

James

Dr. David Shaw

James 1:1-5

This lesson deals with perseverance and faith and trials.

1. The Writer

James, the half-brother of Jesus. He wrote in the period before Acts 15 to a church have difficulties. The reason I like the book so much is that it seems to expand the Sermon on the Mount...and he applies the principles in practicalities.

Perhaps the most astounding thing here is what James calls Jesus – LORD.

James did not believe in Jesus when he grew up with Him or in his earthly ministry. But here he declares Jesus is Lord. Think of all the wonderful opportunities James missed out on during his lifetime, but Jesus called James to Himself after that. I Corinthians 15:7 says: “THEN HE APPEARED TO JAMES, THEN TO ALL THE APOSTLES.”

According to Eusebius (325) James was taken to the pinnacle of the temple and thrown down. Still barely alive, he was clubbed to death.

2. What He Says

Testing will come for our good. Five components are given here to us:

1. Consider/Count - Do the math on what the problems can do for you. James says that we have to think about it, because our natural inclination is going to be to run from and hate trials and troubles. Instead, add up the possible benefits. This is an accounting term that implies careful deliberation and thought.
2. Humility - This comes when you are brought low. Paul was a man of greatness, but he had a “thorn in the flesh.” God’s strength can only be made perfect in our weakness.
3. Freedom – Freedom comes when God takes away something you thought you needed to have. When that “prop” is gone and you survive, you begin to trust God in new ways.
4. Compassion – Compassion can only happen when you are able to relate to people better because of all you have suffered.
5. Faith comes when you see that you love God for who He is instead of what He gives you. Too often we are serving God only if He serves our agendas and answers our prayers.

PAST EXAMPLES

Abraham was tested. Moses was tested. Joseph was tested. Job was tested. Jesus promised our testing (John 16:33). 1 Peter 1:6,7 tells us the test will come like a refiners fire. Why? Something very precious is at stake.

Hebrews 12:1,2 give us a snapshot as to how Jesus dealt with “the cross before Him.” Why did He HYPER-STAND? THE GOSPEL.

Amy Carmichael, missionary to India wrote:

Hast thou no scar?

No hidden scar on foot or side or hand?

I hear thee sing as mighty in the land

I hear them hail thy bright ascendant star

Hast thou no scar?

Hast thou no wound?

Yet, I was wounded by the archers, spent,

Leaned me against the tree to die; and rent

By ravening beasts that compassed me, I swooned;

Hast thou no wound?

No wound? No scar?

Yes, as the Master shall the servant be,

And pierced are the feet that follow me;

But thine are whole; can he have followed far

Who has no wound, nor scar?

In trials and difficulties we all experience a smaller faith than we would wish. However, it is the power of the gospel that must be alive and growing in us to yield permanent growth and strength.

At one point, Corrie Ten Boom voiced concern to her father over the danger they faced and the fear she felt. He reminded her of a time when he sent her on a train and asked the question: “Did I give you the ticket weeks before you boarded the train or the day of your trip”? She replied, “The day of my trip.” He told her, “When God is going to send you on an unknown trip, He will not give you what you need weeks in advance, but he will give them to you exactly when the time is right.

