

James the Just - Part # 1

Count it all Joy

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehrung – 8/30/2003

Book of James was written ~ 60 AD

James was martyred in ~ 62 AD

Type of Epistle: General Epistle – it is written to all brethren.

James 1:

1 James, a **servant** of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes [of Israel] which are **scattered** abroad, greeting.

This letter is to God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Scattered is '*diaspora*.' We are still **dispersed** abroad.

This letter is to us Israel Twelve tribes (then and now)

This letter is to us the Church: This letter is timely – still applies today.

How did Israel come to be dispersed? They were sinners.

2 Kings 17:

22 For the children of **Israel walked in all the sins** of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them;

Jeroboam improperly changed God's Feast to the eighth month.

2 Kings 17:

23 Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away **out of their own land** to Assyria unto this day.

Humility is already evident (James, a servant of God) – in not claiming kinship – he is Jesus' ½ brother.

He did not consider himself to be equal with Jesus – yes they were brothers who grew up at the same table.

They were taught the same things, but James was the son of **Joseph**, Jesus was the **Son of God!**

Unlike men today who wish to attach their names to greater men, James – in humility – almost distanced himself from Jesus.

Servant is "*Dulos*" a bond servant – a slave – only a mere servant.

Theme: Let us live according to Godly principles.

More simply “Be doers of the law” – living according to the principles of God.

James is talking about **appropriate Christian behavior**.

Will the real writer of the Book of James please stand up!

There are at least 5 different men named “James” in the New Testament.

1. **Luke 6:** {All we have is just his name.}
16 “And Judas {i.e.Thaddaeus} the brother {father} of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor”. {Nothing else is known of him.}
2. **Luke 6:**
15 Matthew and Thomas, **James** the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes,” {one of the Twelve + Matthew’s brother} nothing else is known of him.
3. **Mark 15:** James the Younger:
40 “There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome”; {Nothing else is known of him so he is not connected to the book of James.}
4. **Mark 3:** James - Son of Thunder:
17 And James the *son* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder: {Brother of John + another member of the Twelve – always mentioned with John – first Apostle to be martyred in 44 AD – Too early for letter- beheaded by Herod Agrippa.

THIS IS OUR JAMES:

5. **Mark 6:**
3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of **James**, (next oldest) and Joses, (after Joseph) and of Juda, and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

Jesus had little or **no supporters** in His family – Including James.

- Mark 6:**
4 But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, **but** [except] in his own country, and among **his own kin**, [folks] and in his own house.

The family had no understanding – no sympathizing – they actually wanted to stop Jesus.

- John 7:**
5 For neither did his **Brothers** believe in him.

Mary kept these things in her heart – that is how we know them – she told these things to the apostle John who cared for her in her old age.

The book of James is like a New Testament Book of Proverbs.

There are 60 imperative statements – commands, exhortations, entreaties.

There are 23 quotes from the Sermon on the Mount.

Over 500 people had seen Jesus – including the Twelve apostles.

James is not one of the original Apostles.

1 Corinthians 15:

7 After that, He [Jesus] was seen of James; [brother] then of all the apostles.

Of all the men in the bible James, the **younger** ½ brother of Jesus is Most like Jesus.

If Joseph had had **older** children Jesus wouldn't be Heir to David's throne – Jesus had the legal right to reign [Royalty] – Jesus would have been invalidated if there were older brothers.

The genealogies in **Matt 1** and **Luke 3** show the genealogies came together in the marriage of Joseph and Mary.

Jesus is called the carpenter's son – not an older brother

Matthew 13:

55 Is not this the **carpenter's son**? is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

Jesus had at least 3 sisters... {all sisters vs. "both" sisters }

So there were at least 7 – possibly 8 brothers and sisters in Jesus' family.

James had not supported Jesus – until after the resurrection.

But James soon became the leader at Jerusalem – the Bible doesn't explain how or when he became the leader.

He had to have had all the necessary characteristics to take on that leading role at Jerusalem.

Leadership, knowledge, education, conversion, etc...

Good reputation, character.

He was younger, stable, patient,

He wasn't patient with hypocrisy –

James had watched Jesus grow up – without sin!!!

Boys playing together – James would know Jesus better than most.

Champion of the oppressed and conservative

Single minded

Educated and articulate – somehow – the Bible does not say how.

James has the **best** Greek in the New Testament.

James uses 70 Greek words not found elsewhere in the Scr.

Acts 1:

- 14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. [Some of the brothers (and sisters) became converted.]

But soon James became a “Pillar” and an apostle in Jerusalem.

Paul met with James, *et al* in laying out his “Church area.”

Galatians 1:

- 18 Then after three years I [Paul conferred not with flesh and blood:] went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. [Paul was directed by God to meet with Peter and James]
- 19 But other of the apostles saw I none, **save James** the Lord's brother.

Galatians 2:

- 9 And when **James**, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. [Jews and Israel]

Interestingly, Peter **defers** to James when he gets out of prison.

Acts 12:

- 13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.
- 14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.

Acts 12:

- 17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go **show** these things **unto James**, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

James was a man of substance at the Jerusalem conference:

Acts 15:

- 13 And after they had held their peace, **James** answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: [James is Chairman who lays out the Church policy.]

Acts 15:

- 19 Wherefore **my sentence is**, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

Acts 15:

- 22 Then **pleased it the apostles and elders**, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas:

Later:

Paul has been working more with the Gentiles – teaching the Truth

Acts 21:

17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

These were very rough times...Before conversion Saul/Paul was brutal.

Acts 21:

18 And the *day* following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

Remember how Paul had to go into the Temple with 4 men with vows – 7days - not against the Law – Gentiles were not allowed in Temple – whole town in an uproar – Paul almost killed – saved by the police in the nick of time – bound in chains – Paul spoke in Hebrew – Acts 22. – leads to Paul's imprisonment

Martin Luther (fonder of Protestantism) called James' epistle – an “Epistle of Straw.” Luther did not like the epistle of James because:

No Meat, No Christianity, No Salvation, No “Jesus”...

Contradictions,

Didn't preach Jesus like Paul and Peter's writings did...

Martin Luther wanted to see more about the “resurrection,” and the appearance of Jesus (what he looked like)

But James saw a need to **Build** on the other writings – not repeat them. Only Peter and John would write later.

Brethren – Labor with me in this.

The night comes when no man can work.

This is not the time to take it easy and be good to ourselves. The Truth is being watered down today – who will preserve it?

2 Peter 2:

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of **truth** shall be evil **spoken** of.

The Title comes from here: **Count it all Joy**

The world cannot grasp this:

Key to Perfection:

James 1:

2 My brethren, **count it all joy** when ye fall into divers **temptations**; “TRIALS”

'All' means wholly or completely.

Temptations = Putting to the test

Jeremiah 17:

10 I the LORD search the heart, / try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of **his doings**. [What are the fruits of our **lives**?]

God is working in our lives: God's Plan is being worked out in us:

Romans 8:

28 And we know that **all things** work together **for good** to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

That is why James is able to say, "Count it all Joy when hard trials come upon us.

Why does God allow Trials to come to Faithful Christians?

One reason is to learn **patience**.

Key to Perfection:

James 1:

3 Knowing this, that the **trying** of your faith works **patience**.

Romans 5:

3 And not only so, but we **glory** in **tribulations** [hard trials] also: knowing that tribulation **works patience**;

4 And patience [works] experience; and experience [works] hope: [Trials begin this good progression that goes to perfection.]

James 1:

4 But let patience [perseverance] have her perfect work, that ye may be **perfect and entire**, wanting nothing.

If we don't know how to solve a problem – if we need answers – Go to God.

James will write about two basic points in this Book:

1. **Keys to Perfection** {Heb 6 - Doctrine # 7 } &
2. **False Religion**

Key to Perfection:

James 1:

5 If any of you lack **wisdom**, let him ask [diligently seek] of God, that gives to all men liberally [generously], and upbraids not [God won't criticize us]; and it shall be given him.

But don't think we can play both sides against the middle. We can't have one foot in the world and one foot with God. We can't practice false religion and expect good results.

James 1:

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. [No stability there.]

Notice this **Worldly Status** counts for **NOTHING** with God.

There are those who believe that because of office, rank, or position – it gives them some great leverage with God. They think that God smiles on their endeavors more than plain folks.

Money, prestige, and class distinction do **not** impress God.

James 1:

7 For let not **that man** think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. [Do not be self-deceived]

You cannot have both worlds.

The world likes to “give God his due.”

Mention His name

Call on Him

Give Him an HOUR every week

Spread some religious paraphernalia about. [statues, crosses, medals, candles, etc.]

And then go about their business all week – leaving God out.

It can't be God's way and Satan's way – it is **one** or the other.

False Religion:

James 1:

8 A **double minded** man is unstable in all his ways.

Double minded = **self serving** vs **servant** of Christ as James was.

James 1:

9 Let the brother of low degree [humble] **rejoice** in that he is exalted:

10 But the rich, in that he is made low [brought down]: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

11 For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withers the grass, and the flower thereof falls, and the grace of the fashion of it perishes: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

Eternal Life:**James 1:**

- 12** Blessed is the man that endures temptation [Trials]: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

We must work our way through each trial – and figure out what we are able as to its cause, and think about what we can learn from it.

Process leading to Eternal Death:**James 1:**

- 13** Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of [by] God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts He any man: [God is never mean spirited.]

Jesus taught us to pray: Deliver us from the Evil one.

James 1:

- 14** But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his away of his own lust [longing, desire], and enticed.
- 15** Then when lust hath conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, **brings forth death.** [Sin takes place in the mind – even before any wrong action take place.]
- 16** Do not err [be led astray], my beloved brethren.

Key to Perfection**James 1:**

- 17** Every good gift and every perfect [complete, mature] gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, [*parallage* no wobble] neither shadow of turning. [No wiggle room Plain Truth – God is a straight shooter.]
- 18** Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.
- 19** Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

When we get angry – we are not doing God's work or will.

James 1:

- 20** For the wrath of man works not the righteousness of God.
- 21** Wherefore lay apart all filthiness [dirt, malice, immorality] and superfluity [overflowing] of naughtiness [wickedness], and receive with meekness [a truly teachable and entreatable spirit] the engrafted [implanted into our minds] Word, which is able to save your souls.

James is explaining that God's Word must be converted into **Action**

We find the **Theme** of James here in verse 22:

Key to Perfection

James 1:

22 But **be ye doers of the word**, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.
[Don't be careless hearers – non-heeding hearers.]

God's Word must be converted into **Action**.

James 1:

23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a **Mirror**:

24 For he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was.

James is saying that a mirror shows the dirt on our face – but it does not remove the dirt – action on our part is required.

Law keeping does not remove sin. Law shows us where the sin is though.

Key to Perfection

James 1:

25 But whoso looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, he being **not** a forgetful hearer, but a **doer** of the work, this man shall be blessed in **his deed**. [He will be blessed in the things he does.]

Perfect law of liberty = The Truth shall make you free **John 8:32**.

Blessed in his deed means blessed in the things we are doing – **Spiritual blessings** will come first – the best kind of blessings – because they lead to Eternal life)

But a doer of the work = living according to Godly standards in our lives.

Being prompted by the will of God.

The wrong way to get ahead:

Proverbs 6:16

Some people try to get ahead by running down others. They put others down in order to elevate themselves. They try to make others look bad. To promote themselves – they fabricate stories about those they want to get ahead of.

You cannot get ahead in that way.

Yes, there is a time to point out sin. When a brother or sister in the Church is sinning we must turn them around because we are to be our brother's keeper.

James 5:

- 19** Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth [sin], and one convert him; [help him to get back on track to the Kingdom...]
- 20** Let him know, that he which converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

Proverbs 6:

- 16** These six *things* doth the LORD hate: yea, seven *are* an **abomination** unto Him: [We do not want any part of these 7 things.]
- 17** A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,
- 18** A heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,
- 19** A false witness *that* speaks lies, and he that sows discord among brethren.

James says that we must Speak the Truth only: Don't look for opportunities to run others down.

Key to Perfection**James 1:**

- 26** If any man among you **seems to be religious**, and bridles not his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is vain. [People's lives can be destroyed by false accusations.] 'Vain' means wasting your time.

True Religion:

Brethren , let's be careful not to have a **Substitute Religion**.

Substitute Religion is a **false** Faith.

Many of our brethren got so "religious" that they are no longer with God – Yet they **seemed to be religious** (v26).

They didn't eat pork chops...

They didn't eat easter bunnies...

They didn't have statues...

They didn't put up christmas trees and christmas lights...

They didn't eat shrimp or catfish...

They left home on haloween...

They didn't go out on Friday night...

They didn't, didn't, didn't, didn't and thought they were Christians.

And they didn't practice Pure Religion.

Yes, we do not do those things!

But those things do not define our **Christian behavior** or our **relationship with God**.

Key to Perfection:

James 1:

27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Jesus takes Pure Religion **Personally**.

Matthew 25:

45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not **to** one of the **least** of these, ye did *it* not **to me**.

Pure religion!

'Fatherless' is an example of those with real needs – in their afflictions:

They can be a real burden...

They might be angrier...

They can lack motivation - Need a jump start... lacking emotional balance, self esteem – self worth – Not good managers...

Without a network of family support, community support,

Yes, they bring problems on themselves...

God says to 'visit' them.

That word 'visit' does not mean that we should pop in on them once a year and say, "Hi."

'Visit' means visit their needs – bring about some solutions – make a difference in their lives - in their affliction.

End: James the Just – Part 1