

The Complete Christian is expected to grow

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Date: 07 January 2024

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[0 : 00] James, we are beginning a new series in the book of James. As you're looking that up, I just want to publicly apologize for something that I didn't do this morning. I was praying for the elders and it was pointed out to me this morning that I never gave thanks to the Lord for John, for John McIntyre, and I apologize for that.

John, to his credit, wasn't complaining, but it was an oversight, from the oversight, so I apologize for that. John doesn't need to prove himself. He's been here for many years, but I do apologize for that. I never acknowledged him publicly for the works that he does in the church. It wasn't planned, it wasn't organized. In fact, I only had the word elders down, and you just go off on one anyway. I apologize, we move on from that. We are beginning a new series in this book, the book of James, and tonight, in every new series, it's important.

Probably the most important sermon you'll hear on any new book is the first one, because the first one sets the tone for what comes. The first one sets the backdrop upon which every other sermon comes. So, you don't just begin at verse 1 and just work your way through it.

[1 : 12] You try and understand why the writer is writing the way he does what he intends to communicate. In other words, we need to determine why this is in Scripture and why the Holy Spirit has recorded this for us.

And that's what I want to do this evening. So, we're not beginning from verse 1. We're going to begin from verse 17. Verse 17. Just a few verses that—because the book of James, as I'll say in a moment, is a difficult book to try and get your head around how it's structured.

But let's read from verse 16 through to verse 21. Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this. Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.

Because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

[2 : 32] That's our passage for this evening that will set the tone for the rest of this series. Let's just stand and we'll sing once again. Speak, O Lord.

Turn with me, please, to the book of James, the passage we read earlier. A bit easier to find in the book of Nahum this morning. So, you're getting an outline of two books today.

You've sorted the book of Nahum, you know what that's all about. The justice of God against violence and wickedness. He is not mocked, and sin will indeed be punished in the individual and nationally and internationally as well.

But God is a comforting God. He comforts his people. We rest, we hide in Christ. Tonight, we're looking at a very different book, the book of James. Let's come before God. Let's ask for his help now.

Lord, speak to us now from your word. We thank you for your word. And we pray that as we consider this well-known portion, Lord, of Scripture, we pray, Lord, that that which is familiar to us might indeed resound with a fresh sound.

[3 : 38] And we might find it, Lord, and it might be manna and food to our souls. We thank you for your word, that your word is powerful. And when preached, Lord, correctly, it can transform the hearts and minds of all.

So, Father, help me, Lord, as the one tasked with opening up the Scriptures, help me to explain clearly, Lord, your word. I ask these things in Jesus' name for your glory above all else.

Amen. I've probably mentioned this program to you before once or twice, maybe. This is one of my favorite programs on the television, Inside the Factory.

If I wasn't a pastor, I could happily work in a manufacturing environment. I just love the whole machinery things and things happening, work and outcomes, whatever.

It doesn't matter what this program tells you about. I just love it. In fact, there was one over the Christmas period. I don't know, did anybody see it? What they made? No?

[4 : 36] Jelly beans. I've shown you how they make these tiny wee jelly beans. There's about a million different flavors. I think they're made in Dublin. And, you know, my particular favorite of food, a trip to the dentist every time.

But fascinated how they make those wee things. I've not actually seen the program. I've recorded it, though, and I will record it. But this other program, I did see how they make baked beans. That was a fascinating program as well.

No bore you about how excited it is to make baked beans. But if you get the chance, watch that one. That was fascinating. Just fascinating. How things are made.

As we begin this series in James and tonight, what I want to try and explain to you is how Christians are made. And that's what the book of James begins with. That's why I've started halfway through chapter 1.

It's the key to understanding the rest of the book. Because James just isn't giving out just instructions for the sake of it. In this book, and in tonight's sermon, you will know how a Christian is made and how a Christian works.

[5 : 43] And that's the purpose of the message this evening. So that's what I want to look at as we look at the book of James. It's the whole book is to do with Christian maturity.

So I've given this sermon the title, this whole series the title, The Complete Christian. It's based on verse 4. Often what James wants to communicate, or any writer, is usually right at the beginning.

But James talks about, Let perseverance finish its work, so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. All the imperatives in this book, there are 50 of them at least, they're all to do with making us mature as Christians, making us complete, living as we should live.

So for the whole series, that's what it will be called. And tonight's message, every sermon will begin, The Complete Christian is or does.

Tonight's one is probably the most important. The Complete Christian is expected to grow. That is the heading for this sermon. The Complete Christian is expected to grow.

[6 : 57] So first of all, James. Who is James? There are four James in the Bible, in the New Testament. Four men called James. There is one, James, the son of Zebedee, the brother of John, the other apostle.

He was part of Jesus' inner circle, James and John. He was also the first martyr around A.D. 44. And because of his early death, the author is unlikely to be the brother of John, one of the twelve. It wasn't him. They've also got James, the son of Alphaeus, also called James the Younger, probably the brother of Matthew. Matthew. We know very little about him, and it's unlikely that he is the author.

The other James is the brother of the apostle Jude, the person who wrote the book of Jude. And that, too, is very unlikely. The other James, the fourth James, and the one that's more likely to be the author of James, is the half-brother of Jesus.

Same mother, different father, of course. And Jesus had four brothers and at least two sisters. Some commentators say he had nine brothers and sisters in all.

[8 : 17] Matthew 13 says, Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother named Mary? And aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas aren't all his sisters with us?

So we don't know. He had at least four brothers and quite a few sisters as well. There is some debate whether he is the author, but most people today would hold it.

The author of James is indeed Jesus' half-brother. He didn't believe in Jesus initially. He wasn't one of the twelve. He wasn't an initial follower in that sense.

But Jesus appeared to him later on. 1 Corinthians 15. Then he, Jesus, appeared to James, then to all the others. He was singled out in that way.

He was with Jesus in the upper room. We are told he was with Mary, the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. But after his conversion, he rose rapidly in terms of leadership within the early church. [9 : 21] He became the head of the church in Jerusalem. Peter and Paul mention him. Peter, we are told in Acts 12, motioned with his hands to be quiet, described how the Lord had brought him out of prison.

Tell James and the brothers about this. In many ways, he's the first amongst equals in the early church. He's a very key person in the life of the early church.

And then when the church were debating about should Christians be circumcised, he was very much the person who suited up. He was the chief speaker. We are told, when they had finished, James spoke and said, brothers, listen to me.

He was the main spokesman and leader in the church. He was a notable Christian leader. Paul reported back to James and the rest, the other elders.

He's singled out by name all the time. So he's probably the big cheese, as it were, in Jerusalem, in the early church. But note how he refers to himself in verse 1 here.

[10 : 28] James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations. Greetings. Even here, you see his humility.

He's obviously a godly leader, a godly man. And he doesn't make reference to half-brother of Jesus, the leader of the church in Jerusalem.

He simply calls himself a servant of the Lord Jesus. He submits to Jesus' lordship. So that's possibly, more than likely, who this author is.

The letter itself is controversial. If you know anything about the book of James, it's created great controversy. It's, folks say, that it clashes with Paul's doctrine on justification.

How is somebody made right with God? Paul goes out to great lengths. It's not by works, but it's by faith. We are justified only when we trust in the death of Jesus Christ.

[11 : 28] We are made right with God. Some folks say, well, James doesn't mention this. Jesus hardly gets a mention in it. The gospel hardly gets a mention.

The cross doesn't get a mention, and neither do loads of other doctrines. So theologians down through the years have went, this is dodgy. Martin Luther called this an epistle of straw.

It wasn't worth, he says, it should be reconciled to the end of the Bible, along with Jude and Revelation. John Calvin didn't take that view.

He says, no, this is scripture. This is God breathed. This is a place in canon. Whereas Martin Luther, he says, I cannot include him among the chief books, though I would not prevent anyone from including or extolling him as he pleases, for there are otherwise many good sayings in him. That was very kind of him, wasn't it, to do this. We accept this as the canon of scripture. But in answer to the conflict, he's not doing what Paul is doing.

[12 : 34] He's not so much interested in justification as he is in sanctification. It's not so much what a Christian should believe, but if you're a Christian, how you should behave.

It's more to do with Christian conduct than Christian belief. In other words, he doesn't contradict Paul's teaching. He says, if you believe, there should be evidence of this.

Show me your faith by your works. He's not saying that you're saved by your works. He never says this at all. But he says, if you're saved, there will be evidence that you are saved, that you are a Christian.

And there are many parallels between his teaching and Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount to do with sanctification, evidence that somebody is a believer.

So there is that slight difficulty. There's also difficulty in the structure of this letter. It's very difficult when you're breaking this up for a series of sermons to know where to stop and where to start and what his flow of thought is.

[13 : 39] So some people say, this isn't really a letter. This is just a collection of sermon notes. I sometimes do that. If I'm having my quiet time, I thought, here, that would make a good series. So I start whatever comes to my mind of a few points, put it in the back burner, and I might preach them later.

And some folks think that's all James has done. He just come up with various topics, and it's not really a letter. And so they find it hard to structure. And if you're a preacher and you sit with about six or seven commentaries, which I usually do, and try and work out the outline, you struggle with the book of James because there's hardly two commentators agree on the same structure.

So that brings some sort of difficulty with this. James is obviously a preacher before he's a writer. He has a pastor's heart, and the heart of James comes out very clearly as a pastor. And that's why it's a good book to look at, to preach from. It's a very popular book among Christians because it's very practical. It's very straight talking.

He doesn't mince his words. He just says, sort this out, get it sorted. He writes as a preacher, not as a writer. He will deal with many practical issues, trials and temptations, riches and poverty, obedience, the tongue, humility, wisdom, patience, faith, all these big topics.

[15:06] He knows their situation. He knows life. And he speaks into everyday life. So it's good for that as well. Here's why he's writing to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations.

Believers scattered throughout the world due to persecutions. This is a pastoral letter to them. It's also popular, not because it's practical, not only, but because of the illustrations.

He's a preacher's dream. You don't have to dream up the illustration. He gives you the illustration, and he knows it's here. He says, he talks about horses, and boats, and rudders, and fires, and gardening, and farming, and biology.

It's all here. He wants to get his point home, and he does this. And there are also very clear instructions. Over 50 imperatives.

Do this. Don't do that. Very clear. He's very much a preacher, and his pastor's heart comes out of this. So it's very much a letter for Christians that we might become mature and complete.

[16:11] So let's look at the main thrust of this passage together. James wants to show in the passage that we read that if somebody is a Christian, why they should behave differently from everybody else.

And so he does have a theology. And like Martin Luther, he says there's no theology. It's an epistle of straw. He very much has a theology in this. And his theology is basically how Christians are made and how they should form.

And the two key verses understanding the whole of this letter are verses 18 and verse 21 in the first chapter. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created.

And then verse 21, he ends it by saying, except the word planted in you which can save you. Those two verses are the doctrine that drives the rest of the book of James.

And every sermon and every sermon you hear will be filtered through the truth of these two verses, what God has done and why. And that's what we're going to look at for the rest of this sermon.

[17:27] Therefore, set the stage for why all these imperatives are, why we need to sit up and take notice of them. The titles I've given are very blunt.

So first of all then, James tells us what God has done. What God has done. He has chosen to give the Christian new birth.

And he loves illustrations and one he uses illustration of conception and birth to explain what a Christian is. verse 18, he chose to give us birth.

This is a statement that tells us how we became Christians. First of all, he chose. He chose us. When God chose the nation of Israel, he chose you and I as well.

He's a God who chooses. Jesus said, you did not choose me, I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit. And we'll look at this in a minute. Ephesians 1, 4, He chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

[18:34] He predestined us to be adopted as his sons. Romans 8, Paul says in verse 29, those whom God foreknew, he also predestined.

Those he predestined, he called. Those he called, he justified. Those he justified, he glorified. In other words, a Christian is God's handiwork.

We are singled out by God. And that is something that James wants to emphasize here. He chose. He chose to give us birth.

So secondly, he chose, but he chose to give us birth. And this implies that once we did not have life, he chose to give us life. I've mentioned this many times in the sermons that I've preached, the importance of the new birth.

Jesus mentioned this to Nicodemus. I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. And Nicodemus, well, how can somebody be born again?

[19:33] Jesus says, I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of heaven, of God, unless he is born of water and the Spirit. The Spirit gives birth to Spirit.

You must be born again. The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear it sound. You can't tell where it comes from, where it's going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.

Every Christian is born of the Spirit. And that's what James wants to emphasize. He chose us to give us birth through the Spirit. And the context of this is because of the goodness and grace of God.

Look at verse 16 and 17. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father. We often translate that as practical gifts. We say that at harvest time that God gives us.

But the context of this is this spiritual birth, this gift that comes down from above. And so he talks about he chose to give us birth. So that every good and perfect gift is not just material things, although it includes that.

[20 : 37] It is more. One of these gifts is the new birth. He chose to give us life. And the reason for this is that because we are dead in trespasses and sin.

Left to ourself, we cannot, we would not choose him. As for you, Ephesians 2, you were dead in your transgressions and sins. Like the rest of us, we were by nature objects of wrath.

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, what comes next? Made us alive. You don't make yourself alive. God makes you alive.

I remember one book that the Lord really used in my conversion. I didn't get saved reading the book. It was a book by Billy Graham, How to Be Born Again. Our sins grew up and realized the title was a bit misleading.

How you do something to make yourself born again. The book was very much How to Be Born Again. Repent and believe and you're born again. But theologically, you're born again and you repent and you believe.

[21 : 37] The Holy Spirit comes down upon you. He takes over you and He grants you salvation, grants you repentance. He chooses to give you life. Without that life, you do not repent and believe you're dead in trespasses and sins.

So, the book was very helpful if the theology was a bit skew-iffed. You cannot be born again. You can't choose. God chooses to give you life. Very clear.

James is so clear. He chose to give us birth. Chose to give us birth. So, a Christian is conceived in the mind, the will, the power of God.

He chooses to give us birth. That is why we are called a new creation. A new creation equal to the creation that is in the world.

He is a new creature. The old is gone and the new is coming. So, people that James is writing to, he's assuming that if you're a Christian, you have been given new birth by God.

[22 : 37] God has done this in you. You have this new life. So, that is what God has done to every person who here, every Christian. He's chosen to give you birth.

Now, how did God do this? James tells us. What was the means of this new birth? This new birth is through the word of truth.

James changes his metaphors here from human birth to gardening. He jumps between his metaphors. It's hard to try and keep track of. He says this in verse 18, He chose to give us birth through the word of truth.

He expands on this in verse 21. The other verse I mentioned, he says, Except the word planted in you which can save you. Jesus spoke about this in the parable of the sower.

The seed is the word of God. I've been reading this in Mark's gospel. I'm also reading Mark as well as Genesis. And the parable of the sower about the word that goes out and the soil.

[23 : 40] There's nothing wrong with the word. The word is life-giving but the soil is the problem with the soil. But the word is the seed of God.

The life-giving word. And the word of God is powerful. Mentioning Genesis earlier. Wading through and God created and he said and just thrilling again at that that God just said let there be light and there was light.

Let the waters part from let the creatures fill the sea and the land. God simply speaks and things happen. He is such a powerful God and God said and God said and God said and he looked at what he created and behold it was very good.

Jesus healed people by simply saying be clean. He didn't have to touch them but he would simply speak the word. The same powerful word the same word and it's literally that is needed to save you and me.

At some point we need to hear the gospel. The word of God is preached to us. Paul says this in Romans how can they call on the one in whom they have not believed and how can they believe in the one in whom they have not heard and how can they hear unless someone is preaching to them?

[25 : 01] How can anyone preach unless they are sent? How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news? Very plainly the new birth comes to us through the word through the word of God.

That was the way I just finished a whole series in the book of Acts it took me about a year and a half to work through it and all the way through it it doesn't say and people loads of folk get saved but it says and the word of God spread the word of God spread the word of God and as the word goes out in power many people are saved and Paul tells us very plainly in 2 Corinthians 4 6 he compares the creation of the world to the creation of new life in you when he says for God who said let light shine out of darkness made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ God chose you for birth he made his light shine in you through the preaching of his word that word is not magical it is incredibly powerful though that's why in Hebrews the word of God is alive and active sharper than any two-edged sword it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit joints and marrow

I wonder if we really believe that see if to use the word of God in witnessing it has such a powerful effect who knows what God is going to if he's going to let that word be planted in somebody's life that's what he says here the word planted in you it's like a seed when we hear the word of God God grants us this new life this new seed is in us and it has the ability to change us and to transform us and every Christian has this in common God chose to give you life he did this through the preaching of his word Paul mentions this to the Thessalonians brothers loved by God we know that you're loved by God he says that God has chosen you because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with the power of the Holy Spirit and deep conviction Ephesians you were also included in Christ when you heard the word of truth the gospel of your salvation so the Christian life begins with hearing the word and this word like a seed that's now planted in us that we become different we have a new energy within us so it's not just

I have decided to follow Jesus that's such a simplistic way of describing a Christian your dead and trespasses and God chose to give you life through the word planted in you which can save you Peter says the same thing you have been born again not of perishable seed but of imperishable through the living and enduring word of God wow that's why for me to be a preacher of the word of God is the best job in the world wow what not just a toolbox but this is radioactive the word of God to be able to share this and you can share this so if you are in the Psalms or whatever and you have a quiet time never be afraid to quote a verse I read this this morning who knows what that verse as the living word of God might do just take the word of God it's so so powerful and James that's what his theology is for all these imperatives this is what God has done this is how he has changed us so James in this when he gives these imperatives and he tells us to do this and don't do that it's not about guilt none of these sermons you hear is to put you in a guilt trip it's to show it's to cause us to grow so every sermon based on James is because that seed doesn't just work on the day in which you're saved every time you hear a sermon it causes you to grow or it should do you hear the sermon you are quickened in your heart and mind and will every part of you is affected and that's why it's good for us to pray Lord give us ears to hear what you're saying to us that the word might find good soil and produce in me a harvest because Paul says you are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works in other words you are chosen not just to be saved but to be this impressive thing so thirdly why why has God done this

James tells us he chose to give us birth through the word of truth that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created and that's the key verse to understand all of these imperatives as I said it's not to put us on a guilt trip is to show why these things should be the case why we should control our tongue why we should not look down on people different from us why we should be people of faith because we are God's workmanship it's as big as that for us we just think it's all just about being saved that's all that matters not for James his theology is very deep he's not just happy that you're justified sanctification should follow justification I read this in Romans and so forth we are to be first fruits it's an Old Testament word it's the first produce of the field that speaks for itself spring will come I love it I must confess when you after February whatever and you see a tree a wee bud a wee bit of green it's soft and you think there's life just beginning to come out and it's just a great

thing whether it's a wee raindrop or whatever snowdrop whatever you caught and I don't know flowers anyway a wee white thing pops up and you think well spring is round the corner it's as real as that in the Christian sometimes we don't expect much from God but the word of God produces this in us so we are to be first fruits what does this mean?

[31 : 20] two things relating to first fruits first fruits speak about God's promised provision that God promised to be faithful to his word and so forth and when the fruits began to come the people were to take the first of those fruits and offer them to God and it was proof that God was faithful he was good he was a gracious God and that's why he says celebrate the festival of harvest Exodus 34 with the first fruits of the crop they were commanded to do this offer the best of the crop to God not the stuff at the end but the good stuff that comes through at the beginning Exodus 34 26 bring the best of the first fruits of your soil to the house of the Lord your God God has created many things I was talking to Lucille about this today Richard Attenborough was on and there was some dinosaur-y type thing that's kind of lost in me and I went boy that is an ugly beast that thing with teeth and when you look at dinosaurs and so I was sent to Lucille whether I'm right or whether I'm wrong from my field of expertise and I think they just assumed that all the creatures that were maybe so many years ago were just ugly big brown grey animals as soon as they say they were only turquoise in colour and had pink feathers or whatever you look at God's creation now and the birds are just wow look at that thing and the fish and the plants and you're just blown away by God's creative power but no matter how impressive any flower or you may have a favourite flower or a favourite bird or animal or whatever nothing compares to the new creation that God produces in a Christian that he completely transforms you in your heart and your mind the seed of the word that's planted in you changes you does it not shame you it shames me that I'm not as good a Christian as I should be

I can quench the spirit get things wrong and I say Lord there's so much more that you can do in me I want to shine like a star in the universe and I thank you for the work of grace that you've done I'm not as good as I'd like to be but I'm better than I was and that is down to his handiwork I've heard sermons the word is continually growing in me and changing me because I love the word you love the word you hear it what we're saying this morning they found it helpful in Nahum in fact anything anybody can get anything from the book of Nahum if you just read it it's quite heavy duty but there's that one wee verse in the middle that God is a refuge he's a God who is good and that lights up for us why that's the word of God that's the spirit taking that seed and causing it to produce fruit within us so we are the first fruits of God's created we are the best of all his created power better than any blue whale or whatever also the first fruits were to do with God's holiness the first fruits were to be given to God first and they could keep the rest but the first fruits were separate to God the church is the ecclesia of God the called out ones of God we are holy unto him

God has chosen you to be holy above everything else it's not just for salvation it's not to have a harp in heaven as he's chosen you to be like his son to be holy God is holy therefore be holy and that is why we belong to him we are the we are the best of his creation we belong to him it's not rocket science it really is quite thrilling we are different from the world God here is a great truth I think Paul mentions this now and again we are the people that God has chosen but we are not the people he wants he wants to change us I was saved in 1980 I like to think I'm better in 2024 he chose me but he doesn't want to keep me as I was then he wants to mold me and shape me and to make me like his son I am his first fruit better than anything else that he has created he wants me to shine as his handiwork and this comes through the word of God through hearing these imperatives that's why he gives them not to put them in a guilt trip but the mere mentioning of this will cause them to grow and that's what I hope will happen here it's what the book of James is all about chosen by God given you birth through the word to be holy to be different because of what he is doing the work that he is doing in us and that's what

I hope as we look at these 50 or so imperatives but in closing as ever James is very practical so here are two practical things very quickly he mentions this in the verses we read get rid he says verse 21 therefore get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you the world and its ways are the weeds that would seek to choke the word that we hear and not cause us to love him and to follow him and to embrace this and worldliness is like weed killer to this it tries to choke the word Jesus said this in the parable the cares of the world choke the seed and it doesn't produce any fruit and so we are to keep short accounts get rid of anything that will hinder growth hinder our love and our joy in following him don't harbor resentment

pride jealousy grief these type of things so here is be aware of the weed killers of life secondly humbly accept the word verse 21 planted in you get rid of the moral filth but accept the word planted in you which can save you to humbly accept the word is simply saying yes to God it's reading God's word and being challenged and saying yes yes Lord

I'm sorry that's me I don't want to be that person humbly accept the word of God and as you accept the word of God you will find you're being changed into something more beautiful and God will do this to us on a daily basis the new birth and sanctification go on and on in my ministry my ministry 30 years has been church revitalization church planting that's what I've done and prayer is a vital tool but the main tool is not gimmicks and strategy and baseball hats and slogans the only tool you've got in revitalization is the word of God preach the word as I preach you hope that people are saved you hope that God's people are up built in the faith that is my main tool and only as I've given myself and I hope to be better at it to the ministry of God's word to the preaching of God's word will change come about

[38 : 47] I don't woo you with smooth sounding words I hope to bring to you only God's word I've just seen Karen there Karen will be doing a course in counseling counseling for people is not just saying there there sometimes we need that human touch but the tool for counseling is bringing God's word to that situation and people will be transformed they'll know a joy a peace they'll be corrected they'll be encouraged whatever that is the word of God is living and active it is such a powerful thing that God has given us this is not just a bible Muslims rightly get offended if they see you putting your bible on the floor they would never do that with the Quran for us it's just yes it's just paper but the actual words itself are powerful unto God so as we begin this year that's an immensely exciting thing don't see your word your quiet time as something boring something to wade through you do not know what that word will do for you that morning that night it might be a seed that will a few months later it will germinate and produce fruit that's why it's great to sit under the word of God so here then is the backdrop to these imperatives that James is about to give and we'll look at that over the coming weeks it won't be a 50 week sermon we're not looking at them one by one rest assured

I think it's about 12 weeks or something but he's saying before he gives all these things why why is he saying this because as a Christian you're different God has chosen you to give you birth he's done it through the word why has he done it that you are to be the first fruits of all that he created you are to be impressive you are to be holy therefore get rid of this humbly accept the word of God on a daily basis then you will grow does that make sense does that make sense I've preached my guts out tonight trying to convince you of this this is not to put you on a guilt trip I hope that not just this sermon but whenever we begin a new series after Philippians in February whatever series it is I trust in us whenever I preach the word of God not preach what's here not what I think is there open up the scriptures the Lord can use it to transform you and transform me what a privilege it is to be filled with the spirit to have the spirit to have that word planted in us which is beginning to grow that each time we hear a sermon it's like fertilizer again on that word causing us to grow we're going to stand and we're going to use as a prayer a closing song

O breath of God come as a prayer as a prayer as a prayer so as a prayer as a prayer can use it as a prayer as a prayer in us as a prayer as a prayer as a prayer can use it or just let it be a prayer as a prayer is a prayer