Pure Doctrine for Holy Living

A Study of the Epistle of James

Wisdom from Above
Lesson 4
James 3

Trinity Bible Church Sunday School
January 27, 2019
The Message of James

- Becoming perfect and complete, lacking nothing – by faith (1:4)
- Receiving the crown of life (1:12)
- Being the first fruits among His creatures (1:18)
- Achieving the salvation of your souls (1:21) – see also 2:14; 5:15; 5:20
- Being blessed (1:25)
- Being religious (1:26)
- Pure and undefiled religion (1:27)
- Having saving faith (2:14, 22, 24)
- Being perfect or complete (3:2)
The Work of Salvation is by Faith

- Initiated by the new birth – an act of God’s grace (1:8)
- The means of salvation is by faith – tested/proven by trials (1:3-4)
- A necessary provision: wisdom (1:5)
- True saving faith works
- The Law of Moses v. the Law of Liberty (Royal Law or Law of the King)
- Faith is: assurance of things hoped for; conviction of things not seen
- Works are not added to faith but a part of saving faith (AND v. WITH)
- Faith without works is dead or useless (2:17, 20)
“But this James does no more than drive to the law and its works, and in a disorderly way throws one thing into another, so that I imagine it was some good pious man or other who took up a few statements from the disciples of the apostles and so threw them on paper, or perhaps out of his sermon the thing was composed by another.”

MARTIN LUTHER
James

- Part 1: Doctrine of the Christian Life – Saving Faith (1-3)
- Part 2: Practical Teaching on the Christian Life (4-5)
- James 3
  - The power of the tongue (3:1-12)
  - Wisdom from above (3:13-18)
A Message to Teachers (3:1-2)

- Why address teachers?
- The Great Commission:
  - Go into all the world . . . make disciples . . . baptize . . . teach
  - Teach them to observe all things that I command you (Matt 28:19-20)
- The failure of Judaism aided by false teachers (Matt 15:7-11)
- A warning to false teachers is a lesson to true teachers
- The problem of stumbling – in many ways
- Stumbling in words is turning from the truth (Matt 18:1-9)
- If anyone does not stumble in words, he is able to bridle the body
The Power of the Tongue (3:3-5)

- The horse is controlled by the bit
- The ship is controlled by the rudder
- The forest is destroyed by the spark
- The tongue is a very small organ with great impact on the body
- The emphasis now is on the great damage it causes
The Tongue is a Fire (3:6-8)

- A world of iniquity
- Defiles the entire body
- Sets on fire “the wheel of existence” – the course of life
- Set on fire by Gehenna
- No one can tame the tongue – “a restless evil and full of deadly poison”
Double-minded and Unstable (3:9-12)

- The tongue is a source of blessing and cursing
- This ought not to be!
  - A fountain with sweet and bitter water
  - A fig tree with figs and olives
  - A vine (fruitless) with figs
  - Fresh water from salt water
- An insolvable problem? No parallel in all of creation
- Our incomplete salvation - how can the teacher bridle his body (1:4)?
Wisdom from Above (3:13-18)

- The necessity of bridling the tongue (1:26; 3:2)
- Two natures in the believer revealed by the tongue
- An incomplete salvation (1 John 3:1-3) – written 50 years later
- The requirement of wisdom and understanding for good behavior
- The competition: earthly, natural, demonic – from the fires of Gehenna
- Bitter jealousy – selfishness and empty deceit (Phil 2:3-4)
- Selfish ambition – unspiritual desires
- Lie against the truth
- Disorder and every evil thing
Wisdom from Above (3:13-18)

- Pure – unmixed with human wisdom
- Peaceable – arises from peace with God
- Gentle – forbearance; tolerance in the face of provocation
- Reasonable – ready to obey (submit)
- Full of mercy and good fruits – benevolence toward the needy
- Unwavering – without uncertainty or variance
- Without hypocrisy – sincere and genuine
- Wisdom from above – the application of the knowledge of God to daily life
- Seed (Word of Truth) – sown in peace and produces righteousness
Teach them to observe all things . . .

- The just shall live by faith
- Challenges to our faith
  - Trials
  - Indwelling sin
- God’s provision
  - The new birth – the divine nature (Christ in you)
  - The implanted Word and the Holy Spirit
  - The written Word – the wisdom of God