



James 1:5-8_The Assurance of Wisdom

March 1, 2015

Text: James 1:5-8

Thoughts on our Text:

- Do you remember our first lesson on James a few weeks back? We said:

Often called “the Proverbs of the New Testament,” “the book of James practically and faithfully reminds Christians how to **live**. From perseverance to true faith to controlling one’s tongue, submitting to God’s will, and having patience, this book aids readers in living authentically and wisely for Christ.” –ESV Bible

- James is a book of New Testament **wisdom**. To understand James’ exhortations in this epistle, it must be understood again that he was writing to believers under severe trial. We really could say, in context, that when you are going through, read James! ☺
- In his opening words in his commentary on James 1, Matthew Henry writes:

The suffering state of Christians in this world is represented, and that in a very instructive manner, if we attend to what is plainly and necessarily implied, together with what is fully expressed.

1. It is implied that troubles and afflictions may be the lot of the best Christians, even of those who have the most reason to think and hope well of themselves. Such as have a title to the greatest joy may yet endure very grievous afflictions. As good people are liable to be scattered, they must not think it strange if they meet with troubles.
2. These outward afflictions and troubles are temptations to them. The devil endeavors by sufferings and crosses to draw men to sin and to deter them from duty, or unfit them for it; but, as our afflictions are in God’s hand, they are intended for the trial and improvement of our graces. The gold is put into the furnace, that it may be purified.
3. These temptations may be numerous and various: *Divers temptations*, as the apostle speaks. Our trials may be of many and different kinds, and therefore we have need to put on the whole armour of God. We must be armed on every side, because temptations lie on all sides.
4. The trials of a good man are such as he does not create to himself, nor sinfully pull upon himself; but they are such as he is said to fall into. And for this reason they are the better borne by him.

- Amen! The core of our Text today is the need for God’s wisdom in times of suffering, temptation and trial.
- Matthew Henry goes on to say, *“The graces and duties of a state of trial and affliction are here pointed out to us. Could we attend to these things, and grow in them as we should do, how good would it be for us to be afflicted!”*
- We found out the last few weeks that one of these graces during affliction was joy! In particular we have the ability, based on Christ’s finished work, to count all these things (temptations, afflictions, etc.) joy!
- The inference in James is another grace we can and should walk in during difficult times is **wisdom**.

Think about this with me...

1. When do we make some of our worst decisions? When times are really good, and when times are really bad! ☺
2. It is the nature of temptation and trial. The whole point is to get us to sin, either through weakness or trickery.
3. It has been said that nothing reveals what’s really in you like pressure. Both temptations and trials constitute pressure in the life of a believer...times of testing.
4. A few verses down, James writes, *“Jas 1:12 ESV 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.”*
5. This is a constant theme in James; to endure in holiness, to persevere and not lose your mind or your integrity!

6. Friends, how badly we need wisdom and understanding! How desperately do we need them to cover and protect us during moments of temptation and stress!
7. May we heed the Bible and get wisdom! 😊
 - **Pro 1:7 ESV** The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.
 - **Pro 2:6 ESV** For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;
 - **Pro 3:13-18 ESV** Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, (14) for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. (15) She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her. (16) Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. (17) Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. (18) She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed.
 - **Pro 5:1-4 ESV** My son, be attentive to my wisdom; incline your ear to my understanding, (2) that you may keep discretion, and your lips may guard knowledge. (3) For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil, (4) but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.
 - **Pro 8:1-5 ESV** Does not wisdom call? Does not understanding raise her voice? (2) On the heights beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand; (3) beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries aloud: (4) "To you, O men, I call, and my cry is to the children of man. (5) O simple ones, learn prudence; O fools, learn sense.
 - **Pro 9:1-6 ESV** Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn her seven pillars. (2) She has slaughtered her beasts; she has mixed her wine; she has also set her table. (3) She has sent out her young women to call from the highest places in the town, (4) "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!" To him who lacks sense she says, (5) "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. (6) Leave your simple ways, and live, and walk in the way of insight."
 - **Pro 11:2 ESV** When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom.
 - **Pro 17:24 ESV** The discerning sets his face toward wisdom, but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth.
 - **Pro 24:3 ESV** By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established;

Some Lessons and Takeaways on the Assurance of Wisdom:

1. "If any of you lacks wisdom" (v5)
 - The word for wisdom here in Greek is *sophia* and means to be "broad and full of intelligence; used of the knowledge of very diverse matters."
 - As we can see, God wants us to be wise!
 - We've all "lacked wisdom" at some point, and we all still do in certain areas and situations.
 - This part of the verse is a demonstration of **grace**. It means no special person, no special status...from the lowly to the exalted.
 - All of us can receive wisdom from our Lord, "For God shows no partiality." (Rom 2:11)
 - I've found that knowing God will grant wisdom is one thing; actually abiding in the wisdom He grants is another! What about you....? 😊

Jas 1:22 ESV But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

2. "Let Him ask God" (V5)
 - Since God wants us to walk in His wisdom, He exhorts us to ask!
 - Again, how many of us truly want God's wisdom? Think about it. This is an important question because once we have knowledge, we are **accountable** for it.

Joh 15:22 ESV If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.

Heb 10:26 ESV For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

Jas 4:17 ESV So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

- Are you sure you want to "ask God?" 😊 😊

3. "God will "give generously without reproach!" (V5)

- What a great blessing! If we ask...if we truly desire His wisdom, He will give it...and generously!
- Lest we forget, God **loves** to bless His children!

Jer 32:41 ESV I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul.

Joh 15:11 ESV These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

- Not only will He give wisdom, but He won't be mad about it! He will not correct or rebuke us for asking!
- **Precious friends, we can go to God for His wisdom in our weakness and despair, our stumbling and uncertainty, our confusion and pain, and HE WILL ANSWER! Hallelujah! ☺**

4. "Let him ask in faith with no doubting" (V6)

- Like in everything else, God is honored by our faith and **trust** in Him.
- In Matthew 9:28, the blind men who came to Christ were asked, "Do you believe I am able to do this?" They said, "Yes Lord."
- *Then he touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you." And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, "See that no one knows about it." (Mat 9:29-30 ESV)*
- *And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. (Heb 11:6 ESV)*
- With regard to the rest of the verse, again let us be blessed by the words of Matthew Henry:

That oneness, and sincerity of intention, and a steadiness of mind, constitute another duty required under affliction: *He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed.* To be sometimes lifted up by faith, and then thrown down again by distrust - to mount sometimes towards the heavens, with an intention to secure glory, and honour, and immortality, and then to sink again in seeking the ease of the body, or the enjoyments of this world - this is very fitly and elegantly compared to a wave of the sea, that rises and falls, swells and sinks, just as the wind tosses it higher or lower, that way or this. **A mind that has but one single and prevailing regard to its spiritual and eternal interest, and that keeps steady in its purposes for God, will grow wise by afflictions, will continue fervent in its devotions, and will be superior to all trials and oppositions.** (Emphasis mine)

5. Warnings against "double-mindedness" (vv7-8)

- The word translated "double-minded" in Greek is *dipsuchos*. It means "wavering, uncertain," or "divided in interest."
- Like any parent or giver of something precious, God wants our full attention and devotion. He loves when we are "all in" before He gives us something valuable.
- The warning in these verses is serious: One who is always wavering about Christ, uncertain about following Him, and **divided** in priority or interest concerning His Word, won't receive these precious gifts very often.

Friends, may we not only walk in the grace of joy, but in wisdom as well. May we rightly apply the knowledge our King has given us, even during times of trial. May we be stable in all our ways, and thereby, give Him great glory during times of suffering.

In Jesus' Name,
Amen.