James, the Proverbs of the New Testament

Week 2

Introduction

* Review last week
  + Instruction and Illustration
  + Oswald Chambers said: Psalms teaches you how to pray; Job teaches you how to suffer; Song of Solomon teaches you how to love; Proverbs teaches you how to live; and Ecclesiastes teaches you how to enjoy.
* Wisdom and Verbal Linking – Linking to Past Experience
  + Strong “Beam Me Up Scotty!” – Star Trek
  + Medium “If Washing Machines Could Fly” – Blanch Lovell – Apollo 13 talking about Jim Lovell
  + Weak “Stepping Out Into the Unknown for Humanity” – One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.

9 Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, 10 and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. 11 For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits. 12 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

Links:

**Poor/Rich** – Luke 16 Lazarus/Rich Man; Luke 18 Rich young ruler

**The grass withers**… – Isaiah 40; All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever. 1 Pet 1:24-25

**Blessed**… – Matt 5; Prov 3:13 Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding

**Trail/Crown** – Psalm 132:18 His (David’s) enemies I will clothe with shame, but on him his crown will shine; 2 Tim 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing; Rev 2:10 Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

OT Wisdom: The Lord will raise up the poor, and humble the rich

NT Wisdom: Both riches and poverty are temporary, true wealth is the crown of life and is gained only through trial.

13 Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. 14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Links:

**God’s Purity** – Rom 3:3-6 What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? By no means! Let God be true though every one were a liar, as it is written, “That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged.” But if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) By no means! For then how could God judge the world? 1 Jn 1 God is light;

**Luring and enticement** – Gen 4:7 And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; Jas 4 Resist the devil

**Life Cycle** – Psalm 7:14 Behold, the wicked man conceives evil and is pregnant with mischief and gives birth to lies. Prov 1:8-33 (19) Such are the ways of everyone who is greedy for unjust gain; it takes away the life of its possessors. (33) but whoever listens to me will dwell secure and will be at ease, without dread of disaster.

OT Wisdom: Sin is the opposite of God’s wisdom. Sinful men will be destroyed by their own deeds.

NT Wisdom: Sin isn’t just what we do, but it’s who we are without Christ. Death is the end for sinful man.

16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. 18 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Links:

**Gifts** – Psalm 85:12 Yes, the Lord will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase; Matt 7:9-11 Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!; John 2:37 John answered, “A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.

**Light/Shadow** – Psalm 27:1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?; John 8:12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”; 1 John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. **OUSIDE: Father of lights/shadow of change: Sun/Moon Imagery**

**Word of Truth** – John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth; Eph 1:13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit; Col 1:5-6 Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth

**Fristfruits** – Prov 3:9 Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; Jer 2:3 Israel was holy to the Lord, the firstfruits of his harvest; Rom 8:29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers;

OT Wisdom: God doesn’t tempt us, but he allows us to go through trials.

NT Wisdom: Jesus has taken our punishment for sin, so that the trials of life are for our benefit.

19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. 21 Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

Links:

**Slowness** – Prov 10:19 When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent; Prov 14:29 Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly.

**Anger/Righteousness** – Matt 5:21-22 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire; Eph 4:26-27 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.

**Putting away** – Col 3:5-17 - **Read**

**Word of Salvation** – Col 3:5-17

OT Wisdom: Wisdom is staying silent and observing and letting truth come to light.

NT Wisdom: Wisdom is studying the living word and being able to speak/live it.

22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 25 But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

Links:

“The result of looking. Am obvious emphasis is on the contrast between ‘forgetting’ and ‘continuing.’ This stress suggests that James may be using the look at the mirror to illustrate the superficial and temporary effect of the word on those who hear it without doing it. They get no more lasting benefit from the word than they do from looking at their faces in a mirror while combing their hair. The doer of the word, on the other hand, ‘remains’, or *continues*. This verb, which has no object in the Greek, may refer to continuing to contemplate the word, but more likely refers to a continual doing of the word that one has heard (continues to do it).

“This law includes OT commandments, as 2:8-11 makes clear, but James’ characterization of the law as *perfect* suggests that these commandments must be seen in the light of Jesus’ fulfilment of the OT law (Matt 5:17). And, while it is still a ‘law,’ this summons to obedience nevertheless *gives freedom* because, in accordance with Jeremiah’s new-covenant prophecy (31:31-34), it has been written on the heart (cf. ‘planted’ in v. 21). With the searching radical demand of the gospel comes the enabling grace of God. When Jesus called people to ‘come’ to him and to take his ‘yoke’ upon them, he promised that ‘my yoke is easy and my burden is light’ (Matt. 11:28-30). *James (Douglas Moo, p114-115).*

26 If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. 27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

Links:

**Bridle** – Psalm 39:1 I said, “I will guard my ways, that I may not sin with my tongue; I will guard my mouth with a muzzle, so long as the wicked are in my presence.”; Psalm 141:3 Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips!

**Purity** – Job 25:4 How then can man be in the right before God? How can he who is born of woman be pure?; Luke 18:19 And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone; 1 Cor 6:11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

**Orphans/Widows** – Luke 18:15-17 Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to him, saying, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”

OT Wisdom: Religion was practicing the cultic aspects of the law, and doing what God commanded. Ultimately, living before God.

NT Wisdom: In Christ, our redemption is accomplished, but we still have a work to do. This is not for our salvation, but for the revealing of the kingdom of God. “The pure religion of the perfect Christian combines purity of heart with purity of action.” (James, Douglas Moo, p117)