

James

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- [0 : 00] We are studying the book of James here. The book of James is a little bit controversial. People, in fact, Martin Luther was not sure the book of James should be in the Bible. When I say the book of James, I also say we're studying the book of Jacob. We talked about that last week. I saw a surprised look over here. What are you talking about? What's the book of Jacob? The name James is actually the name Jacob. For some reason, Wycliffe, is it John Wycliffe? He decided to translate the name Jacob into James. That kind of stuck. Let's see, where are we at here? We've talked about a little bit of the context of James and looking in the book of Acts and who James was.
- [1 : 10] A few other things that I wanted to bring up. James was the leader in the church in Jerusalem. Along with Peter and John, Paul says that they seem to be pillars. James specifically seemed to be the spokesman, if not the top dog there in Jerusalem. But they had made an agreement. When Paul came to them and he talked to them about how he was bringing the gospel to the Gentiles. And they agreed, okay, God has given you a message to the Gentiles. And he has told us to go to Israel. So we're going to keep doing that. And you go to the Gentiles and we'll be good. And so that's what they did. And James and the other apostles stayed in Israel, excuse me, stayed in Jerusalem. And Paul ended up going, and the Bible describes it this way, to the whole world.
- [2 : 15] Now, you know, he didn't come to Cincinnati, Ohio. But he went to kind of the known world of that day. There in all over, Greece, Turkey, even into what we consider today modern day Europe, into Italy. There are, I think it's always important to keep this in mind as far as the greater context of the New Testament in particular. There's four groups of people. You can categorize people into four groups. You have Jews. And then you have Jewish Christians. People who believed on the Messiah. Jesus was the Messiah. Moses specifically said, someone is coming in the future and you need to believe on him. Moses said that. Listen to him. So there were some Jews who did that. They listened to Jesus. They believed on Jesus as the Messiah. So you have Jews.
- [3 : 27] Then you have Jewish Christians, those who believe on Jesus as the Messiah. Then you have Gentiles. Right? And we know the difference between a Jew and a Gentile. And that's a common difference we make, which is great. And then you have Gentile Christians. And Gentile Christians are those who were Gentiles. They didn't have any part in God's promises to Israel.

But then they became believers. So we have Jews, Jewish Christians, Gentiles, and then Gentile Christians. And the two groups that I think get conflated the most are the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians.

And we need to make that distinction. It's important. We also talked about how this book of James is many times called a general epistle.

And why is it called general? Well, we have the epistles of Paul. And that's a particular epistle from Paul. And the rest are many times called general.

[4 : 36] But I think that doesn't really help us out too much. That just means they weren't written by Paul. But the best way to identify the book of James is as a kingdom epistle.

There's a letter written specifically to Jews regarding matters of the kingdom. Really, James is a book that's continuing on with the teachings of Jesus Christ.

And what was the primary message of Jesus Christ in the Gospels? He said, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. That was his primary message.

And it's easy to conflate. What a lot of times happens in the Christian church is half of the New Testament is the epistles of Paul. And the big emphasis of Paul is the gospel of grace, the blood of Christ and what it accomplished, our identity in Christ, all these things, which is really, really important.

And really, that's the message for us today. But we tend to take those things and assume that that was the message throughout the whole New Testament. And it's not.

[5 : 50] And when we do that, when we think that's the case, then we end up mixing things. We mix things that had to do with law and kingdom with the things that have to do with grace.

Other kingdom epistles. Can anybody name any? Written to Jews specifically. 1 John, 2 John, 3 John.

And that makes sense, right? Because John was one of the original apostles. Right? Peter. 1 and 2 Peter. He was one of the original apostles. Peter was part of the group that decided, Paul, we're grateful.

God has given you a message to the Gentiles. We're going to stick with the Jews. Made that agreement. He was there in Jerusalem when they made that agreement. If you look at 1 Peter, the very first verse, he writes his letter.

In fact, if you're already in James, you can just turn over a couple pages. But Peter, he's an apostle of Jesus Christ to the pilgrims of the dispersion.

[6 : 55] And who is that? The dispersion. That's kind of a funny name. That's not a word we use in regular, everyday language. But we talked about that. It's a Greek word, diaspora. And even today, if you go to Israel, people generally know what the diaspora is or diaspora.

It's the Jews who live out among the Gentiles. And even today, that's what they're referred to as, the Jews who live among the Gentiles. There are Jews who live in Russia. There are Jews who live in Poland.

There are Jews who live in Brazil. There are Jews who live in America. And they are considered dispersed Jews. They don't live in their homeland. And so Peter was writing to those Jews.

And you can imagine why, right? He lives in Jerusalem. And so he has access to speak to the believers, the Jewish believers in Jerusalem. But if he wants to send a message to those who are living out among the Gentiles, and here it gives an example.

People who live, again, 1 Peter 1, those who live in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. So he was writing a letter to these Jewish believers in Christ who live out among the Gentiles in these different cities.

- [8 : 07] There's another one that's really obvious that it's written to Jews. Hebrews. It's written to the Hebrews. That's why we call it the book of Hebrews.
- It's written to the Hebrews. Even the book of Revelation is, and that one is a little less clear because it doesn't say who it's written to in the beginning.
- But there are hints throughout that you can see. In the book of 2 John, the book of 2 John is written to the elect lady. To the elect lady.
- It's kind of a funny terminology. But that term elect is so often a term for the Jews because they were chosen by God as his special people.
- And then also in the book of 2 John, he says this. It's this interesting phrase. He says, take nothing from the Gentiles. So if he was writing to Jew and Gentile, why would he say take nothing from the Gentiles?
- [9 : 09] That wouldn't make any sense, right? All right. Let's look at a little bit more context, specifically the kingdom context of the book of James. And so there are three things I want to point out with the book of James.
- Where are these believers at? Again, these are Jewish believers. Some of them may have participated or been disciples of Jesus Christ during his earthly ministry. Others may have just heard about the Messiah through some of the other apostles, Peter, James, John, and the rest.
- You know, we don't know for sure. But there was a certain mindset, and I want to get us in the same mindset that both James would be in and these believers who live out among the Gentiles.
- So let's look at a couple of passages. Let's go back to the book of Acts. And as we go through the book of James, we're going to actually be doing a lot of flipping back and forth, comparing things that James teaches with things that Jesus taught, as well as some of the other apostles, and then also contrasting with things that Paul taught.
- Acts chapter 3. So in Acts chapter 3, we have this new church, and Peter, specifically, is kind of the one who's primarily in focus as the leader.
- [10 : 51] He gives this message. This is the day of Pentecost. This is a little bit later. But him and John are going to Solomon's porch.
- There's a lame man. He ends up being healed. And then Peter preaches a message. And that's the context of this verse.
- So Acts chapter 3. And where can we start? Let's start with verse 19. Repent, therefore. So he's talking to these Jews in Jerusalem at Solomon's porch.
- Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord. That's kind of interesting.
- Times of refreshing. We'll talk about that in a second. And that he may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of the restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all of his prophets since the world began.
- [12 : 00] We talk a lot in this church about the difference between prophecy and mystery. And there was a whole prophetic plan that the prophets of old foretold.
- They talked about what's going to happen. There's a Messiah that's going to come. And what does the Messiah do? The Messiah, he's going to restore the kingdom of Israel on the earth.
- There will be a, the kingdom will be established, the people of the kingdom will be established, and there will be a king on the throne who will be ruling. That's what the Jews were looking forward to.

That's what the prophets said was coming. Peter, when he preaches to these people early in the book of Acts about what they should do with this man Jesus, whom they crucified, he didn't say, you need to trust in his blood.

Right? That's the gospel that we preach today, isn't it? You need to trust in the blood of Christ that Jesus died for your sins. If you read through the book of, or the chapter three here, you'll never see anywhere where Peter says, Jesus died for your sins.

[13 : 16] That seems so odd to a lot of people. That is the gospel. Why would Peter never mention that? Well, it's because that, that wasn't revealed yet. There was some hints.

You know, Jesus' blood was important. Jesus gave during the last supper, right? He talked about the new covenant established in my blood. But that wasn't something that was explicitly revealed.

So, the message though, he said, it's important for you to repent and believe that Jesus is the Messiah that Moses and the other prophets spoke of.

That was what they needed to believe. And so, if they did that, then what would happen? Jesus would return, their Messiah would come back, and he would restore, what does it say?

Whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things. And so, that's a funny way to put it, but Jews would know what that meant. The restoration of all things is the restoration of the kingdom of Israel.

[14 : 23] That's what that is. And so, this is the big context. These are Jews who are believing that Jesus is the Messiah.

They are, they're waiting for Jesus to return, expecting his return, and they're expecting the restoration of the kingdom.

Another thing that I want to look at as far as context is there's something else that comes with that. Let's look at Luke chapter 21. So, Jesus talked about future things.

What was the expected plan for Israel? In chapter 21, I'm reading the New King James, and one of the nice things about the New King James, and I think other translations have this as well, is it has headings to kind of help you see what the topic is.

for certain passages or sections. Sometimes they don't always get it right. I don't think anyway. But most of the time, it's really, really helpful. In mine, it says here, right above verse 7, it says, the signs of the times and the end of the age.

[15 : 41] And then, right before verse 20, it says, the destruction of Jerusalem. And then, right before verse 25, it says, the coming of the Son of Man. So, Jesus, in this chapter 21, is talking about what's going to happen in the future with the end times.

But there's a few things that he says is going to happen and one of the things, and I should have written down some specific verses, but he talks about deception taking place.

Verse 9, when you hear of wars, don't be terrified. He says in verse 10, nation will rise against nation. Verse 11, there will be earthquakes and signs in the heavens.

He talks in verse 12 about persecution, people being delivered up. let's see, being betrayed in verse 16.

And so, these are things that are going to happen before the coming of the Son of Man, which he talks about from verse 25 on.

[16 : 48] And there will be signs in the, verse 25, and there will be signs in the sun and the moon and the stars and the earth, distress of the nations with perplexity and the sea of waves roaring, men's hearts failing, them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And so, there's going to be a lot of difficulty and persecution, and then, Jesus Christ, their Messiah, he will come back.

The Son of Man will return. So, that's kind of a big picture. Jesus preached the kingdom. He told his disciples to continue to preach the kingdom, that people needed to believe in the Messiah.

And another part of that, we'll go to Matthew 24, that comes with the persecution. Matthew 24.

This is a parallel chapter to Luke. Well, tell you what, keep your finger there, keep a little bookmark there.

[18 : 06] We're going to go and look at some specific verses later, because this morning as we get through the first few verses, we're actually going to reference this specifically. But, this is just another parallel passage, talking about persecution and the mindset that believers need to be in and expecting the return of their Messiah and expecting persecution to come before he returns.

A few major themes in the book of James, trials is a big one, and that fits with what Jesus talked about. Being doers of the word and not hearers only, that's another big theme.

Don't just hear what the word says, do it. Doing. And then another big one is this whole thing about the rich and the poor, the rich in the churches that he's writing to, or the assemblies we'll call them, and the poor.

Okay, so with all that context, let's, let's jump in. We already looked in verse one because we wanted to get the context of who's writing and who's being written to, but we'll read it again.

James, a bondservant of God, bondservant means slave, of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad.

[19 : 36] We talked about who that is, the scattered. Those are, that's the word scattered actually means dispersion, those who are dispersed, those who are scattered abroad. Verse two, my brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials.

Count it all joy. I'm looking at my kids. there's a song, isn't there, about that? We just did this play and some of you came and there was a song that we sang as part of this play.

It was about the dust bowl and people are going through a lot of difficult trials and so there's a song in the middle of the play that says, count it all joy, my brother.

It's really a more uplifting song and so now I can't but think about that song and start singing it in my head when I read verse two here.

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials. Now, this, this word trials, I think the King James says temptations, I think. Is that right?

[20 : 43] And so, but temptation is a little bit confusing because that's not really what he's talking about. It kind of is because a trial is a temptation, isn't it? Whenever you go through a difficulty, you're tempted to do what?

To not count it all joy, to do something else, to go into grief and misery and, or whatever it might be, to have more negative feelings or to sometimes give up, right?

To give up. So, in that way, it is a temptation but I think trial is a better, is a better word. And, one really important thing to point out here is, is joy a natural response to trials?

No, not at all, right? When you go through difficulty, it's not an automatic thing to smile and sing and be happy. It's just not. And so, this is an intentional behavior that James is saying that you need to do.

You need to be intentional when you go through trials to not just be carried away by the trials, whether it's emotionally or in any other way, but to be intentional when it comes to trials.

[21 : 56] to respond with joy. Usually, when it comes to trials, our response is things like worry or fear, sometimes anger, dejection, self-pity.

That's a big thing in today's world. There's this whole like, worldview today. We call it, I think in just the past couple of years, we call it like, woke culture.

And a big part of woke culture is you have to feel sorry for yourself if you're part of the minority. And everybody is just scrambling to become part of the minority so that you can be the victim.

And that's horrific. That's a horrible way to live. And it's a horrible way to tell people how to live. But that's what we do. Oh, well, you are a woman or you're a black or some other racial minority, so you need to live as a victim.

And that's destructive, right? People shouldn't live as victims. People should live in victory. And it's, people do experience trial, but if you do, you should respond to it in a different way.

[23 : 13] Not as a victim, not through self-pity because that will destroy your life. So we want to reject the whole woke worldview of self-pity. Joy is a response of faith because we know that trials, even though they're difficult and they're hard, they're producing something.

They're working something. And there's something greater that comes at the end. It's not something that we can see yet. It's not something we experience right now. This is part of the life of faith.

Responding with joy to trials is part of the walk of faith. Faith. We have to look at the big picture. And sometimes the big picture is looking at what's going to happen five years from now.

When you are saving money and you don't, instead of buying the big screen TV that came out at Walmart, you said, put your money in your savings account so that five years from now you can put a down payment on a house.

Right? That could be difficult. Right? There are all kinds of fun things to buy. But you hunker down, you do what's the difficult, you make the difficult decision, you save that money, and in five years you get this thing that's even greater, right, than that big screen television.

[24 : 38] At least I think so. And so that's looking at the big picture, right, and that's looking towards the future. When it comes to the Christian life, we're looking even beyond our five-year plan.

We're looking beyond the ten-year plan. We're looking beyond our retirement, right, in our 60s, 70s. We're looking on to eternity. I tell people sometimes, what is, you know, when you go for a job interview, people will ask, well, what's your five-year plan, you know, career plan, or ten-year plan?

I can't stand that question. I've never thought that far out. Maybe I should, right? But I do think about, you know, saving up money for retirement. But here's a question.

What's your thousand-year plan? What's your plan for what your life is going to be in a thousand years? No, so many people don't think out that far.

They think 30, 40, 50 years. What about a thousand years? Where are you going to be? And so, whether you're not a Christian and you need to make a decision about God's offer for you for eternal life, that's a big decision concerning your thousand-year plan, isn't it?

[25 : 50] But even as Christians, who we are saved, we're secure, we know Christ, we have eternal life promised to us, but we can do things now that will impact us later, not just in this life, but even in the next.

And I think it's in Timothy, it talks about bodily exercise profits a little bit, but godliness profits so much more, and not just in this life, but even into eternity, profits.

So, responding with joy is a faith response, looking to the future. I think it will help us in this life if we respond to trials with joy, but will also help us to grow in our eternal life as well.

trials can be big or small, and I think it's important to practice joy through difficulty.

And just like with anything that you practice, you don't wait to practice your hitting a baseball, you don't wait for the big game, right?

[27 : 03] You go to practices, you do little games, in the little things, you practice hitting the ball over and over, catching the ball, whatever it might be.

Same thing with trials and going through difficulty and how we respond. When it comes to little things, for example, you go to McDonald's and you order, what's a McDonald's?

Quarter Pounder. Is that McDonald's? Quarter Pounder? And instead, you open up your bag and there is a cheeseburger.

And there's, oh, you order a bacon Quarter Pounder, that's a thing, I know that's a thing. And you open up your sandwich and there's no bacon. And man, I ordered bacon on this sandwich.

That's really important. But you drove off and you're already down the road and you just realized it. Is that a trial? That can be a trial.

[28 : 10] Right? But it's a little one. It's a little tiny trial. And so, when it comes to things like that, we can choose to allow that to ruin our day, to allow us to, you know, feel sorry for ourselves that we didn't get those two slices of bacon on my sandwich.

Or, we can respond with joy. And we can think, you know what, that's just more bacon for somebody else. And somebody else is going to enjoy that bacon that I didn't get.

Yeah, yeah. We do that a lot. We open up the bag. What's in here? Did they get it right? So, in the little things, and there are lots of little things.

In fact, I would venture to say that every single day, we have little tiny trials in life that we have an opportunity to practice responding with joy.

Instead of dejection, instead of, oh, me, instead of whatever it might be, instead of anger or worry, respond with joy. It reminds me of, I'll tell my wife, we were visiting some friends.

[29 : 33] They have a little baby. Do you know that little babies make messes? They just do. That's how God made them. But, especially me, I think to my time as an early father, I didn't understand that.

I got this cute little baby and you put food in front of them and they just throw it all around and I'm like, what are you doing? These kids, they don't come with manners.

They're not civilized. Actually, I will tell Nathan, he actually did come out civilized.

This kid was using a fork when he was six months old. I think maybe his mom had something to do with that. She civilized him pretty early on.

But, what was I saying? Oh, so we were visiting some friends and a little baby and I think there was a spill or something. And Jamie responds and she says, oh, what a happy little accident.

[30 : 38] Is that what she said? What a happy little accident. And I will say, it is easier when it's not your child to respond that way. It is easier.

But, I don't remember if it was that day or later on, but the family told us, they said, when she said that, that changed our whole mindset. That actually had this tremendous impact on us.

The way that we respond to things like that. Oh, what a happy little accident. It's responding with joy to a little tiny trial. Just a little one.

You have to clean up a mess. joy. And so, but there's opportunities every single day to respond with joy to trials in our life. And when it comes, then we have bigger trials, right?

We have bigger trials. Your house might burn down. That's a huge trial. That's so much more difficult to respond to with joy. But if we practice in the little things, then when it comes to bigger things, and I've met so many people over my life, people who you can tell they've practiced this in their life.

[31 : 48] And difficult things happen. There's a guy I know. His name is Cal Zastro. In fact, I might even see him this week. We're going down to Nashville right after church for a pro-life conference kind of thing.

Meet at churches and go out on the streets and talk to people and that kind of thing. But Cal Zastro, he lives up in Michigan. And he is always smiling and always rejoicing. This is a guy who's been in jail, not for committing crimes, but for righteousness sake, for trying to save babies.

He was part of the rescue movement back in the day. He's been arrested many times, even not going in jail. He's been persecuted. People throw stuff at him and yell at him.

And he's just constantly got a huge smile on his face. It's just incredible. And people like that will have a huge impact on you. There's something about somebody like that.

Verse 3. We're going pretty slow here, aren't we? My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials. Verse 3, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

[33 : 01] So this is the question. Why should I have joy? joy? This isn't anything positive. This is something negative. Well, actually, it is positive.

It might not feel that way. So why should we count trials as joy? Because we know there's value in it. There's value in trials. There's value in difficulty.

There's value even in pain. When it comes to Christian apologetics trying to talk to people about the Lord and why they should consider Christianity Jesus Christ.

Sometimes you just have to get them to consider whether they should value their creator before you even get to Jesus Christ, right? And one of the big objections is, well, there's pain in the world. If there really was a God, would He allow pain in the world?

And every one of us has experienced pain. A little pain and sometimes so intensely deep. losing a child or a grandchild is one of those.

[34 : 07] I lost my brother two years ago and that was, I think, the most pain I've ever experienced in my life. I think I can say that. And so we experience a lot of pain in this life, in this world, and the question is, if there was really a good God who really did love us, would He really allow pain in the world?

And for a lot of people, of course not, because pain is not good. C.S. Lewis, popular Christian writer, I love C.S. Lewis.

He's written so many important books, but he wrote a book called The Problem of Pain, and he wrote about that. And he ultimately came to the conclusion that pain has value. It does, and we read that here in James.

Trials, which is one form of pain, produces patience. That word patience, I don't think that's the best translation.

That's what New King James says. I think that's what the King James says as well. But a better word would be endurance, I think. Let me see, I think I have another. Steadfastness I also saw in one of the translations.

[35 : 19] Steadfastness. Endurance. Steadfastness. It produces in you a character. to endure through things, which is important.

Trials build patience and other character attributes that have eternal value. Romans in Paul, sorry, Paul in the book of Romans chapter 5 verse 3 says this.

He says something similar about tribulation that there's value to it. He says, and not only that, Romans 5 3, and not only that, but we also glory in tribulation.

Glory in tribulation? Sometimes we don't know what glory means, but it means like exalt. We're like grateful. We're glad in tribulation.

That just seems crazy. because it produces perseverance. Because it produces perseverance. Sorry, I'm knowing that tribulation produces perseverance, and perseverance character and character hope.

[36 : 38] Perseverance to character and character hope. Peter speaks of tribulation. 1 Peter 1, verse 6, he says, in this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials.

So when he says in this, he's talking about trials and tribulations. You greatly rejoice. You have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

I do want to say this, and this is, throughout the study of this book, we will have opportunities to make dispensational contrasts and differences.

I think that's important to do, especially with this book. Patience and joy, as we've seen, we've seen both Paul, James, and Peter talk about the value of tribulation and producing something of value in our life.

We call that a cross-dispensational, or sometimes I've heard trans-dispensational, but there are things that are taught in the Bible, and this is just a big picture thing, throughout the whole Bible, I'm not just talking about the New Testament, but throughout the whole Bible, there are certain truths that are taught, that cross every dispensational line, regardless of who God's working with, or what kind of the rules are for how to become a child of God, because those have changed throughout history, and we talk about that quite a bit.

[38 : 27] If you're not familiar with that, we call that, it's typically called dispensationalism, which is a big word that some people, it causes people's eyes to glaze over, but it's an important topic, but throughout history, God has had people that he's worked with in different ways, and there have been different ways of coming to God, and in the age in which we live, we call it the age of grace, and we come to God through faith alone.

But even though we live in the age of grace, there are certain truths we find in Genesis, or with Moses, or with Israel, that cross all those dispensational lines, if you will, those buckets of time, or people groups.

And this is one of them. Patience and joy through trials is something that is a value to everyone.

It's a value to everyone. But I will make a small difference. Under the law and the kingdom, trials were valuable in forming your character.

trials. But there was another thing, and that's the same today in the age of grace, but there was something also that's true about trials during this age of kingdom and law that is not true today.

[39 : 53] And that's that these trials are a test of your faithfulness. And so we'll read in 1 Peter, one of the things that Peter says about trials.

1 Peter, we can go ahead and turn there, 1 Peter 4, 16. 1 Peter 4, 16. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

Again, glory and tribulation. for the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God. And if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel?

So this is interesting. He's talking about judgment to begin at the house of God. Judgment is a discernment. It's a division. And in the teachings of Jesus in the gospels, there's a discussion about sheep and goats.

And enduring through difficulty, not just to improve your character, but as a way to prove your faith.

[41 : 19] Are you going to be one of the ones who sticks it out? Or are you going to be one of the ones that gives up? And under the law kingdom dispensation, message, that mattered.

Jesus taught the parable of the sower. I'm looking at the clock. We just have a few minutes, so I don't know if we'll have time. But what is the parable of the sower in Luke chapter 8?

Let's go ahead and turn there. We do have five minutes, so we'll look at this and finish up with this. You know, Jesus, some of his teachings and his parables were very comforting and some of them were very not comforting.

And this parable of the sower is a difficult one. Luke 8, And when a great multitude had gathered and they had come to him from every city, he spoke by a parable, and a sower went out to sow his seed, and as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it.

Some fell on rock, and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. But others fell on the good ground, they sprang up and yielded a crop a hundredfold.

[42 : 46] When he had said these things, he cried, he who has ears to hear, let him hear. 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 the kingdom of God.

Again, this is a parable, like most of them, maybe even all of them, were about the kingdom, the coming kingdom that Jesus was constantly preaching about.

But to the rest, it has been given in parables, anyway, we'll skip down a little bit. Now, the parable is this, the seed is the word of God. 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.

People hear the word, but then that word is taken away, and they don't believe so that they're saved.

But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, they receive the word, so these are people who receive it with joy, and these have no root, who believe for a while, and in time of temptation, they fall away.

[43 : 51] They receive the word with gladness, but then difficulty, trials come, and they fall away. They stop holding to the word. Now, the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with the cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.

So it's not trials, but it's the cares, the love for the world that causes them to fall away from the word that they were given. But the ones that fell on the good ground are the ones who, having heard the word, excuse me, who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

And again, what's that word, patience? Endurance. That's what James is talking about here, is you believers, you Israelite believers out among the Gentiles, we need to work endurance in our lives.

When trials come, count it all joy, because you need to endure. The seed of God's word has been planted in your life. Don't let it be choked out by trials, or don't let trials cause you to give up.

Don't let the cares of this, or excuse me, the benefits of this life, riches, and again, this is a big part of James, the rich, he talks about the rich and the poor, and the danger of money, because these things will cause people not to persevere.

[45 : 25] And Jesus was very clear when he talked about the kingdom of God, he said, those who persevere to the end shall be saved. you have to persevere.

Now, that's something that many people take that idea, and they say, well, this is part of the gospel of the grace of God. And that's not true.

The gospel of the grace of God is that we trust in the blood of Christ, and he is our life. And regardless of whether we persevere or we don't, in good works, whatever it might be, we are secure in him.

And that is huge. That's a huge difference and one that so many people don't get. But in the book of James, this is what he's teaching. We need to work that patience and that endurance.

And endurance is good, and as Christians, as grace Christians, we should build up endurance in our life. It's a value, but it's not a question of whether we are secure in him.

[46 : 32] It's not. We are secure in him regardless of whether we endure or not. So we don't have to fear. We don't have to be afraid. Is the cares of this life going to choke out the word?

Well, even if it does, sometimes it does, we are secure in him, and we can have confidence in him alone. So we'll finish up there, but I think that parable, keep that in mind as we read the book of James, that parable of the sower.

That's where James is coming from as he's writing to the dispersion here. Before we quit here, any questions or thoughts?

All right, thanks everybody.