

The Minor Profits - James Intro

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[0 : 0 0] Well, good morning. Good morning. Somebody handed me a neat picture. It's a picture of John Kerry, a former senator and a former candidate for president years back.

And it says, John Kerry as climate czar. Only Democrats could pick a guy with six houses, 12 cars, two yachts, and a private jet to tell you that you should take the bus to stop pollution.

Can you see, if you look closely, you can see hypocrisy oozing out of his pores. Amazing. Absolutely amazing. And you know something?

These people tend to be beyond the ability to be embarrassed about anything. And I think it was Mark Twain that said that man is the only biological life form that has the ability to blush or the need to.

So. So true. Okay. Thank you all for braving the elements of being here this morning. We appreciate your presence very much. And join with me, if you would, in a word of prayer.

[1 : 2 0] And then we're going to see what Tad has for us for an opening session of a new study. Let's pray. We give thanks, Father, for this occasion to be together. And we are mindful that the snow we see is a reminder of your faithfulness.

For as the rain comes down and the snow from heaven returns not thither, but waters the earth and makes it to bring forth in bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater. So shall your word be that goes forth out of your mouth.

It shall not return unto you void, but it shall accomplish that thing which unto you please it. And we are grateful for that truth. So we ask that as we enter this phase of a new study that you will undertake for us, that you'll give Tad the wisdom and the ability to express what you've laid on his heart and mind.

And us, the ability to absorb it, take it in, and apply it to our lives. We thank you for the occasion to be together. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Okay. Barbie realizes as a rookie you didn't get the same wage as you do, right? Well, welcome. It's good to see you.

[2 : 3 2] Thanks for coming again. And we're going to, what book are we going to study? James. The Bible. Yeah. Okay. Trick question.

Yeah. Okay. And we're going to study a book that starts with a J and it has five letters. J. And you might say James or you might say Jacob.

Jacob. Jacob. Actually, the name James is Jacob in the Hebrew and was translated into Latin and we get it in English and it's James.

So, if you've got your Bibles, you have to open the book of James and we'll get there eventually. But, I just want to say that we're very thankful for the Grace Bible Church that provides the facility here for us to meet.

It's warm. We don't have to be out in the elements. And the good continental breakfast that Pastor Marv has made available to us, that's a wonderful thing.

- [3 : 42] And we give thanks. With this kind of weather today though, I had to shovel a little snow this morning. How many of you shoveled snow? Yeah. Thank you for putting out some salt out there already.
- Somebody was doing that. Who did that? Roger Dodger. Roger Dodger. Okay. Thank you for doing that.
- I've made a decision that when the weather gets snowy and slippery, Marv's going to teach. And when the weather is nice, then I'll teach. Okay.
- We may bounce this back and forth a little bit, but we're going to be in the book of James. Actually, I was reading something from Greg Laurie the other day. He was talking about hope.
- And from the book of Job. Actually, let's put it this way. Christmas is coming. Thanksgiving is past. Black Friday is past.
- [4 : 41] Thankfully. Yeah. Cyber Monday is past. Although they're still trying to hype all that up and get our money and that sort of thing.
- Christmas is coming. Kids love Christmas, right? And what do they love about Christmas? Yeah. Yeah. All right. And somehow we're trying to impress the idea of Jesus into all of that.
- And he's the real reason for the season, as the saying goes. And it's certainly true. So we find a lot of excitement at Christmas time. And yet sometimes, perhaps, we get to the point where we are maybe just drained of hope.
- And hopelessness maybe can get a grip on our minds. And God wants to fill us with hope. We come to this time of year, maybe it's kind of a marker.
- Okay. What was it like last year, this time of year? A whole lot different than this year, probably, right? Yeah. Oh, my goodness.
- [5 : 48] We've gone through one whopper of a year, and it's not over yet. But lots of reason to continue to pray and lots of reason to have hope. But maybe some unexpected things happened.
- Okay. Lots of unexpected things happened in the past year. Maybe just recently something happened. Maybe the loss of a loved one. Maybe a disappointment at Thanksgiving time with maybe some tensions in the family.
- Those kind of things can happen. Marie lost a brother. I was asked last week, a neighbor who goes to a church that I've never been to, called and asked if I would come and see him.
- Lamar Rader. Anybody know Lamar? Lives over on Dietrich Jordan? Yeah. Well, he's with Jesus. And his daughter called me up and asked if I would do the memorial service, which, Lord willing, will be tomorrow.
- Changes happen. Hard things happen. Things kind of unravel. And yet, in meeting with the family already, and I'm going to meet with them again today.
- [7 : 13] There's hope because of Jesus. And this is a little acronym that maybe will help us with the idea of hope.
- Hope is holding on. That's not quite straight, but you can straighten it out in your mind. Hope. Holding on patient expectation. That's what God wants us to have.
- And if ever there was a guy who thought he had a bad day, who would that be? Job. Job. All right. Yeah. Okay. He lost his kids.
- He lost his livestock. He lost so much in one day. Talk about a bad day. But, you know, there's somebody who had, I think, a worse day than that.

And all that he experienced, and that was Jesus when he went to the cross. But it was a day of victory, really, for him and for us. Amen.

[8 : 16] Because of what he accomplished there upon the cross. But Job, he lost some horrific things. And it says of Job in Job 1:20, Job arose, tore his robe, shaved his head, and fell to the ground and worshipped.

I heard it. Yes. He did. Job still had hope. In the book of Job, it says this as well.

For there is hope for a tree if it is cut down. We had to cut down a tree in our front yard because it got all twisted up, mangled up by a storm. Okay. For there is hope for a tree if it is cut down.

And it will sprout again. And its tender shoots will not cease. I got a little shoot that's continuing to grow.

Well, I had lots of them and decided to keep that one. Okay. Job might have thought in his flesh, this is the end.

[9 : 27] This is bad. And it was. But as the scripture says, beauty can come out of ashes. Can we claim that?

I hope so. Okay. The book of James. You got your Bibles open there. It's a letter that is rich with exhortation and encouragement.

It's a book primarily written to Jewish believers in Jesus. Come to faith in him. And yet it still has a message for us today.

It is timeless and very timely for a time like this. For such a time as this, these things are written.

And James teaches us as believers how we can go through trials victoriously and not as victims. He denounces a number of things within the church in the book.

[10 : 30] I'd encourage you to read it over and over again. Sometimes, I think the other week, somebody said James is wisdom literature.

Here's some more wisdom literature. And I'd encourage you, this is December the 1st. Read the proverb for the day. There are 31 of them. And you'll find some wisdom.

And he says there in today's, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. We need wisdom. We need understanding. It comes from him. Okay. Dig in to the word of God.

Read the proverb for a day. Get involved in some other scripture. Share it with your wife, your family, your kids. And focus upon the hope that God can give. So he denounces in this book favoritism.

He denounces the untamed tongue. Watch your tongue. That's kind of hard to do literally. That's kind of hard to do literally. Literally, but you know what we mean.

[11 : 33] And he talks about an unhealthy view of money. And all in all, he brings so many things to pass in the teachings that are for our sanctification.

That we would be set apart from the old way of thinking. To a new way of thinking. Set apart as believers. H.A.

H.A. Ironside divides the book of James into five segments. Five chapters. Chapter 1. Victorious faith.

Chapter 2. Manifested faith. Chapter 3. Controlling and energizing faith. Chapter 4. Submissive faith. Chapter 5.

Patient and expected faith. And so God is wanting us to grow up in the faith. Now I'm looking around the room.

[12 : 32] And all of us are getting older. And it's one thing to grow older.

It's another thing to grow up. Growing old and growing up are two different things. There's a difference between age and maturity.

And James has a lot to say about maturity. And most of the problems that we face today are because I'm not growing like I should be.

You're not growing like you should be. We're not as mature as we ought to be. And God is saying to us, he wants us to grow up.

Most of the problems that we face in our homes, in our church, just leave it there, in our community, deal with a lack of maturity.

[13 : 33] And God is wanting us to grow up and as men be victors and not victims. So the letter of James, look at verse 4.

We're going to go through this kind of a little introduction this morning and only look at five verses. But verse 4 gives us a purpose statement. He says there, But let patience have its perfect work that you may be what?

Perfect, mature, complete, lacking nothing. Wow. A young boy had a baby boy, an infant, brought into the family, born into the family.

And the older brother is hearing this infant just crying and fussing and carrying on. And he says, Mom?

Where did that boy come from? And Mom says, From heaven. And the older brother says, Well, I can see why they kicked him out of heaven.

[14 : 55] Well, during Jesus' brief lifetime here, He lived in Palestine. He lived in Israel.

He lived in a Jewish family. And it was very similar to other Jewish families. They had a lot of interaction with each other.

They grew up. And Joseph was a carpenter. Now, what was a carpenter in that day? What did he do? Woodworking. Woodworking, probably.

And what else? I've not been to Israel, but there are lots of rocks. And so, working with construction in that way as well.

So, Jesus was the son of Mary. But the father in heaven is the one who had his son born.

[16 : 05] Whoa. Luke 1, verse number 35 says that the father overshadowed this. And he was born of the Holy Spirit. This is a miracle kid.

A miracle baby. And Jesus had some brothers and some sisters. Matthew chapter 13 and verse 55 says the brothers of Jesus were James, Joses, Simon, and Judas.

Hmm. Not Judas Iscariot. Okay. And in verse 56 of Matthew 13, it says that Jesus had sisters.

How many? I don't know. So, he grew up in a family. We all had, I had a brother and a sister. Three of us.

You probably had some siblings too. Okay. And you know what goes on in that kind of family dynamic. One of those brothers of Jesus was named Jacob.

[17 : 22] The Hebrew name Jacob is translated from the Hebrew to the Latin to the English as James.

Oh. And that's the guy who wrote this book. There's another half-brother of Jesus and his name is Jude.

And that half-brother as well wrote a one-chapter book that we call Jude in the Bible. So, Jesus is born.

He's the first one who's born. The son of Mary. Not Joseph. And she grew up with all of those innuendos in her mind and that would happen in the community and stuff.

But Jesus was born as the light of the world. Spiritual light. But those others, brothers and sisters, they were born in spiritual darkness.

[18 : 38] Now, you can imagine some of the things that went on in that family. We're not told a whole bunch, are we? Just in Luke chapter 2, that's the only place where you find anything when Jesus was 12 years old.

A little incident there. You can read from the Koran and some of those places and the Jewish writings. And you can find out some things that people thought, but, you know, making a clay dove and throwing it up in the air and letting it fly.

No. No. Those are things that have been passed on, but those things are not according to the scriptures. We can assume that since light and darkness was in that home, there was some conflict.

There was some misunderstanding. There was probably some jealousy. But I'm sure that there was also some sibling love and bonding affection that was there.

Around 26 AD, the firstborn, Jesus, begins a public ministry of teaching primarily up in the area of Galilee.

[20 : 00] And in Nazareth, we saw a couple weeks ago, I think in chapter 4, how he was in Nazareth and he took the scroll and he began to read from Isaiah. And he said, I'm the guy.

So many words. I'm the guy who fulfilled all of that. The coming Savior. And I suppose that the siblings of Jesus, these half brothers and half sisters, that they were there too in the synagogue that day.

And they're kind of going, yeah, right. What I'm getting at, they did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah.

You say, well, how do you know that? In John chapter 7, somebody has that. Rick, I think, has that. John chapter 7, verses 2 through 5. You can turn there if you'd like to.

You're going to see with me that these family members of Jesus, the half brothers and sisters, had a contempt for Jesus.

[21 : 10] John chapter 2, verses, chapter 7, verses 2 through 5. Now the feast of the Jews, the feast of tabernacles was at hand.

His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence and go unto Judah, Judea, that thy disciples also may behold thy works which thou dost to us.

For no man doeth anything in secret, and himself seeketh to be known openly. Thou that doest these things manifest thyself to the world.

For even his brethren, his family, did not believe on him. Whoa. That's rather insightful, isn't it? Mm-hmm. Sure. Yeah, we need to get a grasp on what was going on within the family there.

Okay. I think you read from King Jim. I've got the New King James. That's what I'm used to using. Different translations, I think, can be helpful.

[22 : 17] They're trying to get at what the original Hebrew and Greek were trying to communicate to us. Okay, so in John 7, these brothers of Jesus, they're going to go to Jerusalem.

And they're trying to encourage Jesus to go as well. Hey, if you want to really set forth that you're the Messiah, you best get up there to Jerusalem.

And Jesus says, okay, I'll get there, but I'll get there in God the Father's time schedule. He did and said everything that his father and when his father wanted him to do it. And his brothers at this point, they're just thinking, oh, Jesus, he's on some kind of political or whatever campaign.

But it wasn't until, for sure, after the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, that James actually had that faith in Jesus really confirmed.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and verse number 7, it talks about how he was a man of faith. And Jesus appeared to him.

[23 : 34] And, whoa, wouldn't that have been fabulous? To see the glorified Jesus standing right in front. The one that he grew up with and experienced all of this, you know, stuff with.

Now he realizes for sure who he is. Half-brother of Jesus. And no longer does James identify himself as a half-brother or the physical relationship.

In James chapter 1 and verse number 1, he says, James, what? A bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ to the 12 tribes which are scattered abroad.

He says, I'm a bondservant of God, the Father, and of Jesus.

If you were writing a letter, would you say, I am a bondservant of God and of Jesus Christ? And do our lives really back that up?

[24 : 49] Really? Wow. That's quite a statement. When it comes to the name James, there are probably four different Jameses that could have been maybe writers of this letter.

Some say maybe the Apostle James. But no, he probably would have been martyred too early. It leaves really only this James, the half-brother of Jesus.

Who wrote this book. And we could share with you some texts along that line that maybe substantiate that. But James is also called James the Just.

And that's because, that's kind of a nickname or a title, because he was emphasizing righteousness. Justice.

I think that's something we need to emphasize as well, isn't it? In our homes, in our church.

[25 : 54] This is what God calls us to. James was one of the pillars of the church in Galatians and then also in the book of Acts chapter 15.

He's a pillar. He is a man in 62 AD that according to the first century Jewish historian Josephus, he was martyred.

James was probably the moderator at that Jewish Jerusalem council.

And he gives the summation of the whole thing, of what they should do, and that they should send a letter out. This is what we as Jews, we should abstain from certain things, including homosexuality.

I'll just say I was at a church conference and we were talking about that very issue and it was causing division. And they talked about how we need to have peace and get along and how they did that and brought unity.

[27 : 02] But to my amazement, they did not bring the conclusion of John or of Acts 15 saying that homosexuality is wrong.

Abstain from that. Anyway, that's just a side. This book was probably written about 44, 45, somewhere in there AD.

And so this was prior to the missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul. Prior to the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, the temple, etc.

Before the accounts of the writing of the Gospels. James writes this letter. If that's the case by way of the timing of it, being the first of the New Testament writers to give that as given by the Holy Spirit.

And then he writing it down. That's the graphe. That's the inspiration. Then it's a bridge from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant. James, the half-brother of Jesus.

- [28 : 16] Wow. Wow. He is writing to Jewish people. Many of whom have scattered abroad throughout Asia Minor.
- Even as far as Rome. James is writing to Jewish people. And James is writing this letter. Then to people who are dispersed.
- Who are believers. Who are needing some encouragement. Who have faced the trial of persecution. Wow.
- Wow. Peter taught in his book some things about persecution. And the first Peter. That is. First Peter. He talks about persecution. And that's another one of the letters that is primarily to Jewish people. As well as Hebrews, etc. There are some others that people identify primarily as to the Jews, first of all.
- [29 : 22] But a Jew in that day. A son of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through the lineage. Who was believing in Jesus. Had difficulty.
- Hardship. Persecution. They were ostracized from their family. From their friends. It was hard.
- Joe. Question. Was Paul active in his ministry? He wasn't yet. When James wrote his book then to the Jews.
- The Christian Jews. Paul was not active yet to the Gentiles. Is that correct? Because it's a council meeting. Isn't that where James, Peter, and them all gave the right hand.
- The fellowship. Paul. You go to Gentiles. We'll go to the Jews. Chapter 16. Paul begins the missionary journey. So this book was written before that time or after that time?
- [30 : 23] I can't say for certain about that, Joe. By way of the timing. Do you have insight about it? I'm not positive about that. The timeline.
- It's difficult to be really accurate about it. Because most of the scholars disagree within a period of three to four years.
- You know. So it's really hard to know. Yeah. But I think when you keep in mind that James, as you said, was probably the earliest part of the New Testament written.
- Yeah. Probably the very first book. Yeah. And probably about 45. Yeah. But keep in mind that the Apostle Paul didn't even take his first missionary journey until 16 or 17 years after he came to faith.
- So it's probably about the same time when Paul is taking his first journey as James is writing this. Yeah. Within just a very short period of time.
- [31 : 29] And you've got to remember, there was a tremendous amount of confusion going on. Especially between Jew and Gentile. For sure. Because Gentiles were being included and that was unheard of.
- And so, anyway, that's probably the best we can do with the time frame. Sure. Yeah. Along with that time too. Peter in his letters did not refer to Paul until the second.
- And so Paul or Peter's letters then would have been after James's. So it sounds like Paul already didn't get going good, you know, and to the Gentiles until after a lot of this, these letters of these, these short letters to the Jews from the Apostles and the council members, the Jewish leaders, the leaders of the Jewish Christian church, the assembly at that time, must have come after most of these letters that were written because only 2 Peter, the last Peter mentions.
- That's good. Yeah. And I think Peter, he says, and Paul, he wrote some things that are hard to understand. And we still scratch our heads on that.
- Well, James, he's focusing primarily on sanctification, about Christian growth, about maturity. He's not emphasizing salvation on the front door.

[32 : 47] He's talking about the continuation of walking and living with Jesus as far as continuing to live out one's faith and the practical aspects of all of that.

H.A. Ironsaid says, quote, It is not for those of us who are Gentile Christians to ignore this portion of Scripture as though not being Israelites.

It has no message for us. But just as the letters written by Paul to the Gentile Christians were generally for all believers, whatever their form or nationality or relationship, so this epistle contains precious and important truth for the edification and sanctification of all who, like its writer, are slaves of God and of Christ.

So, there's a theme that comes out here. James 1 and verse number 2 says, My brethren, I like that term brethren.

I grew up as a Lutheran but came to faith as a 13-year-old. I actually wrote that testimony. Did I send that to you as a Thanksgiving note on an email?

[34 : 12] No, I did not? Okay. I will try and do that. I think I said something to you by way of letting me know what your testimony is.

I'd appreciate you emailing me that as well as hearing about it, but also a picture of yourself and your wife. I just slipped that in there. But here James, he's saying brethren.

That's where I came to faith in Jesus Christ, where I heard about the way of salvation at the Grace Brethren Church in Worchester, Ohio. And as a 13-year-old, the lights came on.

And new life appeared. Okay. My brethren, count it all. Next word. Joy when you fall into various trials.

So, here's a theme that he's saying that we need to be involved in persevering, in continuing. The end of verse, encountering many various trials.

[35 : 18] We encounter these things. We fall into something. It's not like, okay, you're tempted and you fall into sin. That's not the idea here with that word fall.

It's to come into something. It's the same word that is used in Luke chapter 10 and verse number 30. Dan, I believe you have that if you would read that for us.

Luke chapter 10 and verse number 30. We're getting into a familiar parable that Jesus told. Then replied, Jesus said, a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when he was attacked by robbers.

They stripped him of his clothes, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Okay. He fell among the thieves. That's the idea here.

He fell among the thieves.

[36 : 41] Circumstances are that you can see this. I hope you get this in the gist of the passage. That this is all happening because of a divine plan.

These testings are not mistakes. This is all part of a divine purpose and a test. By trials.

By trials. Is James talking about being persecuted? Hated? Receiving unfair treatment?

Is James talking about that? Yeah. Is James talking about ordinary difficulties like sickness?

Illness? Financial difficulties? Relationship problems? Unemployment?

[37 : 40] Addictions? Fears? Is he talking about that kind of stuff? Absolutely. All kinds of trials.

Problems we face. And we are to resist those things under the control of the word of God and the spirit of God. He is calling us to faith.

To live out something different in these circumstances. Okay Joe. Paul brings out that very thing to us too. He says the same thing when he says all things work together for good to those who love him.

So even when bad things happen to you. They are actually good for you. You don't know understand it. Know why. But it is all working out for your good to those that love him.

So if you do. Hey it is God's plan for you. He meant for you to get sick. He meant for you to have a wreck. He meant for you to hurt your ankle. Whatever. It is all part of the plan. And that is what the hope and the peace you can have in your life because of that.

[38 : 46] And so he says the same thing that James is saying there. They agree 100%. Yeah. Amen. Amen. I don't know about you but I wrestle with that. We all do.

You know. That is the flesh and the spirit and how James is calling us to practically live out a higher standard. A higher calling.

And he says when you fall into various trials. New King James. The NEV puts it. When you meet trials of various kinds. He is not just describing different qualities of trials.

He is also talking about where they come from. They originate with God. These things don't happen by chance.

These things have a sovereign purpose in our lives. Spurgeon writes about it this way.

[39 : 46] He says I believe that every particle of dust that dances in the sunbeam does not move an atom more or less than God wishes. That every particle or spray that dashes against the steamboat has its orbit.

As well as the sun in the heavens. The chaff from the hand of the winnower is steered as the stars in their courses.

The creeping of an aphid over the rosebud is as much fixed as the march of the devastating pestilence. The fall of leaves from a poplar is as fully ordained as the tumbling of an avalanche.

Wow. That takes a different kind of understanding. A different mindset. That enables us as far as James is saying to us to experience these circumstances with joy.

You go what? He says consider it joy. Think of it as joy. Count it as joyful. This is an attitude that is a product of the will.

[41 : 07] It doesn't come from the emotions. This is an attitude that is a judgment, a thought process that we make that comes from the will.

It's a choice that we make. And God is wanting us to decide properly and count it all joy. While we could face things with anger or resentment or bitterness, he says we should choose to do it joyfully.

Did I see a hand back here? Would that not be more of a spiritual thing he's talking about? You know, like the homosexual trying to incorporate that into the church when it's not supposed to be there.

You know, supposed to love the sinner but not the sin. You know, the leader of Christ possible. It is certainly a spiritual decision that we have to make to choose joy.

And that is a fruit of the spirit like love, joy, peace. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

[42 : 21] It definitely is. Choosing joy. And that has to do with the result of some specific knowledge. Verse 2 says, Our circumstances are ordained by the Lord Himself.

This is a divine test. What we do with it and how we respond. That is the test by way of our maturity.

How we are developing. Spurgeon says, Everything we experience in life comes about according to God's will.

And God brings these trials about so that we can pass the test. I had a professor when I was in school. And he would delight in having a pop quiz.

He didn't know when it was going to happen. He would just say, Okay, get out a piece of paper and pencil. And you'd hear the, Ooh, in the room.

[43 : 25] All right. Pop quiz is always a trial. When I was prepared, Okay. Have at it.

I've studied. And you can face it with joy. If, yeah, If I hadn't. Boy, Not so to say. I had a big night last night.

But, God is wanting us to face the difficulties we do with joy. On the other hand, When we lack knowledge, Spiritually, Then, There's going to be worry, And despair.

That's true in the classroom. That's true spiritually. And in the classroom, We get a poor grade. And from God, We get a poor grade.

James says, Our approach to trials of life is according to a similar principle. The more we understand how God is at work, That there is an eternal grade, That's really important.

[44 : 50] Look at verse number three. James 1, 3. Knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience, endurance, But let patience have its perfect work, That you may be perfect, Mature, And complete, Lacking nothing.

So, James is saying, The key to getting this is gnosis. It's knowing. It's knowledge. So, I have to ask this.

Are we seeing our trials in the right light, in the right way? When my wife and I got married 49 years ago, this past June, 11th, several days prior to the wedding, while I was sleeping at night, my brother came into the bedroom.

We shared a bedroom, but he stole my car keys. My bride and I, we had just bought this car.

And he stole the keys. Good brother. Let me tell you, my initial response was not one of a saint. I thought, but as I thought about it, I thought, oh well, that car is going to appear in the proper time.

[46 : 28] All right. He wants to decorate it up. I hope he doesn't use Limburger cheese. And then, Viv's the one that worked to get that car.

And I had to tell her, man. Okay, the car showed up on Friday night after the wedding.

And it was all decorated up. And they were wanting to follow us and all that jazz. And I goosed it and got out of there. An interesting little side light.

One of the pastors that officiated in the wedding also gave us our marriage counseling. And he pointed his finger at my brother. I got a picture of it.

Thou shalt not steal. Oh my. Well, eventually, I learned to face that trial with joy.

[47 : 34] And I could tell you some other things like that too. And many of them hadn't turned out that good. But Jesus says something about all of this as well in the book of Matthew chapter 5 verses 11 and 12.

And I believe Dennis has that portion of scripture. Matthew 5. Blessed are you and men revile you and persecute you.

And they shall in all manner agree with against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be extremely glad for great is your reward in heaven for so persecuted they the prophets which were worked before you.

Wow. That's a mouthful. That whole sermon Matthew 5 to 7. that's a mouthful. But he's saying face it with the trials with joy.

Difficulties with joy. And he also says that there's an eternal aspect of this. Did you catch that? There's going to be reward for the patience the endurance the steadfastness.

[48 : 50] and that's what Jesus wants to see. That's why he brings the tests so we'll pass them. He's not trying to fail us.

He's trying to build us. If we'll just get this into our character and yet we face various circumstances and oh if we face the day and we're on cloud nine and things are going good and then the next day we're and we're like that all the time that's probably an indication that okay we need to grow in what's the word?

Faith. Grow in maturity. Grow in our knowledge because these are God appointed tests and we need to grow in our knowledge accept the circumstances realize that there are some eternal purposes at work.

Verse number four but let patience have its perfect work that you may be perfect and complete lacking nothing.

Wow. there's a similar passage in Romans chapter five I was reading this this morning I think Greg Glory had it verse number one as a text let's see Steve or Phil?

[50 : 24] Okay therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through Jesus our Lord Jesus Christ by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God and not only so we glory in tribulation also knowing that tribulation work at patience and patience experience and experience hope peace with God wow did you see how that intertwines together he begins with verse one peace with God and then he's talking about okay how we can have the peace of God that's something different even through the trials the pressures the grind the difficulty and he's building in us James isn't emphasizing salvation but Paul brings the two together here

I'm thankful for each of you who are here this morning I wonder how many of us have somebody who doesn't know Jesus on your mind and heart that you're praying for that perhaps you could invite to come I'd like to encourage us to have another man in this group that you have as an accountability buddy and that we seek to find some other buddy that we want to win to Jesus now James isn't emphasizing salvation but we'll talk about salvation he's talking about growing sanctification we all need that but with that in mind let me just say brothers do you desire to grow in maturity okay you've got some things in your mind of how that happens right you should are you doing that

James is trying to kick us a bit to say I want you to see the great God see what he's doing even in the midst of difficulties and rely upon him and be doers of the word not hearers only spiritual maturity do you yearn to reflect Jesus he didn't have it easy did he when he lived here and should we expect anything different James identifies himself as a servant of God and of Jesus Christ James takes the road of growing in maturity passing the test sure he failed tests too we all do but each of the tests come so we will learn patience endurance steadfastness perseverance maturity and the great blessing of that is that we can do that as we walk in the spirit on the other hand if we are not growing in maturity we're sliding on a slippery slope the wrong direction there's something of a conclusion here that comes to my mind and that is that

God brings trials to us as well just like he did in James' day and God wants us to pass most teachers I would assume want their teachers want their students to learn they don't give tests in order to fail kids God never brings tests to bring us to failure he wants to see us succeed and excel not despair and the key to passing the tests is proper knowledge wisdom understanding and he says in verse 5 look at it with me if any of you lacks wisdom let him ask of God who gives to all liberally and without reproach it will be given to him so

James acknowledges that he and other believers at times we lack wisdom and so what what should we do read the Bible ask God the father in heaven has provided the wisdom that we need and he will answer every request for wisdom without reproaching us without you know what are you doing up here he was not going to cast an insult that's an important difference for instance if I was in school and I went up to the professor during one of those pop quizzes and said I'm not sure what the answer to that is could you give me some insight into that I know what the answer would be it wouldn't be very complimentary but when we come to

[56 : 41] God it's different he says he will give to us liberally he will not hold back from us he's saying to us I'm giving you a test and it's an open book test ever have one of those in school I did yeah okay yeah that's a good thing and God is seeking to develop this maturity this steadfastness God's willing to answer our plea and he wants us to pass the tests with flying colors and he says we should ask God not Oprah not the horoscope okay those are obvious right not Christian counselors not other books not family members primarily first of all come to who

God come to him that's what he's calling us to went on I'm sitting here listening to you, and I look back on a note here that says, to Jewish Christians.

Why? What you're saying is for us. Absolutely. Why do we, is that just because of historical things that we recognize? We say, just like Hebrews, we say, it's only to the Jew, only to the Jew.

Doesn't make sense when you're talking James. Yeah. Because you're even right at us. This was for the Jewish believers, but it is also for us. We get to listen in on this conversation and learn from it.

Yeah, but I understand what you're saying. You sound like a politician now. You didn't answer the question, why would we identify it as to just them?

[58 : 38] In other words, just to the Jew. It's to us, basically. Okay. You know, I just wonder that. It just sounds like that. I make noise like that once in a while. Yeah. Let me just, short answer.

When Paul was talking about the scriptures that he had in that day, it was all the Old Testament. And he said, these things are written for your learning.

Okay. So the Old Testament. Yeah. James. We can learn. And we should. From all of this. James.

So James is answering the question. And he's saying these tests are going to come. He wants us to grow. He wants us to have knowledge. Yes, we're going to face trials. Yes, we're going to face difficulties. And in the decades to come, he's saying it's going to get worse.

It's going to be difficulties. How do we respond to these problems? How do we respond to the tests, the pressures? We want to, I hope, please the Father.

[59 : 46] Glory to Him. In everything we do, whether we eat or drink, do all to the glory of God. He wants us to pass these tests. These trials. Count it all joy.

Consider it joy. Ooh, this is tough. Consider it joy. The final exam. It's coming one day. When is that? It's the judgment seat of Christ. It's when we stand before Jesus.

And quite frankly, I think that's going to be kind of an awesome experience. And I tremble a bit thinking about that. Are we ready to say, I want to grow up, mature in Jesus?

Joe? Joe? Paul said the same thing. You went to some of his letters, which said the same thing about maturing in us like James does.

Just James is writing it to the Jewish saints, the Jewish Christians. Paul was doing it to the Gentile Christians. They both agreed at this point.

[60 : 57] And James is not even talking about the gospel, how, you know, you came to know Christ in the first place. You know, it's just the results of that, of knowing Christ, of being in Christ.

And James is not even really getting into the law and saying, okay, now you want to keep the law too, you know. I mean, besides, you know this. You've got to make sure you do all that. He stays away from that.

I mean, it's not that rude. So James is an excellent book, you know, to reinforce what Paul taught in his letter. Thank you. All right. Well said.

All right. I hope there are some key things that come to your mind that you'll be reminded of, that you will prayerfully, passionately pursue. Yes?

He spoke at the beginning of the hour of hope in my Bible, wherever I see hope. It's absolute hope. Yes. We know we're saved, we're sealed, we'll be with the Lord Jesus, either in the rapture or after we pass away.

[61 : 58] Praise God. Amen. That brings perspective. And that's all part of the plan of God.

And that helps us, I think, live out a life with some passion and purpose. And I believe that's what God wants. Some key words that I was thinking about this morning as we were looking through this, I've written down there.

I hope you write some things down. Some things will be written in your mind, in your heart. Maybe you underline in your Bible. And I'd like to present to you the idea of having a key verse, a memory verse for this month.

Christmas is coming. He came once. He's coming again. And Isaiah 9 and verse number 6 brings that idea out. He says, For unto us a child is born.

Unto us a son is given. And the government shall be upon his shoulder. Father in heaven, thank you for the privilege this morning to...

[63 : 30] Open up the best book that there is, your word. And know that it has come from you. And we pray, Lord, that you'll help us to be good students and also good servants of yours.

May the word of God get in us and then be lived out through us. That we would be living epistles to our wives, our family.

Make this a special month. Even as this morning we've been reminded of the fresh white snow. We know the pictures how Jesus and his blood takes away our sin.

What a miracle. Only you can do that. And we do so in expressing this with great gratitude.

Help us, Lord Jesus, to live a life this day. Pleasing and honoring you.

[64 : 39] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Jesus. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.