attitude that we're called to have during trials.

And a trial, the way I personally define it, is an event external to us, out of our control, that causes and can cause discouragement, can cause us to stumble, and is designed by God to increase our faith.

[2 : 57] And they can be various trials. And in James he talks about how you go through trials as an individual, but he also talks about the brethren. Collectively, we should be going through trials together.

And what we saw, the reason that we're called to have joy, we think back to Job. Job went through some tremendous trials.

He lost everything. He lost his children. He lost all of his possessions. The only thing that he was left with was his wife, and she told him to curse God and die.

Talk about being kicked when you're down. And he had friends that basically told him that everything you're going through is because you've made bad mistakes. Again, talk about being kicked while you're down.

But his attitude as he was going through those trials, and what to me is the most encouraging couple of verses in the book of James, in chapter 19, he says that, I know I will, in my flesh, in my risen flesh, I will see my Savior.

[3 : 59] And he was encouraged in the fact of his salvation, that God was his Savior. And Paul, in 2 Corinthians, he talks about that. He lists in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 the tremendous trials, and the difficulties, and the persecutions, and the beatings that he's gone through for the gospel.

And he says, he calls them, but for a moment. Momentary light afflictions, and he's looking towards eternity. So, all throughout the Bible, the Old Testament, the New Testament, believers are

encouraged to look to the future when they go through trials.

They can have that attitude of joy, because my hope is in my risen Savior. I am looking towards eternity. And that is to, James is not talking about in James chapter 1, that we're just to walk around with just this bliss, and people say, why are you joyful? I don't know.

But we have a joy because of who Jesus Christ is, what he has done for us, and that he is working a great work in our lives. Last week, in verse 6 of James chapter 1, I kind of did a poor job of touching on a phrase in there.

And in James chapter 1, verse 6, it says, Sorry, I got the wrong verse. Verse 4. He says, But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

[5 : 27] So I have a question. Who here is perfect in themselves? Anybody? Anybody that's married, if you asked your spouse, Honey, am I perfect?

What would he or she say? Well, dear, you're lovely, but you're not perfect. And I think what we talked about last week is that James is a book that can't be, you can't look at it in isolation.

You have to tie in tremendous amounts of Scripture, not in an effort to prove James right, but in an effort to reinforce what he's saying. And I believe that what he's saying here is, it's not that we as individuals are perfect, but it's that we can be perfect because Christ is working in us.

Is Christ perfect? Okay. Did he go through life facing tremendous trials? Did he sin? He did not. And what's interesting is that Paul reinforces this thing that he talks about, that he's not perfect.

He says, In me, here's an apostle, in me dwells no good thing. He realizes he's not perfect. He realizes that he struggles in the flesh with sin.

[6 : 44] If you read Romans chapter 7, it's almost like a ping pong match where he's talking about, I don't want to sin, but I end up sinning. I don't want to sin, but I end up sinning. And the same thing, does anybody here ever feel that same battle in your life?

I don't want to sin, but I end up sinning. I don't want to sin, but I end up sinning. And he realizes that in me dwells no good thing. I'm not perfect. I personally will never be perfect.

You can ask my wife. But we can be perfect in Christ. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. We are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, and he has given us the perfect spiritual gift for who we are.

And we're going to learn more about this as we go on today, this what we have in Jesus Christ. The purpose of our trials is to help grow our faith.

We see this in Ephesians chapter 4, that we are to be grown and built up. So the goal as we move on is not to be for me to be perfect. It's not for me to attain various merit badges that have gone through this trial.

[7 : 48] I'm perfect. I'm perfect. But to reflect on who Jesus Christ is, what he has done in our lives, and to grow in our faith so that we can be perfect and complete in Jesus Christ.

We're going through a growth process. Now we're going to go and move on to Ephesians, or sorry, to James chapter 1. Today, the goal is to cover verses 9 through 18.

And this has been a difficult passage for me this week. It's interesting, as I teach through various passages, there's a lot of life application that leads up to me realizing that I need to do a better job in applying this passage.

This week has been a challenge. But one thing to realize about James is if he was alive today, if he was in the public school system, he would probably have been diagnosed with hyperactivity attention disorder.

I don't know if I got that right. But if you read through his book, he's kind of like that same ping pong match where he bounces from subject to subject to subject, and it's almost like he's tweeting this book in 144 character bites.

[8 : 56] Here's the subject, here's another subject, here's another subject, and he bounces from topic to topic. Last week, he talked about trials and going through trials, the attitude that we are to have going through trials. And this week, we'll learn about in verses 12 through 18, temptations, but he throws right in the middle between trials and temptations, he throws in verses 9 through 11.

Let me go ahead and read those now. He says, Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field, he will pass away.

For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass, its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes, so the rich man will fade away in his pursuits.

So, me reading that through the first time, I'm like, what is he talking about? Why do you throw this in the middle of trials and in the middle of temptations? Good question. Do the rich and the poor experience trials and temptations?

They do. If you read through the Sermon on the Mount, does Christ, does he say that blessed are those that are poor in spirit? He does.

[10:08] Does he give warnings to the rich? He does. Does he talk at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, he says, Don't worry. Look at the flower in the field.

Nothing is adorned in its beauty. Not even Solomon in all of his glory is as beautiful as that flower. Don't worry. Is it easy to worry?

It is. Very easy to worry. In our life, we have started many years with less money or negative money than we had the year before.

And it's difficult. But when you have nothing, who should we as believers be depending on? God. If we have nothing, working as hard as we could, we couldn't add anything to what we had because we still had nothing and it would feel futile.

But we can be as lowly brothers, we can glory in our exaltation because being poor allows us to trust in God day by day. And it was amazing to see God trust.

[11:14] As a small business owner, we could go through a week and we'd say, we'd come to the end of the month and we'd pay all the bills and we'd be like, we have negative money and we have no work coming in.

And we would pray about it and the next day, guess what would appear? Work. Money. And it was neat to see that you could glory in God because He would provide. As a rich person, what's it easy to trust in?

Our riches, isn't it? Do you ever notice, have you ever seen the TV show Shark Tank? All those people that sit up there and they have the entrepreneurs come in and then they try to buy into whatever that is they're selling.

Those rich people that sit up there, they work very, very hard for riches chasing after a percentage of increase. And usually when they sell those deals, when you read the blogs, they are the ones, the rich people that sit up there make the most money out of that.

The rich people chase riches. And they work really hard. A lot of those people that all sit up there, they work 80 hours a week and they testify to that. When they're awake, they're working.

[12:28] And it's very easy for the rich people to trust in their riches. And guess what? The housing market crashes and what happens to all your riches?

They disappear. And it's very easy when we go through trials, who, what are we called to trust in? Called to trust in God.

Does the rich and the poor are we called to trust in the same God? We are. We can trust in our riches or we can trust in God. And even being poor, we can trust in our ability to keep working harder, to roll up our sleeves and get us out of the situation.

But the picture here, I believe why James has this, hey, wait on a second, let me throw this passage on rich people and poor people and it's because as human beings, whether we are rich or poor, we're called to trust in the same God.

Whether we go through trials, whether we go through temptations, trust in the same God. It's interesting, the political parties love to pit the rich and the poor against each other, right?

[13:28] Stereotypically, the Republicans are there for the rich and the Democrats are there for the poor and their stump speeches try to pit those groups together. But you know what Jesus Christ did is he brought those groups together because we all identify in the salvation of Jesus Christ.

And throughout the Bible, whenever it's talked about rich and poor, what we all have in common is Jesus Christ, our faith in Christ. So, when we come into trials, are we to trust our riches?

No. When we come into trials as being poor, are we to worry? No. We trust in Christ. So, whether we're rich or poor, we should be going through those with the same attitude, trusting in Christ.

Now, we come on to temptation. Temptation. So, temptation is a little different than trials. Trials is an external event.

Temptations are very internal. Now, I want to read verses 12 through 18 and then we'll come back and we'll cover those verses. James chapter 1, 12 through 18.

[14:33] Please read along with me. Blessed is a man who endures temptation, for when he has been approved, he will receive a crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love him.

Let no one say, when he is tempted, I am tempted by God, for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he himself tempt anyone.

Each one is tempted when he was drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire is conceived, it gives birth to sin. And sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death.

Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation.

Shadow of turning. Of his own will he brought us forth by his word of truth that we might be the first fruits of his creatures.

[15 : 32] Okay, a couple of observations. Let's think about this. Does God tempt us to sin? No. We should all be saying no and shaking our head side to side.

Not up and down, side to side. No. God does not tempt us to sin. Where does temptation come from? Internal. Internal.

Our desires. Temptation comes from our desires. Okay? His own way, his own desires, he is enticed internally.

Okay? What does God the Father give us according to the last couple of verses in the passage?

Now, we're going through the love language book in our small group and we're tying in a lot of scripture to it and my wife's love language is gifts.

And guess what I'm not good at? Buying gifts. But guess what God is good at? Giving perfect gifts.

So we're going to tie those things together as we go through the story but God does not tempt us.

[16 : 42] Temptation comes from us and God gives us perfect gifts. So, verse 12. Another thing, when I read this, I'm like, why does he throw this in?

Good question, I asked. So, blessed is a man who endures temptation for when he has been approved he will receive a crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love him.

So, you go through a temptation. You do well. Who approves you for going through that temptation?

God does and then he gives you a crown of life. Now, crowns are used a lot in the New Testament to represent various things.

Paul talks about in 2 Timothy that he will receive a crown of righteousness. If you look into the first few chapters of Revelation, you'll see that there are elders around the throne of God and they all have crowns on their heads.

And then in Revelation chapter 4, verse 10, they take those crowns off and they lay them at the feet of Christ. They lay them at the throne which God sits on.

[17 : 45] It's kind of interesting. So, we go through life. We endure temptations. When we have been approved, we receive this crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love him.

we talked about where does temptation come from? Inside. So, there's a conflict that we have going on and we'll bring that out some more.

Temptations come inside. When we yield to temptation, who do you think we're loving most at that moment? Self. Self.

So, there's a conflict between loving self and loving God. We'll see that brings it up. So, here's a question I have for us all. Can we or do we by the grace of God have the power over our desire for sin?

Can we or do we by the grace of God have power over our desire to sin? Yes. We do by the grace of God have power over our desire to sin. Does that power come from self?

[18 : 48] What we're going to see is no, but we have truth that we can identify that Jesus Christ is talking about. Let's turn to Romans chapter 4. Sorry, Romans chapter 6. I'm going to read a few verses and we're going to see some tremendous promises that come from Romans chapter 6.

Tremendous promises that we have. Romans chapter 6, verse 6. Knowing this, that our old man, our old man was crucified with him that the body of sin might be done away with that we should no longer be slaves to sin.

for he who died has been freed from sin. Now, if we have died with Christ, we believe that we should also live with him. Knowing that Christ has been raised from the dead, dies no more.

Death no longer has dominion over him. For the death that he died, he died to sin once for all, but the life he lives, he lives to God. Likewise, you also reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies that you should obey its lusts. And do not present your members as an instrument to unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God

as being alive from the dead and your members as instruments of faith, instruments of righteousness to God.

[20 : 20] I'm sorry. Okay, verse 6. Should we be slaves to sin? No. Can we be slaves to sin?

We can, but should we be slaves to sin? We should no longer be slaves to sin because we have been crucified with Christ. Verse 7. Have we been, we have been freed from sin as it says in verse 7.

Verse 8. We have died with Christ. Verse 9. Death no longer has dominion over him. Is Christ going to die again? No. Sin has no power over Christ at all.

Verse 10. Who does Christ live for? He lives for God. Verse 11. Reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ.

Isn't that neat? You see that this picture that we have that Christ, he died on the cross for our sins. We as believers identify with Christ's death on the cross.

[21 : 25] We have died with Christ on the cross. Christ now lives for God. Sin has no power over him. He will never die again. Who are we to live for?

We're to live for God. See the contrast? We're no longer to let sin have power in our life. Verse 13. Present yourselves as instruments of righteousness to God.

What's so neat and so encouraging to me about this passage is there are a lot of things that have happened. Christ no longer, sin no longer has power over him. And we have a responsibility to present our bodies as instruments of righteousness to God.

Are there truths that give us power over sin? There are. We need to identify and realize those truths on a daily basis. I love it. Hear how he says in verse 11, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Reckon. Not a word we use a lot but my encouragement is to you when you go out today, reckon. Think about the truth that you have in Jesus Christ. If you wake up and you're thinking clearly in the morning, not all of us are.

[22 : 44] It takes a little while to get going but when you get going, reckon. When you clock in at work, reckon. Think about the truth and the promises that we have in Jesus Christ.

When things aren't going our way and it's difficult and it's easy for me, one of the things that I was struggling with was anger this week. I should have been reckoning, realizing that I am dead to sin and sin no longer has power over me.

My encouragement to you is to reckon, to realize the truth and the promises that we have in Jesus Christ. In James chapter 1, back in verse 13, he says, let no one say that I am tempted by God. God does not tempt. tempt. He does not tempt anyone. Verse 14, our temptations come from our own desires.

Our desire to sin comes from us. So what's the growth pattern in sin? Or shall I say the decay pattern of sin?

[23 : 52] So in verse 15, he says that our desire leads to sin. sin. And when it gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is full grown, does it bring life?

It does not. It brings death. Sin brings death. Let's jump to Galatians chapter 5. Galatians chapter 5 is this amazing passage that we have in the New Testament.

And Paul, he's writing to the Galatians, and they're struggling with, do I keep doing the law as a Christian, or do I, by faith, trust in God, and walk by the Spirit? And there are a lot of people that are coming in and trying to tell me, these are all these things, these are things that you need to do to be a good Christian.

X, Y, Z, all these things were outside of the grace of God, and really didn't make them, righteous before God at all. They're just superficial nonsense that people were trying to come in and say, and Paul, he encourages them with this contrast between the deeds of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit.

So I'm going to read the deeds of the flesh. We can all identify and realize what sin is in our own lives, but I want to read these, and then I'm going to throw in my own couple little phrase at the end of each one of these things.

[25 : 12] So in Galatians chapter 5, verse 19, Jude

[31 : 23] I come through different temptations and I have no idea what to do and what's amazing is we have these prayers of David and we have these prayers of different individuals that went through temptations and how they build up these prayers is to me has been a great it's been a tool on how I should be relating to God as I realize the mistakes that I make in my life and what David does is in Psalm 51 sorry verse 1 he says have mercy upon me oh God according to your loving kindness according to the multitude of your tender mercies what is he pointing out in the first verse who has loving kindness God does who has mercies he's pointing out the great character of our God he is a God of tremendous loving kindness and tremendous mercies and then he says according to the multitude of your tender mercies blot out my transgressions that's amazing to think about when something is blotted out remembered no more it's almost as if it does not exist and that's what

God does when you look in the Old Testament he says I have separated your sins as far as the east is from the west God has removed our sins from the situation wash me verse 2 wash me thoroughly from my iniquity cleanse me from my sin for I have acknowledged my transgressions and my sin is always before me against you and you only have I sinned and this evil is in your sight that you may be found just when you speak and blameless when you judge David realized his sins he realizes who ultimately he's sin against his sin is against God others feel the fallout of his sin but he realizes my sin is against God and he realizes that the judgment that God has brought and continued to bring in his life as a result of his sin was just and that's something that we need to realize we're called to instruct and discipline our children this morning we had she's like this big now a little sinner running around you know her as

Lana she seems cute and nice but she was evil this morning she was evil towards her mom she was evil towards her sisters she was a sinner but we had to correct her that's what we're called to do to straighten out her path and God does the same thing in our lives and when he does that he is just verses so David comes to God and he's realizing something I have sinned I have sinned against you I'm calling on your loving kindness I'm calling on your mercies I'm realizing that your judgment in my life is just it's right but he doesn't stop there he continues on because we talked about last week the purpose of the trials we go through when we go through temptation something to think about when we yield to temptation and that sin is born and that sin grows to death does that magnify the name of Jesus Christ in our life it does not does that magnify the gospel does that enhance our testimony in the world it does not but notice what David does he confesses he realizes who God is he realizes the mercy that he has in God and then he comes to verse 10 not just about acknowledging his sin he comes to verse 10 he says created me a clean heart oh God and renew a steadfast spirit within me do not cast me away from your presence do not take your Holy Spirit from me restore to me the joy of your salvation and uphold me by your generous generous spirit then I will teach transgressors your ways and sinners shall be converted to you so think about that create me a clean heart sin comes from our own desires it's a conflict Paul talked about this conflict David experienced this conflict we see the stories of David that David struggle with sin and we have that same struggle within it we have sinful desires but what does he pray for a pure and a clean heart why does he pray for that restore to me the joy of your salvation if we had the joy of our salvation just like radiating through our being and just radiating out into the world when temptations come would we just be able to smack them like a fly we could by the grace of God by the power of the Holy Spirit if we were living in the joy of our salvation we could just crush temptation like a fly and what does he do restore to me the joy of my salvation that many times the apostles talk about in the book of Revelation you have lost your first love that church that lost their first love they lost the joy that they had in the gospel it talks about in there and what he says is restore to me the joy of your salvation then I will teach transgressors your ways and sinners shall be converted to you what did David want his purpose to be did he want it to be a selfish purpose to living in his own desires or did he want to take the message of the loving kindness the grace and the mercy of God to all those that could hear he wanted to do you think that that same prayer should be as true as it was in the Old Testament before Christ came as it should be in the New Testament when Christ has come and died on the cross and risen again so when we fall into trials when I fall into sorry when I fall into temptations my prayer should be to realize who God is realize his mercy realize that what he's done in my life have that joy of my salvation renewed so that I can take the message of the gospel to all those that will hear in 1st John in John writing his epistle he talks about fellowship and he starts off that epistle on fellowship and he says if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us of

our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness and the reason he says that is we need to realize as believers that we sin I sin and that sin impedes our fellowship with God he says confess if you confess your sins he is faithful and just to forgive you of your sins and cleanse you from all unrighteousness he later he goes on in that book and he talks about this aspect of confession to one another and I don't believe he's talking about okay hey Joe

[38 : 20] I did this today and I did this yesterday and I did this the other day I don't believe that's what he's talking about but just like we talked about James that the brethren can go through trials collectively and we go through trials as individually that as we confess I need prayer in my life I need I covet your prayers this week I struggled with anger I was angry about things I shouldn't have been angry about it was difficult that's how this book was applicable to me I went through I was just tempted to anger I didn't give it over to God and for us me being angered did that enable the gospel to go forth it didn't it was difficult and sometimes do we want we prayed about earlier the gospel going forth in all the different churches in our community do we want the gospel to go forth we do does sin impede the ability for the gospel to go forth it does so what we would want to do last week we broke up for a short time of prayer for just seeking wisdom as we go through trials together today what

I want to do is divide the genders so that means guys with guys and ladies with the ladies and we don't need to confess I did this and I did this and I did this but we can ask for prayer for the things that we might be struggling with you don't have to to share that but we sin can destroy a church sin can destroy the message of the gospel in our own life we don't want that to happen we want to rejoice in who God is we want to rejoice in his loving kindness we want to rejoice in his mercies and we want to have that joy of our salvation restored we want to have that message of the gospel radiating out in our lives so what I want to do is divide up a little bit give us a few minutes five minutes or so the praise team will come up and lead us in a song afterwards but if you want to divide up guys with guys girls with girls just spend a few minutes just asking for help in prayer we want the gospel to go out we don't want sin to impede the gospel message in our church thank you