

Life Link

Music Video: Lord Most High

Video Illustration: Christian Atheist

Slide Background: Holy Living

Sermon Series: Book of James

Title: Doers — Not Hearers Only

Big Idea:

It is easier to say that you are a Christian than to live as a believer in Christ Jesus. If you were to ask a person of their personal conviction concerning Jesus most likely they would say they were a follower of Jesus. But the real test of their faith is demonstrated by the way they live.

Not every person who claims the name of Christ have the same beliefs about how they should live their lives. I am not here today to tell you that there are certain things you should do and things that you not do. Spiritual maturity dictates how a person lives out his or her lives in the world. New believers may live in a way that may be very different from a person who has a Christian Maturity that is more developed.

Christian maturity is not dependent on how long a person has been a believer. There may some area of our lives that may need development and others area that are right in-line with the Christian Walk. Today James address how we are to live in Christ. He encourages us to put aside our worldly ways and let the Word of God (the Bible) guide our daily living. James reminds us that we need to be a disciple that is a disciple who allows the Word of God to guide our daily living. Psalms 119:105 tells us that it the word of God that directs our path.

Psalms 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. NKJV

Introductory Illustration:

SEVICE REQUIRES ACTION

A man fell into a pit and couldn't get himself out.

A subjective person came along and said, "I feel for you down there."

An objective person walked by and said, "It's logical that someone would fall down there."

A Pharisee said, "Only bad people fall into pits."

A mathematician calculated how deep the pit was.

A news reporter wanted the exclusive story on the pit.

An IRS agent asked if he was paying taxes on the pit.

A self-pitying person said, "You haven't seen anything until you've seen my pit."

A fire-and-brimstone preacher said, "You deserve your pit."

A Christian Scientist observed, "The pit is just in your mind."

A psychologist noted, "Your mother and father are to blame for your being in that pit."

A self-esteem therapist said, "Believe in yourself and you can get out of that pit."

An optimist said, "Things could be worse."

A pessimist claimed, "Things will get worse."

"Jesus, seeing the man, took him by the hand and lifted him out of the pit."

(From Internet for Christian's newsletter, July 29, 2002) Preaching Now Newsletter, August 6, 2002.

Read Sermon Text

James 1:21-27

21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. 27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. NKJV

1. Implanted Word (vs.21)

James 1:21 Doers — Not Hearers Only

21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

NKJV

- a. James tells us to put aside all the "filthiness and wickedness" in our lives. While this statement on the surface seems to imply that we have impurities in the world. It goes even deeper into the way we live as disciples of Jesus. We need to realize that we must search out the impurities of our life. We need to let the dark recesses and corners be exposed to the Word of God. It is only when we exposed the hidden areas of our life to the light of the Gospel that we can sweep out the filth of this world. A disciple looks for anything that could stand in the way of our serving our Lord and Savior. Isaiah 64: reminds us that our lives are unclean and our perceived righteousness could be compared to "filthy rags". This comparison is not comparison is not to others but, compared to Jesus. The Word tells us that even though He was tested in every way as

we are tested He did not sin, He was and is sinless. He is the perfect example of what our lives should be.

Isa 64:6

But we are all like an unclean thing,
And all our righteousness's are like filthy rags; NKJV

- b. A disciple may ask “how do we know what needs to be eliminated in our lives?” James very quickly answers this question by telling to let the light of the “implanted or engrafted Word of God” reveal the areas of our lives that need to sweep out. The Book of Luke tells of a woman who lost a coin and she searches the house diligently to find it. She turns on the lights and sweep the house until she finds.

Luke 15:8 "Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? NKJV

We too must search for the impurities in our lives and we must use the “Word” to light the darkness which exist to find that which we should value the most. Which should be a pure relationship with Our Lord and Savior.

Eph 5:10-12 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. NKJV

- c. James points out the Word is “implanted” or the engrafted Word in our lives. In Matthew 13 Jesus tell us of a parable. This parable is about a farmer who sows grain. Some of the grain falls on good soil, some falls on rocky soil, some falls on the rocks and some of the grain falls among thorns. The end result is that not all who have the word sown in their heart will bring out the desired results. The desired results is that it takes root and produces the farmers a return. Jesus has placed the Word in our hearts to produce the crop which is righteousness in our lives. It is up to us to determine what to do with the implanted Word!

Text Illustration:

When Steve Henning of Huntley, Illinois, was two years old, he contracted spinal meningitis. It was the winter of 1943, and because of World War II, doctors had a shortage of penicillin and could not provide Steve the treatment he needed. Sadly, he lost his hearing.

For 57 years, Steve could not hear music, laughter, or human speech. Even though he lived a full life, he still longed to hear the voices of those he loved.

In the winter of 2001, he learned of a surgical procedure that would allow sound waves to bypass the non-functioning part of his ear and travel directly to the auditory nerve. On January 30th he was operated on. Because the implanted device could not be activated until the swelling in the ear decreased, doctors and Steve didn't know if the operation was successful for six weeks.

The day of reckoning came on a blustery spring day. Steve nervously wondered if the procedure had been in vain. As the audiologist programmed the cochlear implant, he invited Steve's wife to say something. Pat Henning leaned toward her husband and gently said, "I love you." Able to hear for the first time in six decades, Steve's face broke into a smile. The first words he heard were of love.

When a person comes to know Christ, the Lord opens spiritual ears that have previously been unable to hear. Paul describes this transformation to the Corinthians this way: "Old things pass away, and all things become new." That includes the ability to hear God saying, "I love you!"

2. Doer of the Word (vs. 22-25)

James 1:22-25 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. NKJV

- a. Just hearing the Word is not enough. We need to hear the word and we need to take action on it. As many of you know I take insulin for diabetes. When I renew my prescription I get several bottles of insulin. But having the insulin is not enough. Those bottles sitting on the shelf in the refrigerator do me no good to control my diabetes, I must inject myself with the medication. In the same way we must take action on the "implanted" Word. We must allow it to take root and change our lives. Having the Word does little good unless it is allowed to work in and through our live.
- b. James illustrates by that looking at ourselves in a mirror only demonstrates what we look like on the outside but, it is the inner man that must be changed and purified. The purification of the inner man will change how the outer man lives and looks. Many of us looked, dressed, and lived before coming to Jesus. Now that the Word has been implanted into our lives it is working from the inside out to remake us into who God wants to be.

- c. A follower of Jesus will not argue and complain because he or she must make changes in their life. Those changes may be things we once enjoyed but now realize how contrary to the Christian life they were. Just like in our introduction video the carnal Christian may have a marker when reading the Word so that he or she can mark out the words that don't want to apply to our live.

Romans 6:12-14 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. NKJV

3. Effect of the Word (vs. 26-27)

James 1:26-27 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. 27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. NKJV

- a. There is a children's song that goes something like this "Be careful little eyes what you see, be careful little ears what hear, be careful little feet where you go". It concludes by saying that "The Father up above is looking down in Love." Being a disciple of Jesus doesn't mean just being religious, or going to church, or even reading your Bible. None of these in and by their selves will produce salvation to the outer man. It is only what is in the heart of a person that will make a difference in our outward person. James concludes in verse 27 that it pure and undefiled devotion to Jesus will keep us spotless in the world.

Mathew 5:16 tells us to let our light shine in the world that we may glorify our Father in heaven.

Matt 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. NKJV

The world need to see Jesus and not us. He is the Alpha and Omega, the bright and morning star. In hearing the Word and doing the Word it will bring us to a right and perfect relationship with God the Father. Not because of our righteousness but because of Jesus. The Word is a "Lamp to feet and a light to our path."

Text Illustration:

. “The 1989 Armenian earthquake needed only four minutes to flatten the nation and kill thirty thousand people. Moments after that deadly tremor ceased, a father raced to an elementary school to save his son. When he arrived, he saw that the building had been leveled. Looking at the mass of stones and rubble, he remembered a promise he had made to his child: “No matter what happens, I’ll always be there for you.” Driven by his own promise, he found the area closest to his son’s room and began to pull back the rocks. Other parents arrived and began sobbing for their children. “It’s too late,” they told the man. “You know they are dead. You can’t help.” Even a police officer encouraged him to give up.

But the father refused. For eight hours, then sixteen, then thirty-two, thirty-six hours he dug. His hands were raw and his energy gone, but he refused to quit. Finally, after thirty-eight wrenching hours, he pulled back a boulder and heard his son’s voice. He called his boy’s name, “Arman! Arman!” And a voice answered him, “Dad, it’s me!” Then the boy added these priceless words, “I told the other kids not to worry. I told them if you were alive, you’d save me, and when you saved me, they’d be saved, too. Because you promised, ‘No matter what, I’ll always be there for you.’” (source Sermon Central, Dennis Lawrence)