

James

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[0 : 00] Good morning, everybody. Uh-oh. That's my little guy. He's not happy this morning. We'll give him a dispensation of grace.

That's how God made babies to cry. You know, I'm sure there's a very specific thing that he wants, and he just wishes he could tell us, but he just can't yet. He's getting close, though.

Well, we've been going through the book of James, and we kind of skipped last week. We told some stories, but we're going to jump right back in. I think this is our third week now, so our first week we just kind of did an overview of looking at the book of James or the book of Jacob, and we talked about that. The name James is Jacob. The funny thing is that, and I think we talked about this, but there are references to the patriarch Jacob, and it's not translated James there, so for whatever reason, someone decided that they were going to translate the three other men in James.

James, the son of Alphaeus, which is one of the disciples, James, the son of Zebedee, and then James, the brother of Jesus, as James instead of Jacob. Then we got into talking about trials and counting it all joy.

So we're going to start there. I think we already went over verse 4, but I wanted to bring out a few other things. We'll go ahead and read a few verses here, and then we'll go back.

[1 : 46] I'll tell you what, I'll just start from verse 2. My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.

For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord. He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. And so we'll spend our time here this morning.

We talked about counting it all joy a couple weeks ago. But let's kind of start here in verse 4. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

That word patience is not really patience, I think, like we use it today, but more along the lines of endurance. Trials, difficulties work in us the ability to endure.

[3 : 11] And this is something that is important. I think it's, and I'm going to be, I think I'm going to be going slow here through the, especially the first chapter of James, and then maybe we'll pick up the pace. But trying to bring in the context of James.

James is a book that I think a lot of people miss the greater context. We talked a little bit about this, but the big picture is, James is writing to Jewish Christians who are under both the covenant of law, but also this dispensation, or at least this beginning, it kind of got halted, of the kingdom.

There was a kingdom being offered to Israel, and there were principles of the kingdom. And if you read through the gospels, you'll read lots of parables, and many people are familiar with the parables of Jesus.

And he would usually start a parable with this. The kingdom of God is like such and such, and he'd tell a little story. And it was a principle about what the kingdom was like.

And what was the primary message of Jesus during his earthly ministry? It was repent for the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven, which is the same thing, is at hand.

[4 : 38] The kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is just a reference to where God lives. So it's the kingdom, God's kingdom. And it's a kingdom that is an earthly kingdom.

And this was what was promised by the prophets for millennia, for thousands of years, that there would be a Messiah who would come and establish a restored kingdom, the restored kingdom of David, on the earth.

But part of that message, and we're going to be referring a lot back to the gospels, because if you read through the book of James, and if you don't have this in mind, then you maybe won't catch it, but there's a lot of parallels between what Jesus taught and what James is teaching in the book of James, in his book, we'll say.

We read at the very end of our lesson two weeks ago the parable of the sower. And I think it'll be helpful just to read through it quickly again.

Luke chapter 21. And again, this is a kingdom parable. What did I say?

[5 : 53] Sorry, not Luke 21. Luke 8. Luke 8, thank you. And where shall we start? Luke 8.

So he tells the parable. We'll go to where he explains it, because his disciples say, what does this mean? So we'll start in verse 9.

Then his disciples asked him, saying, what does this parable mean? And he said, to you it has been given to know the mysteries of what? Of the kingdom of God. But to the rest it is given in parables.

That seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. We won't get into that, but parables, some people think, oh, you know, you tell stories to make things easier to understand.

Jesus actually told parables in order to hide certain things from people. And, you know, it's important to understand that. So he was intending to teach principles of the kingdom, but to only the people who were, who are really interested, who are really the ones focused on receiving the kingdom.

[7 : 02] Now the parable is this. The seed is the word of God, God's word. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear. Then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

So some people hear the word, but the devil comes and takes it away. So they never actually receive it. They hear it, but they don't receive it. That's the first part.

But the one on the rocks are those who, when they hear it, they receive the word with joy. And these have no root, who believe for a while, and in time of temptation, or what's that word temptation?

That's what James used, right? When you fall into various temptations, but it means trials, persecution. So it doesn't take any root.

And when persecution comes, they fall away. And then the third part, now the ones that fell among the thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.

[8 : 13] So it's not that trials cause them to fall away, but it's just the pleasures of life, the cares of life, that cause them to fall away.

And then the last one is, the one that fell among the good ground are those who, having heard the word of God, with a noble and a good heart, they keep it and bear fruit with patience.

So they don't just hear it. They don't just receive it, but that word, they do it. That's an important part of the kingdom of God. It's important for us to understand that that is different than what God calls us to today.

Their entrance into the kingdom required them to hear the word, to receive it into their hearts, and to do it. And it actually is a different word than the word that we are to receive.

And we'll get into that in just a little bit. So with all, again, with all that in mind, remember, James is the brother of Jesus. And so there's a lot of parallels.

[9 : 25] But, again, James 1, verse 4, but let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. So these trials will produce patience.

Going back to this parable, what happens when trials come? Either you fall away, or what? Your roots get stronger. That's what happens with trials.

The roots get stronger. Or you fall away, one or the other. We don't want to be one of those that falls away. Or at least, for James' audience, they don't want to be the kind that falls away.

We talked about that word, perfect. It just means complete, whole. And so it's not talking about perfection. And I don't even think that that's necessarily what Jesus was taught.

Jesus taught, you should be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect. Right? And sometimes we get the, well, that's impossible. But it's really just saying, whole, complete.

[10 : 38] You need to do what you ought to do. I have that reference, Matthew 5, 48.

Therefore you shall be perfect just as your Father in Heaven is perfect. That word perfection comes up again with the rich young ruler. And he said, what must I do to enter the kingdom of Heaven?

He said. And Jesus said, well, what does the law say? He said, love your, love God, love your neighbor, keep the commandments. He says, I've done all these things.

He said, one thing you lack. If you want to be perfect, if you want to be complete, go sell what you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in Heaven and come follow me.

And this was a difficulty. Afterwards, the, and this is Matthew 19, 21 if you want to write that down. But, this was a difficult saying. And the disciples, what did they say after that?

[11 : 42] who can, who can receive this? Who can, who can do this? How can a rich man actually enter into the kingdom?

And, uh, so he said, with God, all things are possible, I think is what, what he ended up saying. So, and I think I, I mentioned this last week, but, we'll, we'll repeat it.

Under the gospel of the grace of God. This was an offer to the kingdom and we have to rightly divide the scriptures and understand what is the age in which we are living?

what are the rules of the dispensation of the grace of God versus this dispensation of the kingdom offer. It was a dispensation of law, but also a dispensation.

There was something new. There was something new during this period. It started with John the Baptist, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The kingdom of God is at hand. It was still under the old covenant, but there was something new and it was this offer of the kingdom to Israel.

[12 : 54] But under grace, let's look at Galatians 1, or not Galatians, Colossians. If I can read this correctly. Look at Colossians 1 and Colossians 2.

Colossians 1.28 says this, Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

And then chapter 2, verse 10, and you are complete in him who is the head of all principality and power. This is Paul speaking to the body of Christ.

That's us. We are the body of Christ. We're not kingdom believers like the Jews were. We are the body of Christ. And as members of the body of Christ, we are not, we don't go through trials in order to be made complete like James is teaching here.

We are complete already in him. Christ did it all and that is offered to us that we can live in Christ.

[14 : 12] And if you are in Christ, we are identified with him. Is Christ complete? He is. And that means we're complete because we are in him. So, we may go through trials and we will as Christians, but it's not those trials do not, as James say here, make us complete because we already are.

But for the kingdom believer, these trials actually accomplished something in making them complete. all right, let's go on to verse 5.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who gives all liberally and without reproach and it will be given to him. Does anybody lack wisdom?

Yeah, right? If we don't lack wisdom, then we lack humility probably, right? It's one or the other. Or usually both. But, we all need wisdom.

Who does not need wisdom? Everybody, we all want more wisdom and that's a sign of wisdom is knowing that you need more wisdom, isn't it? It's the fool, actually, that thinks he knows everything.

[15 : 32] It reminds me, and I'll see if I can get this quote right. Who's the guy that wrote the... Mark Twain. Mark Twain. I can't, I didn't write this down.

It just came out of my mind. But he said something about his father and when he was a child, he didn't think his father knew anything and then when he got older, you know, he realized how much his father had grown, you know, in wisdom.

wisdom. So, I should write down the quote. But, you know, it's an interesting thing, right? As a child, you think you know it all, right?

You think you know so much and the older you get, the more you realize all the things that you don't know. And that means you've actually grown in wisdom, doesn't it? It means you've grown in wisdom to realize how much you don't know.

So, here's a question with this. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God who gives liberally and without reproach and it will be given to him. What is he talking about?

[16 : 37] Is he talking about just, I need wisdom for life? Well, first, you know, we always need to ask, well, what's the context, right? Is this, is James or Jacob here just talking about just needing general life wisdom?

I think there's a very specific context. He's talking about trials, persecution, enduring through these trials. And so, I think it's, I think we can clearly say that he's talking about wisdom for going through difficulty, going through trial.

And that does require wisdom, doesn't it? When you're going through a difficulty, there's different ways you can respond. And there are foolish ways you can respond and there are wise ways.

There's good decisions that you can make when you go through difficulty and there's bad decisions that you can make when you're going through difficulty. But even a little bit further, asking a little bit further, is, is James here talking about asking for just general wisdom?

Just general wisdom in life? Think about Solomon, right? Solomon was a wise man. He asked God for wisdom and he received it. But this was a general wisdom in which he had wisdom in all kinds of areas of life.

[17 : 56] Or, is James talking about getting answers to specific questions? And I'm going to try to make a case that that's what James is talking about.

That he's actually saying, hey listen, you're going to be going through difficulty and trials. And there are times where you're not going to know what to do. But if you ask God to help you make a good decision in specific circumstances of persecution and trials, God will tell you what to do.

And I'm going to make that case from going back and looking at the Gospels. Let's look back at Luke. Luke chapter 12.

Jesus taught quite a bit about persecution. In fact, he told his disciples, well, even in what we read of the rich young ruler who had kept the law, at least he said he did, but Jesus said, I want you to go sell everything.

If you want to be perfect, go sell everything. And then I want you to take up your cross and follow me. And what does that mean, take up your cross? Some people think, oh, he's talking about like, you know, bearing your sins or something like that because Jesus bore our sins on a cross.

[19 : 36] But nobody had any reference to that meaning of cross, right? That's us looking back. We know that Jesus bore our sins on a cross. Back then, and this is what people would think of, what was the cross back then?

Before, you know, before Jesus died on a cross, it was a punishment. It was a capital punishment. It was cruel, cruel torture, a way of putting people to death.

Criminals, usually. And so, when Jesus said, I want you to take up your cross and come follow me, what he was saying was, be ready to die. Because you follow me, people will hate you just like they hate me.

And they may put you to death. Are you willing to do that? So when he told people to take up their cross, he said, be prepared to die or suffer. So suffering was a big part of this kingdom program, if you will.

Luke 12, he talks about some persecution that may come. 12, verse 11 here. Now, when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer or what you should say.

[20 : 58] For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say. So he's saying, these people, they're going to be angry with you, they're going to hate you, they're going to bring you before these magistrates, these judges, they're going to bring you before these courts.

But I don't want you to worry about what, you know, try to come up with a script beforehand of what you're going to say. Don't worry. The Holy Spirit in that time, at that moment, will give you the words to speak, to say.

We'll look at an example of when that actually happened in just a second. But first, let's go to Luke 21. Luke 21, verse 12.

He's talking about the sign of the end of the age. But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and the prisons.

You will be brought before kings and rulers for my namesake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Therefore, settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer.

[22 : 17] For I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.

So, saying the same thing. Don't worry about what you're going to say. Don't try to come up with a speech. I'll give you the words to speak when you stand before. When you're under these trials and persecutions and somebody says, you're blaspheming God, saying that this Jesus is, you know, God's son or something like that.

Don't think, what am I going to say if this happens? I'll give you the words in that moment. I'll give you the wisdom at that moment. And is there an example where this actually happened?

Turn to the book of Acts, chapter 6. So, there's a lot going on in the beginning here of Acts.

And these new Jewish Christians were causing quite a ruckus and the persecution was starting and getting intense. There was a man chosen to serve.

[23 : 35] We call it deacon. these days, somebody who serves. But he wasn't just a deacon. He also preached the gospel, the gospel of the kingdom, the gospel of Christ the Messiah.

It says this, let's start with verse 8. And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Then there arose some from what is called the synagogue of the freedmen, disputing with Stephen.

And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke. There was a wisdom which he spoke and it came from the Holy Spirit.

I don't think that Stephen was necessarily this great orator before, but God gave him the words. And if you read in the next chapter where Stephen is eventually killed, we call it martyred, he gave this great, incredible speech, right?

And it caused his enemies, these people, to gnash at him and become enraged. And I don't think Stephen gave this great, amazing speech because he had taken, you know, he had gone, what's the, Toastmasters, you know, he had done Toastmasters or any of these kinds of things.

[25 : 01] God gave him the words to speak just like Jesus had promised that he would provide through the Spirit. So, this is the way that God was operating during this time of the kingdom, the kingdom offer.

That's kind of how I like to think about it. There was this kingdom offer and during that time and I think the book of James, it's towards the end of this, the book of James is towards the end because what happens? The offer of the kingdom is given to Israel and do they receive it?

They reject it. The people as a whole, the leaders, they reject the kingdom offer and this new dispensation of grace comes in. The book of James is written towards the end of this period of the kingdom offer but they're still under that age, that program, that dispensation, if you will.

And so, that's what James is teaching. I think when he's talking about wisdom, he's not talking about just generally asking for wisdom in your life. He's saying, listen, there's persecution, you're under trials, you may need to have wisdom to know what to do or what to say.

And if you ask for wisdom, God will give it to you. He's willing at the moment to give you the wisdom that you need. I do want to, as we go through, we're going to be talking a lot and as we go through the book of James, I think there's a lot of things that don't apply directly to us.

[26 : 36] But there is opportunities as we read these things about how things worked in the kingdom to think about, well, how do things work under the dispensation of grace in which we live?

So, since Jesus said that in that age under the kingdom offer, and I think the reason, I've asked myself, well, why would things work a little bit differently?

Why would, because if you go back into the Old Testament, did God just promise to people that they would just have wisdom in the moment or did they need to, like we do, study?

And if you read the book of Proverbs, does Solomon or whoever's writing the Proverbs kind of indicate that, well, wisdom will just come whenever you need it.

Is that kind of what's communicated? No. You need to listen to your father, listen to my words, pursue wisdom. Wisdom is something you need to go after. And so, it's the same with us today.

[27 : 39] We need to pursue wisdom. We need to study to know what to say, to give an answer, right, to those who would ask us about the hope that we have. We don't just wait, but there are some people that think that that's what you do because they mix.

They say, oh, I don't have to worry about studying the scriptures, opening up the Bible, you know, studying apologetics or these kinds of different things. When somebody asks me about the hope that's within me, God will just give me the words to say.

And that may happen, but I don't think that's something that's promised for us. We need to study. We need to make sure that we are prepared in season and out of season to give an answer for the hope that we have.

But the kingdom period was super short. It started with John the Baptist and he said, the kingdom is coming in a thousand years.

Is that what he said? He said, the kingdom of God is at hand. It's right here. And we need to do these things. And Jesus said, you need to drop everything that you're doing and you need to come follow me and help get the word out.

[28 : 47] Don't worry about your job. Even leave your family. This is happening right now and we need to get this message out and you need to come follow me. You need to be able to be willing to give up your life.

Don't worry about money. You know, the job, the wealth, the riches, all that. Give it all up. Come follow me. We need to get the word about the kingdom out. So, under our dispensation, under the dispensation of the grace of God, is there anything that we can say about wisdom?

Let's go to Ephesians. Ephesians is a letter written by Paul. Paul is the apostle to who? The Gentiles. The Gentiles. As he says in Galatians, is it Galatians?

Yeah, sorry, I said Ephesians, but he says he's the gospel, he brings the gospel for the uncircumcision. That's us. Ephesians 1.17.

Ephesians. He's praying for the Ephesians. He says, we'll start with verse 15.

[30 : 00] Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers. Verse 17, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation and the knowledge of him.

He's praying for wisdom for these believers. So wisdom isn't this unique thing for Israel. We can pray for wisdom. We ought to pray for wisdom.

Colossians 1.9. Colossians 1.9. For this reason, we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

So for us in the body of Christ, we need wisdom too. But it's something we'll grow in, something we can study the scriptures and grow in wisdom through our understanding of the word of God.

Let's move on. Verse 6 in James, James 1.6. But let him ask in faith. So he's saying, you need to ask for wisdom during these trials, persecution, difficulty. But let him ask in faith with no doubting.

[31 : 17] For he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord. He's a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

So he's saying, ask for wisdom, but ask in a specific manner. Ask in faith. No doubting. So, the prayers of faith, and this is again where we see a mixture sometimes in the church today, where there is a teaching that if you ask anything in faith, you'll get whatever you ask for, no matter what it is.

And a lot of times it has to do with healing or sometimes money, especially if you're having money problems. And if you just ask for the need that you have, and if you just believe that you'll receive it, then you'll get that thing that you're asking for.

And where do people get that? Is that something from the Book of Mormon where people get that idea? They get it from the Bible. And some people think, well, that's not, you know, that's not what we should be teaching.

You know, those are, you know, churches that are, you know, prosperity churches and that kind of thing. But they get this from the Bible. And so when James tells these believers, these Jewish believers, to ask in faith, this is, again, another kingdom principle.

[32 : 56] And let's look at it. Go back to Matthew. Matthew 21. Matthew 21. Matthew 21.

Matthew 21. Matthew 21. It was a withered fig tree.

We'll start with verse 20. And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, how did the fig tree wither away so soon? Jesus had spoken to the fig tree and it withered. He basically cursed it.

So Jesus answered and said to them, assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt and will not only do what was done to the, sorry, assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, be removed and be cast into the sea, it will be done.

And whatever thing you ask in prayer believing, you will receive. Wow. That's incredible. If I ask for that cool Mercedes Benz, right, and I just believe with all my heart, I'll get it.

[34 : 26] That's what Jesus is teaching. Again, this is a principle of the kingdom. This truncated, short period of time in which such an important transition was happening.

This is a transition from the old covenant to the new covenant. This transition from being in captivity, being under the Roman rule, to the entrance of the kingdom of God that had been promised for thousands of years in a short period of time and things were operating differently.

And they had to operate differently because this was such a critical time. So Jesus said, if there's a need that you have, if there's something, I'm going to give you a special, we call it a dispensation today, right, special period where if you ask for anything, just with faith, believe that you received it and you'll have it.

And that's what they needed for that time period. Again, let's look at Mark. Mark 11. Mark 11.

Verse 22. I guess this is the same as the fig tree, but said a little bit differently. So Jesus answered and said to them, have faith in God for assuredly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, be removed and be cast into the sea and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done.

[36 : 09] He will have whatever he says. Going back to James, let him ask in faith with no doubting. If you ask and you believe and you don't doubt, you'll receive that thing that you asked for.

You see the parallel? All right, verse, let's see, John. We'll go to John. John chapter 14. In verse, let's look at 13 first.

All right, start with verse 12. Most assuredly I say to you, he who believes in me, the works that I do, he will also do. And greater works than these he will do because I go to my Father.

Jesus did a lot of pretty amazing works. He said, you will do greater works, not just the same, greater works than I have done. And did that happen? We see so many miracles in the book of Acts, don't we?

Just incredible things. But if we think in this dispensation which we live, we should expect to walk around doing miracles, we're going to run into trouble.

[37 : 36] Verse 13, and whatever you ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in my name, I will do it. There's this period of the kingdom, we're offering the kingdom, we need, I need people to believe you.

There's no time, there's no time for being like the Bereans and studying the scriptures and is these things true and all that kind of thing. We need some miracles here for people to know for sure that you are sent from God.

And so whatever you ask, I'm going to do it so that people know that you're sent, that you're sent from God. Go down to verse 26. But the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

So again, this I think is that spirit of wisdom. You know, when you have that need, the Holy Spirit will give you, he'll remind you of those things because we just don't have time. If you need something brought back to your memory, things that I taught you, the Holy Spirit, he'll just tell you right then, right in that very hour, he'll tell you.

So when it comes to, let's talk about the object of faith. So in this case, he wants, James wants the believers to believe that if they ask for that wisdom, if they need that question answered, they need to believe that God will answer it to no doubting, don't waver.

[39 : 14] Jesus was really big on faith and just for the sake of time, we won't go to these verses but I'll just read them. You notice that Jesus got kind of annoyed when people lacked faith and sometimes it seems like it was kind of unreasonable some of the things that they were supposed to believe but Jesus didn't think they were unreasonable.

He said, you need to be believing. Here's one, Matthew 6.30. Now, if God so clothes the grass of the field which today is and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

Don't worry. We need to go preach the kingdom and again, we can't mix this in with the age in which we live. Should we have concern about what we're going to be clothed in and where we're going to be housed?

Yes, we ought to. In fact, if we don't, we are worse than infidels, the Bible says. If you do not provide for your own house, you are worse than an infidel, Paul says. We need to build careers, build homes.

We need to have, we need to build lives for the long term but during this kingdom period, all that's out the door. We have a mission that is critical, that is super short and we can't be worrying about long term stuff.

- [40 : 41] We have a short term plan here and we need to focus on that with laser eyes. So don't worry about what you're going to eat, don't worry about what you're going to be clothed with, God's going to provide and I need you to believe that.
- That's what, the kind of faith that he was talking about. Matthew 8, 26, this was when they were in the boat but he said to them, why are you fearful, O you of little faith?
- Then he arose and rebuked the wind and the sea and there was great calm. Matthew 14, 31, and immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him. This was Peter walking on the water.
- He said, O you of little faith. I'm thinking, Peter, that was a tremendous faith for him to just step out on the water, right? But then he faltered. You can't falter. Continue to believe.
- Why did you doubt? Matthew 16, 18, but Jesus being aware of it, this was, I can't remember the context, but Jesus being aware of it said to them, O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread?
- [41 : 51] So Jesus was constantly saying, I need you to believe your faith. Your faith needs to be there and all these promises that I have made. Under grace, do we need to have faith?
- Yeah, we do. Faith is super important. Faith is important through every dispensation. What changes, though, is the object of the faith. What are we supposed to believe?
- If you're under the dispensation of law under Moses, what are you supposed to believe? In the law. You're supposed to believe the law and what God said, if you do this, then I will do this.
- That's what you're supposed to believe. Under grace, we have faith, but it's different. It's not believing that we're going to be able to walk on water. It's not believing that God's going to clothe us even if we don't provide for ourselves.
- Our trust is in the finished work of Jesus Christ. And we need to put all of our faith in that. And that faith needs to be unwavering as well, just like James is talking about with his believers.
- [42 : 59] We don't need to be wondering well, is my identity really in Christ? Am I complete in him? Maybe I still need to do something. No. Unwavering faith.
- Don't be double-minded. Be unwavering. Let's talk about that double-minded. He is a double-minded man. That's the last part of this section. He is a double-minded man, unstable, in all of his ways.
- Double-minded means to have your attention divided or your heart divided. You know, there's, why put these words? To divide your attention, your interest, or your affection.
- There's a verse in Chronicles, I'll read this, Chronicles 12, 33. Of Zebulun, such as went forth to battle, experts in war, with all instruments of war, 50,000, which could keep rank.
- These were people who were, they kept rank. They were not of double heart. They were focused on their mission. They kept rank. They weren't being distracted, right?
- [43 : 58] Keeping rank means you're focused on your mission. You do what you're told. You don't get distracted by other things. Psalm 12, 2. They speak idly, everyone with his neighbor, with flattering lips and a double heart they speak.
- 1 Kings 18, 21 says this, And Elijah came to all the people and he said, How long will you falter between two opinions if the Lord is God, follow him, but if Baal, follow him.
- But the people answered him, not a word. So these are kind of different ways. But I think double-minded, in this case, we need to have a laser focus.
- And this was the message of the kingdom. All right. We have a few minutes, so I'm going to get a few. I'm just going to read these. Luke 9, 59 through 62.

Jesus told his followers, forget earthly things. We're focused on the kingdom. Luke 9, 59. And he said unto another, Follow me.

[44 : 59] But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead, but go and preach the kingdom of God.

And another also said, Lord, I would follow thee, but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house. And Jesus said to him, No man, sorry, no man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.

That is hard. But this was the intensity. This was the urgency of the kingdom. You don't have time to go to the funeral.

We've got to go preach. You don't have time to go say goodbye to your family. We've got to go preach the kingdom right now. Don't look back. Put your hand to the plow.

We've got to keep at it. We can't take any rests. Mark 10, 29. So Jesus answered and said, Assuredly I say to you, there is no one who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands for my sake and the gospels, that's the gospel of the kingdom, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands with persecution and the age to come, eternal life.

[46 : 15] This was a difficult thing for people to do. Jesus was saying, I'm going to reward you. I know this is really, really hard, but this is so important. We need to do this, but there will be a reward for those who are willing to do it.

And again, back to the rich man. He said, If you want to be perfect, go and sell what you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven and come follow me. Under grace, it's different.

We need to have long-term plans. There isn't this short time horizon in which there's this urgency to get something done in just a few years. We need to make long-term plans living in this age of grace in which we live.

We need to build up mission agencies in countries around the world where we develop long-term plans. We have a 50-year plan for reaching the country of Cambodia, let's say.

We need to have multi-generational vision for our family. We need to not think about not just feeding our family and caring for them now, but what is my children's lives going to be like in the future?

[47 : 24] What are their children's life going to be like? I need to build a home in which my children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren will have a legacy in which to live on.

I need to, as like the, what is it, Proverbs or in the Old Testament, it says that a good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children.

And so, we need to be thinking multi-generationally, planning for the future. we cannot mix this message of the kingdom, which was so intense, and what happens if we live that way?

Our families will break. Our communities will break. But if you're living in an intense period where the kingdom of heaven is right at hand, that is what we have to do.

And so, as we read through the book of James, this is the context, at least part of the context, of what he's speaking to these believers about.

[48 : 24] And we need to keep that in mind. We'll finish there. Any thoughts or questions? Yeah, Dave? I think one of the unfortunate things is the way that the Bible got divided up, and people are still stuck.

Oh, it's the New Testament. The New Testament, you know, they're stuck in the Gospels, and they never get past that. Yeah, and that's right there, right? It says the New Testament, right there, right before Matthew, right?

And we have two big sections, and so it's easy to just think you have the Old Testament and the New Testament. And the Old Testament, we know, is different from the New Testament, and people make that division, and I think that is important. But then the further kind of divisions that we need to make a lot of times get lost.

Anything else? Ron? As Christians today, with our faith, we also ask for wisdom. We do. So, why do we to accept that?

Yeah, so I read the prayers of Paul there in Ephesians chapter 1, and he says, I pray that the eyes of your understanding would be enlightened, that you would know all the, and he kind of lists all the things that we have received in Christ.

[49 : 35] And so we pray for others, and I think we pray for ourselves that we would grow in wisdom. But it's not a decision that we need to make, which I think is what's going on here.

I could be wrong. You know, this could be a general prayer for wisdom. But just kind of in looking at some of the things that we looked at with what Christ taught, I think he's talking about specific situations where wisdom is needed in the hour.

But we pray and ask God to work in us wisdom. And he enlightens our minds through what? Through the scripture. Yeah, as we read the scripture.

And I think we should do that when we open up the Bible. God, open up my eyes so that I can understand what you have for me today, what you have for the body of Christ today.

Help me to understand these things. And he will. Anything else? All right. Thanks, everybody. Thanks, everybody.