

ARBC

Sunday, February 5, 2012

Pastor Tim: Amen, Amen, father we thank you for Calvary and that you came for us, you gave your life and lived perfectly and to rise to give us the freedom to have you in our lives. We sing holy unto you and may you have the freedom to reign in this place as we worship you. We pray you will speak clearly through your word. We will leave closer to you. In your name, Amen.

What an exciting time to begin my first series. If you will turn to James, hopefully you will learn some new things. I found a lot of new things as I was preparing for this. James is towards the back of the Bible but probably the first book written in the New Testament. James comes along and although not one of the general epistles. We can put our mind around it and say yes, that is where I need to be and what I need to be doing, as I grow closer to him. We look at Martin Luther who used to say that Paul and James were contradictory to each other. Romans 3:23 and Romans 3:28

28: Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds (or works) of the law.

Then James write is James 2:24

24: You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

As we look we will see this isn't a contradictory at all but Paul was looking on the inside of a person that says you are justified by faith through Christ but James says yes you are but we can only see what is on the outside. We see the outside God's sees the inside. James is telling you we need our walk to match our talk.

James says we can distinguish those that are truly walking with Christ and those that are not.

Matthew 7:15-16 says

15: "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

16: You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles?

As we look, James is telling us we need to act what we speak. James is saying that natural overflow needs to come out as we greet, encourage each other to grow in Christ. These truths are found in the 5 chapters of James.

James 1:1

1: James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.

I find it interesting James starts the book with the words, I James: When we write letters we write our name at the end. But James puts it at the beginning. It's important that people know who writes the letter.

Suppose one of our high school guys is called to the office and has a letter, it says: Dear Chris, you are one of the best football players. Your future is as bright as you want to make it. Give me a call when you have a chance to talk. Signed Mom.

If you take that letter and sign it Tim Tebow, different feeling.

James wants you to know that he is writing to you. You need to take these things because they are

practical.

God's word breathes through the writers.

2 Peter 1:21 says

21: for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

You see God took each person and used them, spoke through them to write the Word of God.

The people knew who James was. But as we sit here, we say James who? What James wrote this?

1. James: The Person

There are several James' that could have written this book. Let's look at:

James the son of Alphaeus – mentioned in Matthew 10:3

James the father of Judas the Apostle referenced in Luke 6:16

These two are probably not the ones that wrote this book.

There are two others: James the son of Zebedee - brother of John the Baptist "sons of Thunder".

Acts 12:1-2

1: Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church.

2: Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

History says it happened about 44 A.D. so the timeline for James the son of Zebedee, probably not him.

James had a mother named Mary, father named Joseph and half brother named Jesus.

We will see Mary and Joseph had several children.

Matthew 13:55 says

Is not this the carpenter's son? Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and the Bible says that Joseph and Mary didn't consummate their marriage until after Jesus was born.

James, his 2 sisters and 3 brothers, the word says they were not believers. Imagine that he was around and they did not accept him.

Matthew 13:57 says

57: So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house."

That would have to be a big challenge. Can you imagine finding out your big brother was the son of God? You go up to him and say Jesus do you always have to be right? Dad says to James, why can't you be more like Jesus? How many of you had siblings that went to school before you?

I did, I remember Mrs. Welch in 6th grade. My older brother had A's and B's. And then there was Timmy. My teacher said what happened to you?

Why can't you be more like Jesus? Brothers had some frustration. Could this be the Messiah the one we have been waiting for?

John 7:2-5 says

2: Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was near.

3: Therefore His brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that your disciples also may see your works which you are doing.

4: "For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world."

Look at this

5: For not even His brothers were believing in Him

But something happened after Jesus' death and Resurrection we see in 1 Corinthians 15:7 James was made awake and aware of who his half brother was. Have you ever thought that before Jesus was crucified that He went to his mother and says to John "Behold your mother" you take care of my mother. Why not go to the other 3? Maybe because they didn't know who their brother really was. Jesus put John in care of his mother.

2. James: His Position

How would he handle a blood relationship to Jesus in the early church? As you read through James, it's a short book, read it won't take long. You will see how humble James is. His position, he didn't use the fact that Jesus was his brother.

In Acts 1:14 says

14: These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

They came around, but slow learners. James didn't look to have a high place of prominence. He wanted to lead by example by his experience. He didn't say "look at me" he said look what God has done through his son.

It was if he had no connection through birth.

The historian Eusebius records that James prayed so often that his knees become callused. They called him camel knees. He was also known as James the just. Kent Hughes called James a late bloomer; better late than never.

1b. "A bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ"

In spite of what his position could be; doesn't mention his parents, etc. He calls himself a bond servant. Not privileged or coming from royalty. He is under the control of his master.

Proverbs 20:6 describes James.

6: Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, but who can find a faithful man?

Don't we do that? We say things like "you know what I did this week", or "Look what I did". No the writer says "Who will find a faithful man or woman?"

Here is a true story of selling a slave.

Fine young man placed on auction block. Finally a purchase was made and the young slave went up to the man that bought him and said how could you do that? The purchaser said "I have bought you to set you free". The slave was so overcome that he said "I will be your slave forever".

John 8:32 says

32: And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." As we start this book, and look at the truth, God will set us free.

John 8:36 says

36: Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

We see James a bondservant of God. How refreshing that is. We try more and more to get titles; but James says I am a bondservant. Not wanting to build himself up. Wanted to serve the Lord Jesus. This book is very practical and describing what our life should look at. How we should act.

James writes this to scattered believers. They fell under prosecution and so they scattered about. We will see a strong similarity between the way James wrote his book and Jesus with the sermon on the mount.

3. James: His Projection

Misconception #1 – Trials are bad and trials are sad.

If you say that you may say duh, yea.

But in James 1:2 says

2: My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,

How different that is from the way we live today. Count it joy!

Misconception #2: God tempts us to Sin.

James 1:13 says

13: Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

God doesn't tempt us. We can easily fall into the sin. Or in King James - out of the things that come into our lives, that weigh us down, we have a choice to do right.

V1d: "To the twelve which are scattered abroad."

I have alluded to the Jewish Christians back then, they believed in Jesus and because of the church back then they were displaced. Because of death they moved out. James has a strong burden on his heart for them. He is in the church praying for those that are scattered.

5. James: His Proclamation

V1e: "Greetings" that is the last thing. He wanted to encourage that early first church. He was there to say these things can help you, bring you closer to God, bring comfort to the believer because Satan

will come along and put doubt in your mind. What you did way back when doesn't matter.

He wants to encourage us, have assurance and confidence at what God has done in our lives.

What happened to James? He was taken into custody and beaten and thrown off the roof of the temple.

First what can we learn from the first verse?

1) Don't let advantages rob you of your potential. He never used things to gain popularity.

We look back over our lives and say my father was this my mother was that, etc. Billy Graham said "God has no grandchildren only children" That is a good line, worth Amen. Some people rely on talent; can be a horrible stumbling block. May be a great singer. You need to find out what it is God wants you to do. Find out where your talent fits in.

Wealth makes it difficult not impossible to become a Christian. A huge misconception that says Wealth equals the favor of God - not true.

Beauty - age - because they have some years, think they should be considered wise. Being smart doesn't make you wise. Think about that. I have known some brilliant people but when a rain storm comes they don't have enough sense to come out of the rain.

Position - may feel don't have to pray as hard, or be as faithful.

Past accomplishments - used by God in the past feel they should be used today. Not so.

Don't let the lack of advantages rob you of your potential.

You may say you have too much wealth, too old, too young, not the right title or position, past accomplishments not all that impressive. God looks for the closest tool. Maybe that is where James was or where you are. Will you be that close tool for God to do an incredible work?

2 Timothy 2:20-21 says

20: But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.

21: Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

As we sit here, and look at our lives, we think what have we done for the Lord Jesus Christ am I a vessel of gold or clay? Do we shine for him, do we want to be all that he wants us to be. Our invitation is the one that says "I want to be the one that makes a difference for God". We will see each week in James of what God wants to do in our lives.

We will sing "I surrender all" will you surrender your life, your all to Christ.

Father we give these moments to you now, that we will be the vessels of gold you want us to be. We will be pure and lights. Make us what we need to be. We pray in your name, Amen.

Stand together and sing.

(Singing...Words on Large Overhead Screen)

Amen, wonderful to be here today, I hope that you have been blessed and as we have begun our

journey through James. I don't see Bob Belcher, would you give our benediction and be sure to hug someone and let them know you love them. Is there a word?
Robert wants to join the church this morning.

Alright, very good. Go ahead and sit down church. This is Robert and he wants to join the church. And you are already saved?

(Woman – couldn't hear what she said)

Pastor Tim: Excuse us, this is Robert and I asked him if he knows the Lord, been saved, and he wants to move his membership here. Vernee please stand here, church come by and give him a hug and let him know that you appreciate him. And come and give Lynn and I a hug. Look at your new family! (Applause)

Amen, Brother Bob. Let's stand.

Bob - praying. (Cannot hear him/her) be with those that Pastor Tim has mentioned. Thank you for your many blessings. Amen.