

Sermon Follow-up — July 5, 2020 — James 1:19–27 – “Doers of the Word”

Other Scriptures Referenced — Isaiah 1; Amos 2

Sermon Recap:

What is James asking us to do as we posture ourselves before God’s word? How do we define freedom from Verse 25? Many moderns understand freedom as the absence of restrictions. James’ original readers would more likely have understood freedom as release from something that kept them from flourishing. For them, freedom meant becoming all that God has created us to be in the world that He created. This perfect law of God’s Word will show us freedom to flourish and be all that God has designed us to be.

To experience this freedom from God’s Word, we must approach the Word with three postures.

1. **With a posture of humility (v.21) and meekness.** Can we approach scripture with the humility that says, “I am not God, but You are. And as a human I may disagree with a few things, but I am here to listen. As my creator and the creator of the universe, You have something to say about how to live.”
2. **With a posture of vulnerability (v.22-25).** This posture allows the Word to bring light to things we don’t see or don’t like. We need to look into the law of liberty and freedom as a mirror to examine ourselves. We cannot look into the law as a mirror and walk away forgetting what it has shown us. When we go to scripture with vulnerability, we see that we are more sinful than we could possibly imagine and more loved than we could possibly imagine.
3. **With a posture of action (v.25-27).** What religion is pure and undefiled before God? To stay unstained from the world and to advocate for those that are hurting in our community: the poor, the widows, the marginalized.

James asked us to come to scripture in humility, acknowledging God as creator of the universe; in vulnerability, seeing that we are sinners; and then to close our Bibles and go to the streets and act as God’s hands in our communities.

There are two ways to fulfill the law: to obey it or to pay the penalty for breaking it. Not only did Jesus follow the law, he also paid the penalty for breaking the law even though he never broke it. He paid that penalty for you and for me. And he did this so that we have the opportunity to approach scripture with humility and vulnerability and then to take action with courage and remain unstained from the world while advocating for those in pain.

Application Questions:

1. Would you read all five chapters of James every day this week after saying this prayer: “LORD God, I come humbly and vulnerably to your word, ready to take action and live out what You speak to me”?
 - As you read each day, write down what you are learning and how you are putting it into action.

2. What are some less-healthy alternative postures we could take in approaching Scripture? (i.e. accepting parts I that affirm what I already believe while glossing over parts that I find difficult to follow.)
3. How do you sense the Holy Spirit calling you to apply James 1:22–23?
4. You may have heard it said, "The gospel is not "do" but "done." That's a way of saying it isn't about what we do but about what Jesus has done for us. Jesus fulfilled the Law and God's standard of righteousness on our behalf; He perfectly kept the Law Himself and He paid the penalty for the rest of us who have broken it. Yet, it's not a simple thing to balance God's acceptance of us through Jesus alongside the many commands in Scripture to put our faith into action. Keeping our balance between grace and performance can be a challenge. How are you managing that balance?