

**22S24 James 1:1-8 (Part 1) Profit of Trials**

Hello everyone. Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. I hope everyone is doing well. Today we are beginning our study of James with James 1:1-8.

Before we start, we need to understand a little about this amazing short letter from James. Who was James? Historians are not sure. Many believe this is James the half-brother of Jesus or even another early Church leader. Most believe this is the same James that appears in the book of Acts and was the leader of the Jerusalem Council in Acts Chapter 15. We don't know the exact date it was written but there are indications that this was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD, but we really don't know. The best guess is 50-60AD. Which would make this one of the earliest New Testament letters. James was writing to Hebrew believers scattered among the nations who are facing many trials and persecution. The main theme in this letter is patient perseverance in the midst of the trouble of life. James is encouraging his readers to actively live what they have learned in Christ. He has strong messages about various sins but includes pride, hypocrisy, favoritism, and slander.

I'm reading from the New American Standard version (NAS) today. But of course, you can use whatever translation you choose.

Let's read James 1:1-8 (NAS) *<sup>1</sup>James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings. <sup>2</sup>Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials, <sup>3</sup>knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. <sup>4</sup>And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. <sup>5</sup>But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. <sup>6</sup>But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup>For that person ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, <sup>8</sup>being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

**Let's pray. Dear heavenly father, guide our discussion today such that your message is clear to each of us. As we read your word from James, help us see what James wants his readers to understand and why. I pray that you help me stay out of the way so your hope and peace can be shared with us. I pray this in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.**

James begins this letter with a customary greeting. This is great for us because it helps us to understand who James is writing to and why. So, let's break these verses down a little more. Starting with James 1:1 (NAS) *<sup>1</sup>James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings.* He is writing to Hebrews who are not in the Holy Land. They are dispersed abroad. So this letter is going to Churches in Asia, Asia-Minor, Macedonia, Africa and elsewhere.

But then James says something amazing in James 1:2-4 (NAS) *<sup>2</sup>Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials, <sup>3</sup>knowing that the testing of*

*your faith produces endurance. <sup>4</sup>And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.* James is telling us to face our hardships, our trials and troubles with joy. How do you do with that. I know I struggle to be joyful in the middle of my troubles. But James goes on to tell us why we can be joyful. Its not because of our situation but we are joyful because we know holding strong to our faith in the middle of the trouble produces endurance. And that endurance can lead to us understanding we really lack nothing. God is giving us what we need, even in times when we don't have what we think we need.

Then James says in James 1:5 (NAS) *<sup>5</sup>But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.* It seems like a bit of a change of subject but it's not. James is telling us, the reason we don't have joy in the middle of our trouble is probably because we lack the wisdom to see it properly. But this is also one of those great promises from God. If you don't understand, then ask God for understanding. God has promised to give us the wisdom we need generously. God is not surprised when we don't understand but we need to humble ourselves and ask for the wisdom we need.

But then James ends this section by saying in James 1:6-8 (NAS) *<sup>6</sup>But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup>For that person ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, <sup>8</sup>being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.* Other places in the Bible say we don't get because we don't ask, and we don't receive because we don't understand what to ask for. James is making this same point. We should never ask something from God while not believing God will do it. What's the point in that? Of course, God will not reward such double thought. You either trust God or you don't. You either surrender control of your situation to God or you don't. You can't sort of believe. You either believer or you don't. Why would a double minded man expect anything from God?

Let's review.

- 1) Joy? James is telling us to be joyful no matter what we are facing in our life. Be joyful on the mountain top when things are great and be joyful in the valley when things are not great. We know that God will use our situation for our growth and the growth of others. God's will, not ours. Trust God.
- 2) Wisdom? Why wisdom? Well why not. One thing all of us need is more wisdom. When we are facing hard times and don't feel joyful, we need more wisdom. This wisdom allows us to see the bigger picture beyond ourselves. Wisdom helps us to understand. So ask and God promises to give you what you lack in understand. Just Ask.
- 3) Doubleminded? Another word we use in English is wishy-washy. It means you can't sort of believe. You either trust God or you don't. no grey areas. You either surrender control of your life to Jesus or you don't. no other options. You either follow Jesus or you don't. There are no parttime followers. Christians must be fully devoted followers of Jesus, period.

**Let's Pray. Heavenly Father thank you for this letter from James. Help us to read and meditate on this letter so we can hear the message you have for us. Help us to remember who you are Lord. You are our king, king of kings. You are our Lord, Lord over everyone. We can trust you, Lord. Help us to ask you for wisdom when we don't understand. I pray this in your Name Lord Jesus. Amen**

Let me leave you with this, James was not writing to us that is clear from the introduction to this letter. But his message is still applicable to us. Trust God. Trust God. Trust God. Any other questions.

Thank you for joining me for our study of James. Please email me comments or feedback. Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.