

Series – Part 22: How to Live as a Christian:

Reach Out to Those Who Are No Longer Functioning as Believers!

James 5:19-20 ESV

Sunday, September 29 at 8:00 & 10:45

Monday, September 30 at 7 PM

19th Sunday After Pentecost / 18th After Trinity – 2013

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Our current sermon series on the book of James, *which began on April 14 and includes 22 parts*, concludes today!

1. **Some of My Thoughts about This Series:**

- a. James, *the half-brother of Jesus and the leader of the Church in Jerusalem*, wrote with the intent of blessing those who received his letter. In a similar way, *my intent with this series was to bless all who heard it!*
- b. James wanted to bless his recipients in these ways; *my intentions were similar:*
 - i. To instruct mature believers in how to better live for Christ.
 - ii. To challenge immature believers who were living like the world.
 - iii. To reach out with the saving truth to those who had fallen away.
 - iv. To promote among the community of believers honesty, forgiveness, unity, and love.

- c. The outcome of this series: It seems that *♦some loved it, ♦some hated it, and ♦some ignored it!*
 - ☑ My part is to “preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2);
 - ☑ your part is to gladly hear the Word, and
 - ☑ God’s part is to impress His Word upon us so that we benefit now and forever!

2. **The Final Two Verses of James:** ¹⁹ **My brothers, if anyone [τις] among you wanders from the truth and someone [τις] brings him back, ²⁰ let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering [way] will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. //**
 - a. Verses 19-20: They summarize “the entire letter.” (LSB, 2145) James wanted everyone to understand this: **To be in Christ is to live for Christ – thus in agreement with God’s Word!** Therefore, *both then and today, for all who have settled on something less*, the Almighty God is calling all such people – *within this congregation and throughout the entire Christian Church* – to repent and be blessed now and forever!
 - b. “...wanders from the truth”: LTJ wrote: “‘Truth’ in this context does not mean theoretical [or academic] correctness, but rather the proper ‘way’ of behaving...” (337) James was NOT writing to say: “You are thinking *that way*, but now you should begin thinking *this way!*” Instead, the letter of James is a CALL TO ACTION; a call to BE WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST; a call to FUNCTION AS BIBLE-BELIEVING CHRISTIANS! Therefore, every title in this series has included a challenge to FUNCTION AS BELIEVERS:

- i. **Part 1:** Benefit from Your Trials! (1:1-4) *Remember, God is at work in your life!*
- ii. **Part 2:** Ask in Faith! (1:5-8) *Without doubting!*
- iii. **Part 3:** Properly Boast! (1:9-12) *If rich... If poor...*
- iv. **Part 4:** Avoid Temptation! (1:13-15) *Leads to sin, death, and eternal separation from God!*
- v. **Part 5:** Be a Living Sacrifice! (1:17-18) *Say “no” to yourself and “yes” to God!*
- vi. **Part 6:** Shine the Implanted Word! (1:19-21) *Live it!*
- vii. **Part 7:** Be a Doer of the Word! (1:22-27) *Just do it!*
- viii. **Part 8:** Don't Play Favorites! (2:1-7) *God doesn't!*
- ix. **Part 9:** Love Your Neighbor as Yourself! (2:8-13) *How do you love yourself?*
- x. **Part 10:** Be Truthful with God's Word! (2:14-17) *Realize that faith without works is dead!*
- xi. **Part 11:** Don't Separate Your Faith From Your Works! (2:18-24) *Live like Abraham!*
- xii. **Part 12:** Show Your Faith By Your Works! (2:18-20, 25-26) *Live like Rahab!*
- xiii. **Part 13:** Tame Your Tongue! (3:1-12) *It can bless or curse, so bless!*
- xiv. **Part 14:** Practice Heavenly Wisdom! (3:13-18) *Not worldly wisdom!*
- xv. **Part 15:** Avoid These Things! (4:1-6) *God knows best!*
- xvi. **Part 16:** Practice These Things! (4:7-12) *Ditto!*
- xvii. **Part 17:** Acknowledge the Lord's Control! (4:13-17) *He is God!*
- xviii. **Part 18:** Be Responsible With Your Wealth! (5:1-6) *Trust and obey!*
- xix. **Part 19:** Suffer Patiently! (5:7-12) *God knows!*
- xx. **Part 20:** Talk Plainly and Pray Fittingly! (5:13-15) *God tells us what to do in various situations!*
- xxi. **Part 21:** Confess To and Pray For Each Other! (5:16-18) *Let us be a healthy part of the body of Christ!*

- xxii. **Part 22:** Reach Out to Those Who Are No Longer Functioning as Believers! (5:19-20) *Believers in Jesus live God's Word!*
- c. **“...brings back a sinner from his wandering [way]”**: How can you or I know whether or not a person is wandering away? *It's simple!* We compare between God's Word and a person's life; those who SAY **they trust in Jesus AND faithfully live God's Word** are on the path to heaven, while those who SAY **they trust in Jesus BUT do not faithfully live God's Word** are wandering. Some have already wandered away, some are moving in that direction.
- d. **“...will save his soul from death”**: As your pastor—*shepherd*, serving under THE SHEPHERD, that is my desire for everyone, FOR YOU: →that you *know* Jesus as Savior, →that you *continue* in God's Word, and →that you *function* as a believer until the LORD takes you to paradise!
- e. **“...will cover a multitude of sins”**: Think about this progression: **(1)** the sinner is brought back to Jesus, **(2)** his soul is saved from death, and, *going forward*, **(3)** he will desire to say “no” to sin and “yes” to God's will for his life!

Conclusion: The book of James has focused on HOW WE FUNCTION as believers; we do not function in certain ways to get to heaven; instead, *having received heaven as God's gift thru Jesus, we now desire to live for Him who lived and died for us!* For this life – *let us faithfully live God's Word*; for the life to come – *let us be certain of heaven thru Jesus! Amen!*

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