



This & That

Class Six

*James is the source of several great "One Liners,"
and these gems are a great lesson to us today.*

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- What I hope that we have seen this week is that sometimes facing the message of the Truth requires us to look at our beliefs in a **Radical & Different** way
- That while we are grateful to those that went before us, we do not base our beliefs on the traditions of men
- Our doctrines are founded and based on solid scriptural concepts and we do well to protect them with vigor
- But, we need to be sure that we are not becoming entrenched, dogmatic and legalistic in our dealings with the members of our Ecclesia
- Christ's **Radical & Different** message was one of grace, forgiveness and inclusion
- Yes, working out those concepts in messy, flawed human lives is hard and sometimes very uncomfortable
- But, that is what we are called to do by our master
- And that is the message of James

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- I hope that we have seen that a correct understanding of the concept of **Faith & Works** can be a motivating and inspiring factor in our spiritual lives
- We don't believe like many modern-day Christians that all we have to do is believe and we are saved
- But, we also don't fall into the natural, human tendency to somehow start thinking that we can earn our salvation by checking the boxes on some eternal checklist of good deeds
- Neither extreme is correct, and both are dangerous
- We need to understand that our lives need to be **FULL** of good deeds, but not because we think that we are unfavorable in God's sight unless we do so
- We need to understand that God chose us and loved us as sinners
- Even though we were sinners He loved us so much that he gave his only son to die for us
- Understanding, believing, and actually having **FAITH** in that simple fact is what will motivate us to fill our lives with good deeds

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- I also hope that we have come to look at **Rules & Regulations** in a different way
- The Scriptures are abundantly clear that rules have no value in checking the indulgences of the flesh
- Although it's a natural reaction for us to want to set rules, we can't regulate righteousness, and regardless of how many rules we make for ourselves, and for others, the rules themselves will not stop us from sinning
- I hope that we have shown that there is only one true way to control sinful behavior
- Transforming ourselves from the **INSIDE OUT**, by connecting with God in an intimate and personal relationship is the only hope we have of controlling ourselves

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- It is only through **Effectual & Fervent** Prayer that we can really change things
- Only by confessing our sins to a person who we see as acting righteously in that specific area will we begin to feel God's power changing us for the better
- God is willing and able to perform miraculous works in the lives of believers

- But, we have to ask **believing that we have received** for Him to act in our lives

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- I hope that we have been reminded that out of the same mouth comes forth both **Bitter & Sweet**
- And these things ought not to be...
- We talked about how the tongue is a small member, but the root and source of many terrible and wicked sins
- The tongue has a great potential to condemn us
- But, if you can control the tongue, the greatest sinner in your body, then by virtue of controlling the greater, you can gain control over the lesser
- The tongue is primitive, it is wild, it is untamed, it is savage, it is uncivilized, undisciplined, irrepressible, and irresponsible
- We need to turn to God in prayer for help in controlling our tongue
- True believers speak with a tongue that is under control, under the control of a loving God that wants the best for us
- So, we've looked at some important and wonderful themes in James
- But, we have one more class to share together
- What am I going to speak about?
- There are so many more topics in James that I want to explore

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- James speaks quite a bit about the topic of **Favoritism & Discrimination**, and I'd like to look at that today

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- Another topic that James treats with much importance is the concept of **Rich & Poor**, and we can't ignore his message there

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- James speaks of **Worldliness & Godliness** in Chapter 4, and we want to touch on that for a moment or two

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- I love his section on **Today & Tomorrow** we will go into such and such a city... and I'd like to speak about that also

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- And we'll end with the same verse that we began with, James discussion of how we treat the **Fatherless & Widows**
- So, now you see why we have such an enigmatic title for this class

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- Because the class really is about a little of **This & That**
- James is often referred to as the Proverbs of the New Testament, and is full of great little gems that we just can't leave untouched
- I'm sure I won't do any of them justice, but I'm tempted to try not to leave any undone

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- Let's begin with the discussion on **Favoritism & Discrimination**
- James begins Chapter 2 with this important topic

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- James 2:1-4 NIV

- 1) My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, **don't show favoritism.**
- 2) Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in.
- 3) If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet,"
- 4) have you not **discriminated** among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

- The message that James continues to point out is the importance of applying the Word of God to your everyday life
- Remember, "whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.
- A great place for us to apply the Word of God is in the area of **Favoritism**

- As the leader of the Ecclesia in Jerusalem Church, James' argument is directed towards the special treatment being given by the early Christians to the wealthy
- James admonished the church to avoid the divisive distinctions of social class which can destroy true fellowship
- When one group won't associate with another group because they are not of the same social class, then how could you ever have fellowship?
- These distinctions aren't as readily apparent today in our middle-class society, but the concept of Favoritism still exists

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- I'd like to consider four ways that we show Favoritism today

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- First, we show favoritism because of people's **APPEARANCE**
- We often discriminate simply because of the way people look
- Beauty is very important in our society
- This is natural, but that doesn't make it right
- This tendency in us is true even from an early age
- Studies show that infants respond more positively to attractive people than they do to those who are considered homely
- But, we are no longer children, as we mature, we have to learn to **NOT** respond with this natural reaction, but to respond in a Godly manner

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- God looks at the heart
- God doesn't look at the hair color, the features of the face, or the shape of the body

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- The second reason we show favoritism is because of a person's **ANCESTRY**
- The Dred Scott decision of 1856 reads as follows:

“But it is too clear for dispute, that the enslaved African race was not intended to be included, and formed no part of the people who framed and adopted this Declaration.”

- Fortunately, a lot of that kind of reasoning eventually changed
- But, unfortunately, a lot of it remains today
- Just as there is still discrimination in our country even after the Civil Rights Movement, so is there still discrimination in our Ecclesias
- On paper we believe, teach and confess that everyone, of every race, deserves to hear the saving message of Christ, but in reality it often doesn't work out that way
- 13% of the US is Black, 14% is Hispanic, and 5% is Asian
- Of the 5,000 Christadelphians in North America, do you think that there are 650 Black Brothers and Sisters?
- 700 Hispanics?
- 250 Asians?
- There's a sociological principle called "Homogeneity" that says we are drawn to associate with people who are like us
- It's **NATURAL** to gravitate towards those with whom you have a cultural affinity
- However, we are called to live a **SPIRITUAL** life
- A life that is in many ways the opposite of what comes natural
- As we mature in Christ, let's reach out beyond our comfort zone to include people of all races
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- God doesn't look at the color of the skin
- **SLIDE**
- We also show favoritism because of people's **AGE**
- I can tell you right now that in the business world, many companies discriminate against older workers because they usually cost more to pay and have less years of productivity left to offer to the company... And don't even get me started on the cost of Health Insurance for older workers...
- In our society in general, there seems to be a waning level of regard for the elderly
- Respect for our elders seems to have been lost on our younger generations
- In the Ecclesia, however, it might even be the opposite

- Of course, there are no such statistics in Christadelphia, but I can say that in mainline denominations, the average age of members is well over 60
- We all know of many Ecclesias that find themselves in the same situation
- Since Brothers and Sisters tend to cater to their own needs and interests in worship style and church activities, the needs and interests of the youth, especially those that don't currently go to meeting, are often neglected
- An Ecclesia full of young people needs to be sensitive that they are not discriminating against their older members
- But an Ecclesia full of older people also needs to be aware of the same peril
- We might feel more comfortable wearing suits and ties, and singing hymns that were written in the 1800's, but we might also be alienating whole generations of potentially new Brothers and Sisters
- Age discrimination goes both ways, and is wrong either way

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- God doesn't look at a person's age

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- The last thing that we'll consider that promotes favoritism is **AFFLUENCE**
- The Jews believed in what is referred to as Wealth Righteousness
- If you are wealthy, then that must mean that God has blessed you
- God only blesses the righteous, so therefore being wealthy is a sign of your righteousness
- That's why it was so hard for them to understand why a rich man would have a hard time getting into the Kingdom of God
- If a rich man - an obvious righteous man - can't make it, then how could we?
- This thinking was revived with the Calvinists and the Puritans, and forms the basis of the formation of our country
- America was formed on the belief that working hard, no matter whether the job is digging ditches or building a business, by engaging in self-discipline, sacrifice and obedience, by depriving yourself of indulgent pleasures, by enduring hardship, by saving what you make, and reinvesting profits to increase wealth, you are acting virtuously, righteously, and Godly

- While this may be true, the reverse is not true
- Those who have not succeeded by the world's financial standards are not necessarily unrighteous
- We all know many wealthy people who give no thought to pleasing the God who created them
- Don't we also know many who are dirt poor, but thank God daily for what they have?

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- God doesn't look at a person's balance sheet, model of import, or cut of suit when determining who He cares for
- And we shouldn't either...
- Because **Favoritism & Discrimination** are not a part of the servant of Christ
- Which makes a good segue into the next subject that James spends time with...

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- **Rich & Poor**

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- James 2:5-9 KJV

- 5) Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not **God chosen the poor** of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?
- 6) But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?
- 7) Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?
- 8) If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:
- 9) But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

- God has blessed me with a great job that provides more money than I need...
- So, I have a special interest in trying to understand this message
- I had to think long and hard about it, and I honestly do **NOT** believe that James is saying that God dislikes rich people
- Abraham, the patriarch of Israel, and chosen of God, was incredibly wealthy

- David, a man after God's own heart, was in a position of wealth
- And not even Bill Gates compares with his son, Solomon
- But, my favorite example is always Job, a perfect example of man whose faith was not tied to his purse strings

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- But wealth **CAN** be an impediment to faith

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- Wealth buys things like good medical care, fine food, services, and comfortable homes, all of which can **INSULATE** us from the turmoil, hunger, and disease that is the lot of the majority of the human race

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- Wealth makes it easier for us to **DELUDE** ourselves and deem ourselves **SELF-SUFFICIENT**
- The poor have no such illusions and are therefore more open to God and His power in their lives
- I don't think that God dislikes the Rich

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- I just happen to believe that He prefers the Poor
- Our God is a God of the poor, the underdog, those who are trodden under foot
- Those who rely on their money think of themselves as wise
- But the Bible teaches that,

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- 1st Corinthians 1:27 KJV

27) But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the **weak things** of the world to confound the things which are mighty

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- Those without status and wealth seem to be the very ones who respond readily in faith toward the Gospel

- We live in a society where even the poorest are wealthy by third-world standards

- We live in a society where it is fairly easy to become wealthy

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- We have to remember that the purpose of working is **NOT** to obtain wealth for your own personal gratification

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- The purpose of working is to obtain wealth in order to help out those who are less fortunate than yourself

- James warns about those who obtain wealth and then exploit the poor, taking advantage of them for the purpose of increasing their own personal wealth

- And it doesn't sound pretty...

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- James 5:1-6 NIV

- 1) Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the **misery that is coming** upon you.
- 2) Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes.
- 3) Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days.

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- 4) Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.
- 5) You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter.
- 6) You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you.

- Sure, maybe none of us have ever been guilty of murdering innocent men

- But, the exhortation to those of us who have been blessed with more than we need, is clear that we shouldn't hoard it to the hurt of those around us, but be generous and give to those we come across who are in need

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- It's a liberating and freeing concept when you realize that you are **NOT** limited in your giving

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- You are **NOT** limited to a **TITHE!**
- Like every other commandment in the Law, 10% was the **MINIMUM** required of a servant of God, not the maximum allowed
- Give until it hurts, not until you've met your "obligations"

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- You are **NOT** limited to a **TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION!**
- This one took me a long time to figure out
- It's a blessing that we live in such a wonderful, Christian country, that they encourage good works by giving us a tax deduction for certain gifts
- But, that doesn't mean that we can't help out someone directly who is in need, even when it's not convenient to funnel it through a charity

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- You are **NOT** limited to **BROTHER & SISTERS!**
- Do good unto **ALL MEN**, especially those who are of the household of faith
- If we run across Brothers & Sisters who are in need, then it is our obligation to help them out
- But, if everyone else in your Ecclesia has more than enough just like you do, then you are not restricted at all to give to those in your community who are truly needy
- God loves both **the Rich & the Poor**, and wants all of us in his Kingdom
- The Rich have more challenges, but they can be overcome
- The Poor have more obstacles, but God wants to help them

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- Let's move on to a discussion about **Worldliness & Godliness**
- Here's a verse that our Young People have heard many times
- But, I believe that this gem of a verse shouldn't be limited just to those in their teens, as we all can learn something from it

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- James 4:4 NIV

- 4) You adulterous people, don't you know that **friendship with the world is hatred toward God**? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.
- One of the beauties of James writing, is his ability to clearly state what should be obvious to all of us, such as the truth that if we get too friendly with this world, we will increasingly distance ourselves from God
 - Spending our lives in pursuit of possessions and pleasures is a sure recipe to becoming haggard and restless, and experiencing a kind of stress and frustration that no teenager has ever comprehended
 - You cannot be a friend of God and a friend of this world and its fallen values
 - Your cheating on God, acting like an adulterer, if you try to maintain a relationship with the World while being espoused to Christ
 - God is a jealous God
 - Verse 5 says that God cares about the spirit that we serve Him with
 - And look at verse 6:

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- James 4:6 NIV

- 6) But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."
- It takes humility to approach God
 - And the only way to break the cycle of "double-mindedness" is a total submission of oneself to God
 - Continue reading in Verses 7-10

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- James 4:7 NIV

- 7) **Submit** yourselves, then, **to God**. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
- 8) Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

- 9) Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom.
- 10) Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

- Self-Help is **NOT** going to take you as far as you need to go
- We need to come near to God for him to come near to us
- Purify your hearts, and your mind will become centered on Godliness
- We sometimes call this “double-mindedness” by another name: “fence sitting”
- Straddling a fence allows a person to keep a foot in both places at the same time, and in a culture that insists on having a multitude of choices, this has never been more popular
- But the downside is that it absolutely paralyzes a person from making a concrete choice in life
- And anyone who chooses to be have one foot mired in **Worldliness**, but wants to have one foot standing firm in **Godliness** will surely fail

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- **Lord willing**, I'll continue on to the subject of **Today & Tomorrow**
- You know why we always say “Lord willing”... The concept comes from James

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- James 4:13-15 KJV

- 13) Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:
- 14) Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.
- 15) For that ye *ought* to say, **If the Lord will**, we shall live, and do this, or that.

- It's an interesting set of verses
- James is speaking to people who are making plan
- What kinds of plans are they making?

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- They are planning a time - **Today or to morrow**

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- Planning a location - **such a city**

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- Planning the duration - **continue there a year**

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- Planning a course of action - **buy and sell**

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- Planning an outcome - **get gain**
- Looks like a good plan to me
- I do all of the long term planning at my business
- We are currently in year 3 of our existing 10 year plan
- Plan 2015, as it's referred to, replaced Plan 2005 which was a 5 year plan, and it replaced Plan 2000
- Plan 2015 comes to a conclusion on December 31, 2015
- And we already have Vision Plans for the years after that
- They aren't as detailed as Plan 2015, but we have goals that reflect what we want to achieve and where we want to be as an agency by the years 2020, 2025 and 2030
- Is planning wrong?
- Is this **ANOTHER** topic that I'm going to have to feel guilty about?
- No, verse 15 is clear on that, right?
- As long as we say, ***If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that***, then we are okay, right?
- It's a little deeper than that, though isn't it?
- Saying, "Lord willing" isn't some sort of magic talisman that makes all of your planning all right
- Let's look at the verse in the middle... Verse 14:

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- James 4:14 KJV

14) Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a **vapour**, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

- In other words, in all of your planning, you have to take God's view of life into account

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- Your life is a **VAPOR**

- The question that you really need to consider is...

- What practical difference does it make in your planning whether you believe my life is a vapor? Do you stop planning altogether, simply because your life may be short or uncertain?

- You've all heard the saying before...

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- He that fails to plan, plans to fail

- I don't think that James is saying that you should stop planning

- James isn't encouraging anyone to drop out of society, become a hermit, and just sit around waiting for their little vapor of a life to disappear

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- For James, and for God, it matters whether or not a **TRUE VIEW OF LIFE** informs and shapes the way you think and how you speak about your plans

- Your mindset matters

- How you talk about your plans matters

- Why? Why does it matter?

- Because God created us not just to do things and go places with our bodies, but to have certain attitudes and convictions and verbal descriptions that reflect the truth - a TRUE VIEW OF LIFE and of God

- God means for the truth about himself and about life to be known and felt and spoken as part of your reason for being

- God wants us keep in mind that we have no firm substance on this earth
- You are as fragile as mist and vapor
- Keep in mind that you have no durability on this earth, for you appear for just a little while
- Your time is short
- Keep in mind that you will disappear
- You will be gone, and life will go on without you
- I'm not trying to depress you, but It matters, God says, that we keep this view of life in mind

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- In Verse 15 God tells us the **TRUE VIEW OF LIFE** that we should have in our minds and in our mouths as we plan our future
- God tells us two very important things about Himself in Verse 15

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- One is contained in the words: **"If the Lord wills, we will live"**

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- And the other is contained in the words, **"If the Lord wills, we will... do this or that"**

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- The duration of our **lives** are in the hands of God
- Or another way of saying it is, that God governs how long we will live
- We may not know how long our vapor-like life will linger in the air, but God knows, because God decides how long we will live
- James is trying to tell us that **IF** this is a **TRUE VIEW OF LIFE**, then it should shape our mindset and shape our way of talking
- If we truly believe that our lives are in the hands of God, and God will decide how long we live and when we die, then doesn't that change our impression of death?

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- Worry and stress about death should **decrease** as our faith in this belief increases

- Because not only is our life in God's hands, but...

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- **God is GOOD**

- God wants the best for us
- He controls every part of our lives, including this most important part
- Turn that over to Him, and rest in the faith of His love

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- The other truth about God in verse 15 is that the activities and **accomplishments** of our lives are also in God's hands
- God governs what we accomplish
- Not only are our lives in God's hands, but our success is in His hands as well
- If the Lord does not will, we will not do this or that, buy or sell, or get gain

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- The stress of success and failure in what we do is also **decreased** when we come to believe this truth
- This doesn't give us permission to be lazy, but it should remove some of our worries

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- Again, **God is GOOD**
- God wants to bless his children with good things
- God wants to see us happy, and He is in the position to do so, as he controls whether or not our plans succeed
- So, in simple terms, God wants to make sure that we understand that these two things

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- God governs how long you live and what you accomplish
- But, there seems to be more to the issue than just that
- Look at the next verse:

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- James 4:16 KJV

16) But now ye rejoice in your **boastings**: all such rejoicing is evil.

- Why does James bring up boasting all of a sudden?

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- The root problem at play here is **ARROGANCE** and pride, and that is why causes us not to look at our life with a **TRUE VIEW**

- Boasting is simply the expression of that arrogance

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- When you don't look at life with a **TRUE VIEW**, then you begin to think that **YOU** are the one who has control over your life

- **YOU** are the one that is responsible for your own success

- It's through your hard work and efforts that you succeed

- You can even start thinking that if you take your vitamins, exercise and eat right that you can control how long you live

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- We can start to get **ARROGANT** in the face of the God who **REALLY** controls those things

- So, when we talk about **Today & Tomorrow**, and we say Lord willing, it's not just a nice thing to say...

- It's an acknowledgement of an important and valuable truth about who God is, and the faith that we have that he is in control of our lives

- That God holds our entire lives in His hands

- That God decides how long we live

- And that God decides whether we succeed or fail in this life

- Let's go back now to the verse that we began the week with

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- Let's close our thoughts with a discussion on the **Fatherless & Widows**

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- James 1:27 KJV

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.

- First, let's define what James means by "*pure religion*"
- I think that by saying "*Religion*", James means "*Faith in Jesus*"
- It's the same Greek word that James uses in the previous verse
- Look back at Verse 26:

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- James 1:26 KJV

26) If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's **religion** is vain.

- The reason I think that James means "*Faith in Jesus*" when he uses the word "religion" or "religious" in these two verses, is what he says in the next verse
- There is no break in the flow between 1:27 and 2:1, and look what he says there...

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- James 2:1 KJV

1) My brethren, have not the **faith of our Lord Jesus Christ**, *the Lord of glory*, with respect of persons.

- The point is: If you say you are religious, or say you have the faith of Jesus, but you don't bridle an unloving, lying, gossiping, cursing, angry tongue, then your faith - your religion - is worthless

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- We've talked about this already, it is faith that saves us, but whether our faith - our religion - is real or not is shown by the change it brings about in our hearts and lives
- Now in verse 27, James gives us another very concrete example of the same point
- Notice the two kinds of effects that pure religion or faith in Christ has:

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- 1) **Practical Compassion** toward orphans and widows

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- 2) **Personal Purity** of life
- We need to do the one, without leaving the other undone
- Too often, I'm afraid that people fall off the horse on one side or the other
- Some fall off by saying: What matters is Personal purity - Sexual purity, financial integrity, a clean thought life, and so on; but they are weak in practical deeds of compassion for the poor and helpless
- But some fall off the horse on the other side, by saying: What matters is reaching out, and having compassion and helping people, and what you do with your mind and body and your private personal life is not significant
- But James says that pure and undefiled religion - true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ - stays on the horse
- Pure religion is "to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world"
- **Not either / or, but both!**

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- **Public Compassion AND Personal Purity**

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- Proactive steps of kindness **AND** Protective vigilance against sin
- There are over 2,000 verses in the Bible that deal with protecting the poor and the oppressed
- Clearly, this is an issue that is important to God
- I fear that because we have been too concerned about Personal Purity, we have neglected this important instruction from God
- Because we have been too concerned about keeping ourselves unspotted from the world, that we have been neglected the requirement to go out there and help people - for fear that we might get dirty in the process

- I fear that we have become so concerned about not sinning, that we haven't done enough good works
- And I think that I can prove my point in **three simple sentences**:
- First, while we were sleeping last night, 30,000 children died of starvation
- Second, most of us don't give a damn
- Third, and what's worse, is that right now you are more uncomfortable with the fact that I just swore than you are with the fact that 30,000 children died last night
- If our religion is **REAL**, if our faith is **ALIVE**, then we will do something about the suffering and the pain that goes on around us
- I don't need to remind you about the millions of children in sub-Saharan Africa who are made orphans each year by the rampant spread of AIDS in that area
- I don't need to remind you about the millions of children in Eastern Europe who are abandoned due to poverty
- It's easy to see where to help once you start looking
- I just want us to try looking a little harder!
- God has been concerned about the fatherless and the widow since the beginning, but although His methods have changed over the years, His message is still the same
- Let's look at what He says in the Law

- **SLIDE**

- Exodus 22:22-24 KJV

- 22) Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child.
- 23) If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, **I will surely hear their cry**;
- 24) And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.

- The Law of Moses simply punished you for doing wrong, but the Law of Christ encourages us to be righteous
- God has tried the stick, and now He is working with the carrot
- But, we need to respond better than the Israelites did, or who knows what God will try next

- I've talked about a lot of things this morning, and I've lectured you about trying harder to live the life of faith that James describes
- My goal was to try to push you **(AND MYSELF)** out of our comfort zones, and into the kind of life of service that James calls us to
- I apologize if I have offended any, but pray that if I have done so, you will get over it quickly, but not forget the message quite as quickly
- I'd like to leave you with one simple suggestion about how to care for the Fatherless & Widows in their distress
- It's a verse on the subject that Jesus spoke in Luke 14, that has really captured my attention lately, and convicted my soul
- And I hope that this verse moves you as much as it did me...

- **SLIDE**

- Luke 14:12-14 NIV

- 12) Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid.
- 13) But when you give a banquet, **invite the poor**, the crippled, the lame, the blind,
- 14) and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

- **SLIDE**

- So, as you can see, this class really wasn't about **This & That**

- **SLIDE**

- This whole week has really been more about **God & You**
- He has called us to live lives of faith, and James gives us plenty of practical examples of what that means
- My prayer is that these classes have helped us see James' message a little more clearly
- And that we all leave here a little more motivated to follow that message