

James 25-06-29a

Greetings. Welcome to Sunday at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 29th of June 2025.

We're in the epistle of James as it's labeled in the New King James and we are at the promise in verse 17 that every good and perfect gift is from above and comes down from the father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning reviewing these gifts is concomitant with our investigations here. So let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and study and we'll explore. Father, it is always a great privilege to spend this time together looking at the truth of your word receiving the ministry of your Holy Spirit to transcend the limitations of the presentation and of our distract ability and fallibility as humans in this life and to be energized to be transformed by the renewing of our minds to be renewed by the truth so that we can begin to grasp your good and acceptable and perfect will we pray that as we look at this section of your word and the passages that shine upon it that the Holy Spirit will find us ready pupils able to learn ready to remember and put into practice the principles that will lead us to service and function in the kingdoms to come as well as in the present day.

We ask these things in Jesus name. Amen. Our passage is tied to the earlier exhortation and explanation in verse 4 and 5 which actually began in verse 2 but the impetus is in 4 and 5 recognizing that testing in this life is an opportunity.

That's verse 2 and the opportunity is to develop patience endurance hoopoe Monet which is to bear up under to remain under Pharaoh ph ero is the word that means to bear or carry and you sometimes find this word by itself or in combination but here it is. Hooper which is. To be under as in Hypo and then Monet which is from Minnow which is the word that means to remain and so often when difficulties and trials come we want to be delivered out from we want an exit.

We like to think about the verse that says with every test there's a way of escape and we saw in the past few sessions that that's really not the idea that there's going to be a hatch that we can blow there's a ejection lever we can pull and will be taken away patience is to remain under to accept whatever load God asks us to carry whatever burden we are to bear whatever undertaking we are assigned and so this comes to the fore under pressure when we are tested and our testing has two components. We've seen the different kinds of testing there's testing for Approval testing to show the genuineness of our faith testing as Abraham experienced on the Mount when asked to sacrifice his son according to God's command. But there is also the kind that is.

Leading us away drawing us away because of our own desires and we saw this picked up in verse 13. Let no one say when he is tested when he is tempted when he is put to the test. God is trying to get me to fail.

God does not fail. God is not tested and he doesn't test others to try to get them to fail. We

used to have little chunks of metal when I was taking engineering courses that had a they were rectangular blocks if you will and there was a line scribed halfway down one side you put it in a machine and it grasps each end of the block and then at a precisely calibrated and measured.

Effect the machine began to pull on the block to see at what point it would fail and different alloys could be tested to see which ones are most likely to endure. But the point is you keep pulling and pulling and pulling until it fails. The point is to get it to fail and measure how much pressure there was.

That is not what God does to us. He doesn't test us to find our breaking point. But almost all of our testing does have two components take Abraham taking Isaac to the top of Mount Moriah once again to the top of the mountain.

If he had not trusted God if he was not able to believe the promise that said in Isaac shall thy seed be called through you all nations of the earth will be blessed. Would it have involved a sinful act? Could Abraham's emotions have gotten the better of him? Could his selfish desire to have and keep his son have outweighed his faith in the promise of God? If you think about it every test is not only endurable and produces patience. God gives us grace.

There is grace to help in time of need. We can ask for it. We can have wisdom to understand how best to operate in that time of testing.

But if we fail through lack of faith as James describes in verses six through eight. We're double-minded and unstable and the double-mindedness is the sin side of the test. If we endure we will reign with him.

You remember this from our previous study in the pastoral's. And failure isn't just lacking faith. It involves caving into our own desires to our nature instead of pursuing God's new nature created in us.

It is doing our own will instead of thy will be done. So when we come to the conceiving that takes place in our own desires our desires hatch out rationalization justification blame. I will blame and shame someone else.

It's their fault. It's anybody's fault. It's especially heinous.

If we say it is God's fault. Why did God bring us out here in the desert to die of starvation say the Israelites and they began to desire the leeks and garlicks of Egypt. It was a faith test.

And they failed it and the reason they failed it is they chose the option of catering to what the King James calls lust personal desire. So this is our struggle day by day. If you just step back for a minute and think here I am.

I'm a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. I hope to be in glory one day with him and the things that he has gone to prepare. There is his coming millennial kingdom, which is literal thousand year

reign on this earth fulfilling the material substantial genuine promises that God made to his people Israel prior to the coming of Christ.

People want to spiritualize it. They want to explain it away. It's metaphorical.

It's figurative. It's this it's that a lot of people are going to be in for a big surprise when the Lord Jesus Christ sits on the actual throne of David and rules from Jerusalem over the millennial Israel and from that the millennial world and for a thousand years. There will be perfect justice.

There will be swift recompense. He will crush those who oppose like potter's vessels ruling with a rod of iron. People don't like the rod of iron Jesus.

They want the gentle Jesus with a child on his lap. That is not the biblical view. So when those days come we want to be on the positive side.

We want to be useful. We want the Lord Jesus to be glad he died for us and saved us and redeemed us and made us capable of good works that God has foreordained that we should walk in them. They should characterize our lives.

So we don't want to be on the opposite side with lust conceiving and bringing forth sin and sin when it comes to fruition brings forth death. It's sort of the opposite of conception of a little child and bringing it forth and you notice that whether it's a positive example or a negative example the life of this death if you will begins at conception when desire conceives it gives birth to sin and there's no abortion of the sin when it conceives it is going to come forth. We have to prevent the concept the conception the putting together of our desire with these human rationalizations justifications and so on.

We've got to as Don Knotts used to say as Barney Fife nip it in the bud stop it before it gets started. What is the 100% foolproof way to avoid pregnancy? Never a single failure in the history of mankind abstinence abstinence works 100% of the time. When desire tries to conceive when our sinful coveting or grasping or deciding our plan is better than God's plan.

Stop it there. Don't let it conceive. Don't let it fester.

Don't let it simmer. Don't let it begin to metastasize and spread and become a thing see it. It is not a sin to be tempted.

It is a sin to let that temptation hook into our desires and conceive. So that's the idea here. And he goes immediately in verse 16.

Don't be fooled my brethren. Don't be fooled about what don't be fooled that well didn't God say that trust in the Lord with all my heart and lean not to my own understanding and he will give me the desires of my heart and people say the desires of my heart are God-given. So if I want a thing it must be God's will.

I wouldn't want this except, you know misreading the passage and using a rationalization using

a an alternate interpretation. If you want to see how this happens in the world of those who are same sex attracted you can look up on your own time side be theology. And this is there is a way to be gay in the church.

You can be a faithful believer and be gay. I don't recommend it. But if you're curious or if you have the need to understand this because of circumstances look up Elisa Childers and she does a great job of briefly explaining how this infiltration into the church is corrupting groups and deceiving people into believing that they are right with God while harboring perversion and practicing that which is proscribed in Scripture.

We don't want to be in that crowd. We are children of truth. We have been born again by the word of truth.

The church is the pillar and foundation of truth be not deceived. The world is rife with deceptions old and not so old circumstantial socially based want to go along to get along types of falsehood. Be not deceived my beloved brethren.

This exhortation is given in love. A desire to see us succeed to grow in grace and knowledge every good gift and every perfect gift is from above comes down from the father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning notice in verse 18 of his own will. He chose to do this according to his own purposes and plans he brought us forth how by the word of truth.

Do you see the parallel ideas here of bringing something forth when lust conceives it brings forth sin when God conceives he brings us forth by his word of truth. We as regenerate born-again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are children of truth. God conceived us with his own word with his own truth of his own will brought us forth by the word of truth for a purpose.

Didn't just say I'm only let me just make a bunch of creatures will have a crowd. Have some social life will all be in one big tent. He brought us forth that we might be a kind of first fruits of his creation.

A kind of first fruits notice. It says it doesn't say the first fruits does it? It says a kind of first fruits. What does this mean? Think about planting cultivating harvesting bringing in the sheaves bringing in the barley bringing in the figs bringing in the dates bringing in the grapes.

God has a lot of different crops. We are one kind. We are a peculiar people.

We are unique in that. We are a gift to the Lord Jesus Christ a victory trophy for his work on the cross. He redeemed all the believers of every age, but we are a special people.

We are a particular kind of first fruits. Dedicated as a gift from the father to his son. We are Christ's body.

We are his bride in figurative terms. We belong to him. We are in him uniquely Old Testament believers never were and because of that we have a new covenant founded on new and better

promises than what was given to Israel.

What are some of these promises? We know there is a coming kingdom. We alluded to it earlier. It is the 1,000 year Millennial.

Reign of Christ on this Earth over Israel proper regenerate resurrected in the sense of resuscitation Israel. They will have human bodies. They will be susceptible to death.

But they will be brought back everyone who placed his faith in God Hebrews 11 6 without faith. It is impossible to please him. He that comes to God must believe that he is and that he rewards those who diligently seek him.

That is the basis of Old Testament faith Hebrews 11 is the Old Testament faith chapter and they are our example. These things were written for our instruction. Those people will live Daniel 12 1 and 2 those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake.

Some to a resurrection of righteousness others to shame and contempt some will be in the kingdom and some will be out. This is a teaching that applies to us by extension God's dealings with his people Israel as goes Israel in the Old Testament. We can apply individually as believers in the new by God's grace through God's provision.

I want to enter into blessing and service and function. I want to reflect God's glory the way Israel has done at points in the past and will do in the kingdom age. So what about the kingdom? Part of what we can expect as a good and perfect gift.

That comes down from the father of lights is participation in the kingdom. We are not subjects of the kingdom. This is so widely misunderstood with kingdom now King Jesus.

Let's do kingdom work. We are kingdom people. He's our King.

Do you notice the striking emphatic absence of any such language in the epistles to the church or Jesus own letters to the seven churches in Revelation chapter 2 and 3. There is nothing remotely suggesting this kind of emphasis this kind of talk this kind of terminology this kind of viewpoint on life is not found. Find me a place where Paul says you all need to be doing kingdom work your kingdom people. You need to be praying to King Jesus.

It is dissonant. It is discordant. It is out of step.

It is out of line with the actual biblical evidence be not deceived. Let no one deceive you my beloved brethren. Don't be fooled you get distracted into this kind of thing and you wind up with one of the oldest tricks in the book advancement by what you do eat a piece of fruit.

You'll get smarter Old Testament do the works of the law. I was reading some of the Mishnah the tractates and things the rabbinical view of righteousness and a lot of people think that that's what's going on in the book of James the commentator that writes in expositors Greek New Testament thinks and there's a funny phrase. I should have written it down where he says

the author of this letter James was not yet fully familiar with.

Righteousness by faith and he still stuck in the Old Testament righteousness by works and that's why he says what he says a little bit later on and the Holy Spirit is the author. The Holy Spirit didn't kind of forget that there was a new program and let slip some Old Testament works notions into the epistle of James will see it when we get there. But this is of a piece.

This is the mind of Christ that is inspired by the Holy Spirit himself. And what does it say? We can be easily deceived we can be fooled if we stray from the word of truth. We are children of truth.

So these gifts that God is going to bring one of the things you can look at and we've seen it in the past. It's probably a good time to review it is the role of the kingdom in our own expectation. And I have conveniently organized our understanding of the kingdom both for Old Testament and new.

We look at the Old Testament we observe we interpret we apply we look at the last seven years of the Old Testament age in Revelation and we observe and we interpret and we apply we are not in that time but it is sent to the church. That's why letters to seven churches are in chapter two and three come up here. I will show you John Church Age Apostle things are about to happen.

He did. Why didn't God bring Elijah back and say Elijah come up here and you can tell this to the people who are going to live the last seven years of their age. It's for us.

It's written for our instruction. So what was the teaching? What was kingdom teaching to Israel the Lord Jesus? Summed this up and emphasized it right at the close of that Old Testament age minus the seven years. So there are three relationships that an Old Testament Saint can have to the kingdom.

You can see the kingdom. Or not see the kingdom. See it or not see it.

You can enter the kingdom or not enter it. You can inherit in the kingdom or not inherit. As with our study of love where there are subcategories important subcategories with distinctions of conditions for the expression of Christian love there are conditions under which someone will or won't see the kingdom a believer will or won't enter the kingdom a believer will or won't inherit.

This is specifically given to originally Old Testament Israel, but the concepts are the same. God has no variation or shadow of turning and the criteria by which he gauges the level of access the level of blessing and reward and opportunity in the future doesn't change that much between Old Testament and new if anything we are held to a higher standard because we have more revelation from those to whom much is given much is required much is expected seeing the kingdom John 3 3 soon as I say John 3 you say what? Nicodemus John 3 is Nicodemus John 4 wedding feast of Cana you you will know these things John 1 the word is with God the word was

God Hebrews 11 faith first Corinthians 13 love you should know these off the top of your head John 3 Nicodemus 3 3 Nicodemus we got to have a verse to tell us that he came to Jesus by night and to make his comment. We know you must be from God.

No one can do the things you do. What does Jesus say in verse 3? Right off the bat opening salvo. Truly verily most assuredly I say to you Nicodemus unless a man is born again.

He cannot see the kingdom of God. Born again is spiritual regeneration. One has to be spiritually born.

What does it say in our passage of his own will he brought us forth he caused us to be born by the word of truth. If you are not born by the word of truth Old Testament or new. Hebrews 11 6 believe that he is and that he rewards those who seek him.

The demons believe that he is and they tremble. But they don't have an avenue of receiving good and perfect gifts. He's not their father.

They don't like the light. They like darkness. Unless a man is born again.

He cannot see the kingdom. Why is that? Because the unregenerate dead live not throughout the kingdom age throughout the thousand years of the Millennium. Church age believers have been raised at the rapture seven years prior to the inception of that kingdom Old Testament Saints Saints being those who are born of truth will rise.

Daniel 12 1 and 2 many other passages Ezekiel Valley of dry bones prophesy to these bones prophesy is speak truth. What happens when Ezekiel in the vision speaks truth? Flesh and sinews cover the bones they stand up and breath enters them and they become a mighty host born of truth. That is what is going to qualify Old Testament types for resuscitation.

Notice their flesh is reconstituted. They stand on the earth as a mighty host. They don't ascend to meet the Lord in the air in Ezekiel's vision.

See the kingdom. You won't be alive to see the kingdom. The kingdom starts out with Christ's presence and his glorified church accompanying him and resuscitated Old Testament Saints.

Everybody that didn't jump the fence at Pentecost into church age status is heir to the Old Testament covenants. I will take out your heart of stone. I will give you a heart of flesh.

I will pour out my spirit on you. That's future for Israel. The spirit was not poured out without measure in the Old Testament specific individuals judges Kings prophets received the spirit.

For limited time and special purpose. I will pour out my spirit on all of your flesh. Have you ever noticed that the resurrected church has no promise of indwelling or filling of the Holy Spirit? It's the resuscitated Israel the resuscitated Old Testament Saints that have that promise.

We won't need it because we are like him. Does not appear what we shall be but we know that

we shall be like him. We will see him as he is.

See the kingdom got to be a believer. And this is actually true for anyone in the human race. You've got to be a believer to see the kingdom.

John 3 3 the second and more fulsome opportunity is to enter the kingdom. I don't want to be out in the dim opposite side of the globe looking at the glow. I can look over the horizon here on a clear night or especially if there's a little bit of low clouds and I can see the glow from the direction of Tulsa.

Tulsa's 40 odd miles away, but the glow from the lights. Illuminates the horizon and in some cases illuminates the clouds above the city and it can be seen from a distance. I can't see light one building one person one in Tulsa from here.

I can just see the glow. Heaven forbid that that is all we can see because we are at such a distance from God's kingdoms in the ages to come. We want to enter the kingdom and seeing and entering there's not that much distance between them.

I can see the outskirts of a city, but if I really want to see the city, I want a guide and a day to go see the sites and have it explained to me. And did you know this is here? And here's the Gilcrease Museum. Here's the National Bank of Tulsa Tower here early.

All of the things in the city that are wonderful to see when you go visit a town go to Dallas. You got to go up in a rotating restaurant. You got to go to the school book depository and so on to really see it.

You need to be in it, right? And so the emphasis is on the privilege of entering the kingdom. I don't want to just be alive and see it. I want to enter.

So two verses later in John 3 still talking in Nicodemus. Truly, truly, verily, verily, most assuredly, I say to you Nicodemus unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. People like to say verse 3 and verse 5 are synonymous seeing is entering entering is seeing.

I wouldn't quibble. The point is look at the additional condition. It isn't enough to just be born again.

You're born of water and the spirit. Why does he change the terminology here? We know that he's talking about spiritual birth, but now he distinguishes born of water. What is that? Born of water.

What's the one thing that you know for sure distinguishes angels and human beings? We are earthly. Some science fiction fantasy put in an alien's mouth a description of human beings as ugly bags of water. The human body is better than 90% water.

We're of the earth. We are born when the mother's water breaks. And when you see a baby

born, you're born of water.

There's all kinds of connections there that you can explore, but human beings are born of water and to enter the kingdom, which is earthly and is for people. It's not an angelic kingdom. It isn't ruled by angels, isn't populated by angels.

It isn't overseen by angels. It is human. And to enter the kingdom, you have to be human.

But a regenerate human being born of water and the spirit. Water and the spirit to enter and the emphasis on the spirit is in the same way that you talk about somebody who is David son of Jesse or the Lord Jesus son of David. When you mention this, there is an emphasis on that forbear that causative agent that that is linked in a meaningful way to the person and those who enter the kingdom are linked in a meaningful way to the spirit.

It isn't just an objective operation where the Holy Spirit causes someone to be regenerate. When Jesus is described as son of David, this is David's best self. This is the faithful David the obedient David the courageous David the sweet psalmist of Israel who has so many wonderful appreciations and insights and glorifications of God in heaven.

Jesus is son of David because he is like David in these positive respects and those who enter the kingdom are like the spirit. They bear the fruit of the spirit. They are spiritually active activated.

They are alive and not dead when it comes to bearing spiritual fruit Matthew chapter 5 verse 20. Remember that first one was John 3 5. This is Matthew 5 20 Jesus. And once again, your mental map of the New Testament.

What is Matthew 5 through 7? Sermon on the Mount 5 20 of Matthew unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. You will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. You might see it.

But you won't enter it unless you have righteousness by faith. The righteousness of the Pharisees was manufactured in human strength for human observation human approval. According to human standards of what is right and wrong.

This does not partake of the spirit. The righteousness of the Pharisees and the scribes wasn't. Motivated or produced by the spirit or any appeal to God's standards.

Unless your righteousness exceeds this human good. You will by no means enter the kingdom. So good and perfect gifts imparted to us by the father of lights whose standards whose conditions do not change.

How can we not be fooled when people offer other paths other ways other variations of Christianity than what is sourced in the word of truth. That's what we're looking at. We'll continue that look when we come back from the break.