

To Speak The Same

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Date: 02 May 2021

[0 : 00] If you would turn to, before we come to prayer, let's turn to James chapter 1, and there's two readings. So James chapter 1, verses, James is found after Hebrews, and we're heading towards the back of the book anyway, so James chapter 1, verses 12 through to 18.

So James chapter 1, beginning at verse 12, now hear God's word. Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

Let no one say, when he is tempted, I am being tempted by God, for God cannot be tempted by evil, and he himself tempts no one.

But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire, when he is conceived, gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death.

Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every 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.

[1 : 31] Of his own will, he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be the kind of firstfruits of his creation.

And then 1 John 1, verses 5 through to 10. It's just a few pages over.

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie, and we do not practice the truth.

But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus, the Son, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[2 : 35] If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. Well, let's pray. Lord, this is the sixth part in these messages, and I've not covered everything.

I've just mainly tried to focus primarily on the idea of the Romans 6 and the Romans 12, the identity in Christ, what it means to live the Christian life, and of course, as we saw last week, the three tenses within salvation.

You have been saved, you are being saved, and you will be saved. You have been in justification, set free from the penalty of sin. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

You have no judgment to worry about in the judgment for your sin. There is nothing to worry about that. It has all been paid for at the cross. The penalty has been covered.

Then, of course, Christ in the power of the gospel has set you free from the power of sin. No longer are you slaves to sin having to obey it. The reason you can obey God is because you are no longer bound to obey sin.

[3 : 53] The reason why you can say yes to God is because sin doesn't make you say yes to it. So you can say no to sin and yes to God because that's how the grace of God works.

In fact, that is the very evidence of God's grace within your life, the ability to say yes to God and no to sin. And then ultimately, glorification is when you will be free from sin's presence.

And you're not free from sin's presence at the minute. The sin's presence, it could be in your thoughts. It could be in your desires. It could be in the world. It's in other people as well.

And so we can't constantly live within a sinful presence, but we are no longer under its power. And as I said in the first message, the myth of neutrality tries to convince people that it doesn't matter what decision you make, everything's neutral.

But what Romans 6 teaches us, it's not whether but which. It's not whether or not you will obey, but who you will obey. We will always be obedient to someone.

[5 : 02] And love for God is described by Jesus as obedience. So we can be very thankful for receiving the grace that we have received. Our hearts can be full of gratitude.

We can have complete belief in what we're being told. But there will be no success in your life, no progress in your life unless you're obedient. Because Jesus defines love for God as obedient.

And if you love me, you will what? You will keep my commandments. That's the very defining mark of love. Jesus says to his disciples, I do exactly what the Father has commanded me so that the world may know that I love the Father.

How does the world know that Jesus loves the Father? By Jesus obeying the Father. That Jesus is saying there's only one way the world gets to see your love for God.

He says, I do exactly what the Father has commanded me so that the world would know that I love the Father. How does the world get to know love for the Father?

[6 : 05] By obedience. Therefore, there are many Christian lives that are not making progress and they are not successful. Not because they don't believe.

It's not because they're not grateful for the grace that they have received. But it's largely because they're not obeying. Love has been defined in a different way. It's either been defined as gratitude or it's been defined as belief.

But it's not defined as obeying the commandments of God. Now James understands, and so does 1 John, that we live in a world where God tempts no one, but we live in a world where people are bound to be tempted.

We are told that we are to count every trial a joy because this is how God makes you perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

The ultimate aim that God has with your life is to make you like Jesus. And he does this in two ways primarily. Number one, God uses the world to shape you.

[7 : 08] And number two, God uses you to shape the world. And by you serving God, by imitating Christ, you naturally become more and more like him.

But God also uses the world to shape you. The best illustration I think I can use of this is the simple prayer of, Lord, lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from the evil one, which is found in what we commonly call the Lord's Prayer, is very directional in the sense of this, that I may wonder why I don't get a promotion.

Obviously, I'm not in the position to get promotion, but when I was in the world where I was working for bosses and companies, I may wonder why I don't end up with the job that I want.

And if I'm praying with my whole heart, Lord, lead me not into temptation, I have to take that into consideration. I have to take into consideration that that job or that move or living in that part of the country may actually cause me to be tempted and fall away from the living God.

You know, why did God call me to be a pastor in Scotland, where in Edinburgh, where beaches are miles away and there are no surf? Well, because if he called me to be a pastor on the north coast of Cornwall or on somewhere else in Wales, for instance, I might be tempted to surf.

[8 : 38] So God knows my strengths and my weaknesses. And if I'm praying with all my heart, Lord, lead me not into temptation, there are many things that I would like which I won't receive.

Because the Lord tempts no one. So there are many things that don't turn up in my life that I would like to turn up in my life because I'm praying at the same time every day, Lord, lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from the evil one.

James wants to make it abundantly clear that he tempts, that God tempts no one. Absolutely no one. But it is possible for some believers to believe that he does.

And this is why James has to address it. The Christian is one that is always called to respond to what God is doing. Whatever you're dealing with in life, you're always dealing with God.

And so let me deal with the summary of James here. Firstly, if you take the past five weeks, five messages, what we have seen is this, that we have been freed from the penalty of sin, we are definitely free from the power of sin, and we will one day be free from the presence of sin.

[9 : 48] But because we are not free from the presence of sin, we have to deal with temptations in this life. James makes it abundantly clear that God doesn't tempt anyone, but often the trials involve temptations.

And this is where the overlap and the confusion often happens. I'll give you an illustration. Let's say for argument's sake that my son is up on the street corner, and there are loads of boys and girls up there with alcohol.

And let's say they're, I don't know what alcohol it is, and they're all drinking, they're all a little bit drunk with the drink, and they're saying to my son, here, have some.

Here, take some. Now that's a serious temptation. And my wife nudges me on the arm and says, go out and rescue him. Go out and get him. And I said, no, just leave him.

Why do you want to leave him? Well, because I'm testing him. They're tempting him, but I'm testing him. So the same event from two different points of view is a test and a temptation.

[10 : 59] God may call you into a situation where the people in that situation are tempting you, but God's the one testing you. He knows that you have the power to say no to sin.

He's testing whether or not you're going to avail yourself of it. So God tempts no one, but the situation you may be in could be highly tempting.

If you constantly remove people from the moment there's a slightest bit of temptation, you will never know, you'll never be able to test their ability to say no to sin.

So there has to be the environment in which you can say no to sin in order to say no to sin. And that's how God tests. That's how God matures. God doesn't always pull us out of the situation.

We are to pray not to lead us into those sinful temptations, and God will, but every now and then God tests us with various trials of various kinds because this is how he will make you complete.

[12 : 01] It could be anything. It could be absolutely anything. But this is often the case why some Christians believe that they have ended up in the position that they have, either because of the feelings that God has given them or the people that God has brought them into their life or the place where they live.

All of those were tests, and they've fallen for the temptation, and they say, well, God did it. And this is not making, this is the confusion. It's not making the distinction that God actually calls us to make.

God wants us to be the type of people who shape the world and not be shaped by the world. But God does use things in the world to make us more like Christ, and they are called trials.

They are called tests. For the world, they are trying to tempt. Now, in a situation like this, we're to ask God for wisdom because if we don't ask God for wisdom, we're not going to be able to get through.

And if we ask God, we shouldn't doubt because if we doubt, we're not going to receive. But how many Christians still think that they can have in unbelief? How many believers really believe that they should have even in their unbelief?

[13 : 17] And God says, no, that's not the way it works. The person who doubts is double-minded, unstable in all his ways. He expects to receive, but he never will because there are conditions by which God gives.

And one of those conditions is that you must come believing and you must have faith. Because you now have been given the ability to obey and obey in faith, God wants you to use it.

And he's not going to treat you like an infant where you don't know any better. Now you do know any better, he's going to put you to that kind of test. Now one of the issues that we have here in James as well as in John is this word, and I'm going to call it by its proper name, and that is homo legeo.

Homo legeo means to speak the same, to say the same. Homo means the same, legeo means to speak, to speak the same. And therefore, we are never to call a sin something different than what God calls it.

For instance, we're never to call a sin a mistake. If it's a sin, we call it a sin, we don't call it a mistake. Because we don't repent of mistakes, we repent of sin. And if we redefine it as a mistake, we're far less likely to repent of it.

[14 : 33] And so God has organized his words so carefully that we make sure that we're all on the same page. So we've got a Christian life full of trials where we're being tempted, and God wants us to call it the same.

We should not call it something else when God is calling it this. And this is part of the confusion. Because James is writing to people who want to doubt and still expect to receive.

He's writing to people who are being tempted and falling for the temptation and then blaming it on God. And he has to point out to them, God doesn't tempt anyone. The trial comes from God, the test is from God, but God doesn't tempt anyone.

So why all this confusion? Why is it the case that so many believers have got themselves into a position where they can expect to receive in doubt? Or where they can expect that they've got an excuse for living the way that they are because God is the one who's actually tempted them?

Well, partly, it's to do with what I would call functional unbelief. Let me put it this way. Did you know that if you do not know what the Word of God teaches, you cannot do it?

[15 : 48] James says that we are to be hearers and doers of the Word. And therefore, if you don't know what the Word teaches, you can't do it because you don't know what to do. Functionally, that looks exactly the same as unbelief because the unbelieving person doesn't do it either.

Now, their motive is entirely different. They don't do it because they don't want to. The other person doesn't do it because he doesn't know what to do because he doesn't know. And therefore, functional unbelief looks exactly the same.

Functional, sorry, not knowing looks functionally the same as unbelief. Not knowing what to do looks exactly the same as not doing it in practical terms because neither person is doing it.

But the motive is entirely different. One's not doing it because he doesn't want to. The other's not doing it because he doesn't know what to do. And this is partly the answer to why there is so much confusion.

Sometimes you don't have the wisdom to do what you're meant to do. You just don't know. And other times, excuse me, it is to do with unbelief. The other thing here to recognize in homologue, that is to say the same thing, to call it what God calls it, is to not try and convince yourself that it is something different.

[17 : 15] How many times have you had a conversation with someone and you have said something and then you spend the rest of the day trying to convince yourself that what you said is okay? That was okay.

What I meant was this. What I meant was this. And the reason you spend all that time trying to convince yourself is because you're not sure. And you're not sure because you're not sure what it is. Was it in effect?

You spend, you feel guilty because you've said something that you perhaps shouldn't have said. You've done something you should have done. And then you spend the rest of the week or the month or whatever trying to convince yourself that it was okay.

And the reason you spend all that time trying to convince yourself is because you've either called it something that it isn't and you're trying to self-justify or you just weren't sure in the first place.

And this is the very basis of which James is getting at. So I want us to look at this under three simple headings. Conflict, conviction and confession.

[18 : 17] Conflict, conviction and confession. All in the same way in order to become complete. Now a person can continue to feel guilty of a sin that they have committed once upon a time for no other reason than the fact that they are they remain sensitive to that sin.

That they committed a sin two, three years ago twenty or thirty years ago and they feel guilty. Even though they've confessed it they are so sensitive to that sin they just can't get it out of their mind.

It just perhaps it took them by surprise. Perhaps it was something that they never imagined they would have done and they did it and they never thought that they were that type of person. And even though they have confessed it even though they are forgiven in Christ they just cannot forget it because they're very sensitive to that.

And so you have this person who has this sin this memory of the sin and they know they cannot forgive themselves they read the Bible well enough to know that you cannot forgive yourself.

the reason you cannot forgive yourself is because you have not sinned against yourself. All sin is against God as David said in Psalm 51 against you and you only have I sinned.

[19 : 45] Why on earth some people believe in this idea of self-forgiveness? It must have come from a self-help book somewhere but it does not come from God's word.

You cannot forgive yourself because you cannot sin against yourself. You can commit a sin but you cannot sin against yourself. All sin is against God because it's his law that we break it's his holiness that we rally against.

And so if you've read Psalm 51 and you've read 1 John you recognize that self-forgiveness is more about self-forgetfulness. I will just try and put it back to the back of my mind as much as possible and it works for a time being until the day it no longer works when it rises back to the surface.

So now we have the issue of why do some sins stick around? Why do some sins stick around? Or rather why does the feeling of guilt stick around?

Why does that hold on to us? Well firstly it could be because you're a very sensitive person to the sin that you committed. In other words you're so sensitive to the fact that you didn't think you'd be that type of person you just can't get over it.

[21 : 02] The second reason is to do with homologer. In other words what you confessed was not the same as the sin. In other words it is the spirit's job to continually convict you of sin so that you would repent of it.

But if you've called it something else and then said sorry to God for it the spirit doesn't work like that. The spirit hasn't forgot it. So the spirit is constantly laying upon us this feeling of guilt for a sin that we haven't confessed because if we confess our sins God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.

And so the reason people can still feel guilty especially when the Bible is being taught because you teach the Bible and suddenly I'm made to feel guilty all over again. Well it could be for no other reason then the sin that you confess was not the sin that you're actually convicted of.

In other words you're avoiding homiligel. You're not calling it what God calls it. You're calling it something different. And so when you call it something different your confession is for a different thing.

And this is what James is getting at and of course 1 John in particular is getting at. The reason why some people can continue to feel guilty and not know why they continue to feel guilty is because they have said sorry for something that was never the issue in the first place.

[22 : 30] You've heard me say this plenty of times. Someone pulled me up on it once. They were completely wrong and I can demonstrate why. As you know in our house we don't say sorry.

We ask for forgiveness forgiveness. And there's a massive difference between the two. Sorry is often the power of the one who's done the crime.

So you know one of the boys walks into the room hits the girl right the girl's crying and they say sorry. No you don't have the power to make this right.

Okay because the next thing you're going to say that's going to come out of your mouth is well I said I'm sorry well I said I'm sorry whenever an offense takes place it is the right of the other person to grant forgiveness and therefore the other person must ask for forgiveness.

This is exactly how God does it. God never tells you to say sorry he calls you to repent. Okay God grants forgiveness and you ask for forgiveness.

[23 : 41] To say sorry is for you to dictate the terms on which something is final and we don't allow that in our house because of homiligeo because my wife could say to me you're saying sorry for something that's not the issue.

We practice homiligeo. We need to call it what God calls it and you need to ask for forgiveness and I need to grant forgiveness and this is how God changes us both because I'm not allowed to be unforgiving and you're not allowed to be unrepentant.

Do you see how important that is? So if you change the word from forgiveness or asking for forgiveness to saying sorry it changes everything. It changes everything.

So when God calls it homiligeo say it as it is it's incredibly important for you becoming like Christ because you could be saying sorry for things that are not even the issue.

You could be confessing things that are not even the issue. And as children we do it all the time. We think that if we have said sorry that should be the end of it. But the way God changes people is that if an offense has occurred one person is obligated to ask for forgiveness and the other person is obligated to forgive.

[25 : 05] Hopefully you can see how clear that is. That's homiligeo. that is to say it as God says it. But of course the issue in James and the issue in John is that one of the reasons why people can continue to remain feeling guilty is because they haven't actually confessed.

And the spirit doesn't forget. You can suppress it. You can pretend it's not there. But it'll never go away. if you confess your sins God is faithful and just to cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

And that cleansing doesn't happen without the confession. The confession comes first and then the cleansing happens second. And this is incredibly important if you are really desiring to become like Christ.

Christ. Therefore it only takes one sermon on a subject like this for the person to feel guilty all over again. You've been going through Genesis talking about creation.

They feel fine. The moment you get to homiligale suddenly there's great conviction because that's how the spirit of God works. The spirit of God brings to the surface saying the same as God.

[26 : 25] Call it what God calls it. So we can all redefine the terms. I could just be a person that just made lots of mistakes without ever calling myself a sinner.

And my natural condition before God is one of guilt, not one of depression. I'm guilty and I need forgiveness. And then my mind will be healthy. I'm not depressed with all the mistakes I've made.

I'm not homiligale, calling it what God calls it. And this is how God makes us complete. This is how God makes us complete.

He uses trials. The trials may include temptations, but God isn't the one tempting. And the same way by me leaving my son out on the street corner being tempted by teenagers that are drinking alcohol, I'm testing him but he's being tempted by them.

It's the same scenario. I want to see if he can say no and I won't know that if I pull him out. And God knows that you have the ability to say no to him because that's what he gave you in the cross and so he leaves you in the trial for you to say no, for you to walk away from that temptation.

[27 : 43] And this is where part of the confusion lies. So there are many Christians who live their Christian life who will say something similar to this. okay, I admit that I was tempted and I sinned, but if God didn't lead me into the situation in the first place, it wouldn't have happened.

Right? Does it remind you of anyone? The woman you gave me. Do you remember Adam sinned?

He doesn't actually blame his wife, he blames God for giving him a wife. It was the woman you gave me. He blames God. This is the very heart of the initiation of sin.

That we will acknowledge that we sinned, but then what we do is we back trace it to God. And we say something along the lines of, okay, I sinned, yes, I'll put my hand up, I did something that God did not want me to do, but if you didn't lead me into that situation in the first place, I would have never done it.

And because there's a part of logical truth to that, it makes sense. And this is why James is saying, no, God doesn't tempt. God doesn't tempt.

[28 : 56] God walks in the light. God walks in the light, as 1 John puts it. So we must understand this very simple principle of homiligo, to call it what God calls it.

Now imagine it the other way around, where Jesus is tempted. Jesus was led out into the wilderness, he was tempted by the devil, but no sin was found in him, and he did not sin.

And you're going to go, hang on a minute, that's because he was Jesus, and that's the point. That's exactly the point. What is God doing with you?

He wants to make you like Jesus. Jesus. So if you can see in Jesus someone who overcame sin in the desert, in the wilderness, now you can understand what God is doing with you.

So if you arrive at the conclusion, well, of course he could because he's Jesus, now you can see why God wants to make you like Jesus. We are becoming complete.

[30 : 04] temptation, James says, comes from within. The trial is able to make you to count it as joy because the trial is able to make you perfect, lacking in nothing, it's able to make you a complete person, but the temptation comes from within.

You are lured and enticed by your own desires. Now they are desires that you can say no to. Remember Romans 12 where we began, that you are to present your bodies to God as a living sacrifice.

You are no longer to be the type of person who is dictated to by their body. Lured and enticed by your own desires?

Not anymore. You present those bodies to God as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable. You are not to be dictated to by your own body.

And secondly, because of the power that you have in Christ, in union with Christ, of being able to say no to sin, you are no longer under its mastery.

[31 : 16] The argument can never be made, I couldn't help but sin. The only argument you can be made now is, I sinned and I shouldn't have. sinned.

And why did I sin? Because I was lured and enticed by my own desire. Instead of obeying God, I went with my feelings. Instead of obeying God and presenting my bodies so that my body doesn't dictate the terms, I was dictated by my feelings.

And I ended up doing something that God did not want me to do. And so one of the reasons why people can continually feel guilty, one of the reasons why some people change so very little is because obedience is the key to success.

That obedience to God is the key to progress, to success in the Christian life. And that's what it means to actually love God. And while there are other reasons for feeling guilty, like a sensitive soul, because you just can't get over the fact that you've done something you should never have done, there are also more legitimate reasons for feeling guilty, such as you are still guilty for that sin because you've not confessed it.

You've confessed something other than what God calls it. You're saying sorry for something different than what God actually calls it. So God has not given us a life beyond explanation, where we're sat around thinking I can't understand myself, or this life.

[32 : 48] No, every good gift and perfect gift comes from God, who is the Father of lights. There's no shadow, no variation due to change. If we have fellowship with God, we walk in the light.

So here's the exhortation. If John calls us to be honest with God, and James calls us to call out for wisdom, then we must recognize why they are calling us to do those two things.

James calls us to call out to wisdom without doubting, so that we can be this perfect, complete man, so that we can be this blessed man who remains steadfast under trial, so that we are not driven and tossed here, there, and everywhere, and our life is indistinguishable from the unbeliever's life.

John calls us to be honest with God because he understands this is where the fundamental change and the cleansing happens. Homologau, unless you confess your sins, homologau, speak the saying, call it what God calls it, when that happens, God is faithful and just to cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

That's when the feeling of guilt disappears. It disappears because so does the guilt disappear with it. And so now we begin to appreciate just exactly what it is that we have received, that we really have received a new life, no longer under the penalty of sin, no longer under the power of sin, and that while we are in the presence of sin, we have the ability now in Christ to say no to it.

[34 : 28] And if we are tempted, we are never being tempted by God, but by a body that we have not presented to God as a living sacrifice. We're allowing it to dictate the terms.

God is always dealing with God in whatever it is that you're dealing with, whether it be the trial, whether it be the temptation, whether it be the feeling of guilt, whatever it may be, you are always dealing with God.

And God is always dealing with you because you're his child. and he wants to dress his child in righteousness. He wants to comb your hair in a particular way.

He wants to put these type of shoes on and these type of clothes. Go read Psalm 110 and 111. The idea of being clothed in righteousness is what God wants you.

But God doesn't dress you in righteousness as though it's purely external like lights on a Christmas tree, but the tree itself is dead. you have been given new life to produce new fruit as you keep in step with the Spirit.

[35 : 41] And so your life with the Spirit at this present time is always going to be one of conflict and conviction and confession. Because it is the Spirit's job to constantly pick you up when you're not living like Christ.

And so every time the flesh desires something that it shouldn't desire, a conflict breaks out. Because the Spirit doesn't want you to look like that type of person. It wants you to look like Jesus.

So in this sort of final message on sanctification, on what it means to become, not just to come to church, but to become like Jesus Christ, I want you to understand these definitive moments.

Number one, you have been set free from the penalty of sin. Number two, you have been set free from the power of sin. Number three, you will one day be set free from the presence of sin.

This means that you have a new identity in Christ Jesus. Therefore, you are to present your bodies as a living sacrifice to God because your bodies are not to dictate the terms of your new life in Christ.

[36 : 53] You are to be renewed in your mind so that you can actually discern what is good, acceptable, and perfect so that you can tell the difference between a soldier and a civilian so that you do not engage yourself in pursuits that are not pleasing to the one who enlisted you, God.

In other words, God is doing so much with your life that you are meant to understand and the reason you are meant to understand it is because not understanding looks very much like unbelief, practically speaking.

not understanding looks very much like unbelief, practically speaking. Though the motive is different, both people are not doing what they're meant to be doing.

And therefore, God is constantly at work within us to convict us, to bring us to confession through confliction, because God wants us to become like Christ.

In other words, we are a people who ought to be defined by homiligo. In other words, calling it what God calls it. If we are a Christian, then we should be a Christian as God designed Christianity to be.

[38 : 07] Amen.