

Scripture Reading:

Please go ahead and turn in your Bibles to **James 1, James 1** for our scripture reading today... We are in **James 1:19-27** for ...And I will ask you to please stand if you are able to do so for the reading of God's Word...

James 1:19-27

This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak *and* slow to anger; ²⁰ for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. ²¹ Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. ²² But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, ^[y] he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. ²⁵ But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but ^[z] an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

²⁶ If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his *own* heart, this man's religion is worthless. ²⁷ Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, *and* to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Introduction:

Good morning...It is great to be here at Calvary Bible Church...It is an honor to be here with all of you.

I hope all of you had a wonderful Christmas Holiday and I wish you a wonderful celebration of the New Year to Come...I imagine many of you are off of work tomorrow and many of you have a much deserved and much needed day of rest.

Thank you for being here this morning...We are all excited about what the Lord is doing here at Calvary. I appreciate every one of you for being here and it is an honor to be here with you this morning...

I feel privileged to speak both on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve in my first year here...Both are tremendous days on our annual calendar...Before we begin this morning let us go to the Lord in prayer...

Let Us Pray...

ME:

Today I'd like to give you a reminder...Today's message is a reminder of what we most likely know...

Yet as many of you know, Today is a unique day in the year... December 31 is a unique day for people around the world...

For many people, New Year's Eve is significant because it holds promise of change...for so many people around the world they circle this day as a day to start making changes...A day full of hopes and plans of New Year resolutions...

Countless New Year's resolutions and changes are thought of on this day...People perhaps wish to make the change to eat healthier or to exercise more...So, Gyms around the nation are packed out for one month of the year only to return to normal in February...

On New Years Eve, people perhaps plan to budget and t save more money...maybe for retirement or a new house...

Yet people on New Years Eve often seek not to just change a habit but oftentimes people look at themselves in the mirror and wish to change in more drastic ways...People often wish to reinvent themselves into a "New You"

I imagine churches are filled today with so many preachers encouraging life-altering change...I imagine...many preachers today are discussing "How 2018 is your year" ...Or how you can make the decision in 2018 decision to be a "new you"...How through 8 steps you have the power to transform yourself into "New You"...

Yet Friends...I am not so sure...I believe we can change habits and certain aspects of our

lives... Yet I am not so sure that today is the best day to “reinvent” ourselves...

Because as I look upon this crowd many of know what we should do different... Many of us know the truth of the Bible... Many of us know the truths and the commands on how to live for Jesus and how to read and apply the scripture to our lives... So, perhaps the importance of today, New Year’s Eve, is not an ideal time to make inspirational changes... Maybe the best use of today is rather to remind us of what we already know...

Transition: Yet I am not alone in my hope to remind... I share my intention to remind us with the intention of James to remind his audience... In today’s passage, James actually gives his readers a reminder... James in 1:19-27 gives his readers a reminder of what they already know...

Yet this reminder is not designed for them to check a box but rather the reminder serves to take what they already know and put it into practice...

Transition: James’ entire reminder to his Christian audience is the importance of a proper **RESPONSE** to the Word of God...

Transition: So, essentially this morning, it is my hope to remind us of our proper response to the Word of God and I hope to accomplish this by answering the question, “How”... “How should we respond to the Word of God?” When we hear the Word of God proclaimed... When we hear it taught, preached... Whenever we read or study the Word of God... “How should we respond?”

And In the passage today, James gives his audience a reminder with gives us four critical responses to the Word of God which are found in verses 19-25 and he then provides us with **three results** when we respond properly in verses 26-27...

GOD:

So, come with me to James 1... James 1... And we will be looking at verses 19-27...

Transition: As you turn there, I find it helpful to do a very brief recap of Chapter 1... In order to really think through our passage this morning, we must set the stage for our discussion with a review of the last several sections of the Book of James...

Transition: As you may remember James 1:2-12 essentially talks about our RESPONSE to Trials... He addresses our response to Trials with 5 actions... #1: Consider vs 2-3 #2: Allow vs 4 #3: Ask vs 5-8 #4: Do not Envy vs 9-11 #5: Remember verse 12

Then two weeks ago we looked at James 1:13-18 which addresses our RESPONSE to Temptation and Lies about God... James addresses three lies or misconceptions about God that tend to creep into our minds when trials and temptations come... Lie #1: Lies that God is evil vs 13-15, Lie #2: Lies that God has changed- verse 16-17, and The Lie #3: lies that God no longer loves and cares for you addressed in verse 18 ...

The truth is...is that God is Sovereign, Immutable, Implacable, not swayed by evil...He never changes and will never change...That God's love for you is **unwavering** and **unquenchable** despite what your circumstances say...

Transition: So, James in verses 2-12 addresses our response to trials, in verses 13-18 he addresses our response to temptations and lies that creep in...

Transition: And finally in this week's passage...James reminds us of our *response* to God's Word...

Transition: The first of four responses towards the Word of God is found in verses 19-20...

Look at James 1:19-20, "This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak *and* slow to anger; ²⁰ for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God."

Friends, Our first response when we hear the Word of God should be to #1: Listen...#1: Listen...

But notice something with me about the text...Notice that the first three words reveal to us James' intention of a reminder... "This you know..." What do these words imply? To put it another way, "This you already know...(Yet needed to be reminded of...)"

Yet these three words "This you know" are actually only one very interesting Greek word...
"ἴστε"

Now, I am about to get a little Bible nerdy on you all...What makes this word very interesting is not only its parsing and definition but also it is actually a very interesting text critical issue...Super interesting...

Scholars debate this one word actually could have three possible meanings...The first meaning could represent the Greek Word for "Thus" or "so too"... "ὥστε"...This meaning is actually represented in the majority text called "Gothic M" in academic circles...but many of its supporters are later manuscripts making it not the ideal reading for this verse.

Stronger Greek uncial manuscriptic evidence supports the thought that it is this Greek Word... "ἴστε" which based on the context and the manuscript support this word can have two possible uses...It can either be a Greek Imperative or a Greek Indicative Verb.

If it were a Greek imperative...the Reading for the First phrase in verse 19 is, "Know

this"...But based on the context and the fact that James seems to be drawing a conclusion to this section of his epistle...it seems best to understand it as the NASB has it as... "This you know..."

But the fact the best reading is "this you know..." shows me something about the following verses... Notice what it reveals...It reveals what I said earlier...That they already "know" what he is about to tell them...That James is giving them a reminder...But not a reminder to just stack away in their minds...But rather a reminder to help them to respond properly...In other words, the follow instruction from verses 19-27 is a reminder to all believers of one's proper response to the Word of God...

Friends, Can I prod a bit? Friends...if believers back then needed reminding then believers today need reminding...All of us in this room know what our response *should be* to the Word when we hear it...Right?

Before we even dissect the following text...We all know we response to the Word by what? By Doing it, right? And by Listening to it? Right?

Transition: Friends, as we enter the following text, let this serve as a reminder to all of us to what we already know...

Let us look back at verses 19-20 "*This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; ²⁰for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.*"

What should be our first response when the Word of God is taught or read? Response #1: Listen...To listen... When we hear the Word we should be quick to hear...Or quick to listen...Slow to Speak and Slow to Anger...

Why should we be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger? "For" the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God...

Friends, when we hear the scripture...Let us listen to it...Let us listen to it...

But Friends, let us be a bit transparent for just a second...Let me play a scenario for you...What do we sometimes do when we are hearing a preacher teach something we have already been taught multiple times? There are typically two reactions to the Word of God when we are already familiar with it...We are typically "Quick to Hear and Quick to be Angry and Irritated..."

Let me give you an example...If someone came up here and quoted John 3:16 and then even

began to teach on it...What would be our typical reaction? We probably would brush it off and quote the verse ourselves...Right...We would be quick to speak and perhaps really not attentively listen to the truth in the verse itself...

Friends, I even catch myself doing this...When someone reads a passage...My mind typically seeks to quote that passage off the top of my head...Instead of LISTENING to the truth conveyed in the passage...

Friends, let us be Quick to hear the scripture no matter how many times we hear it...Let us be slow to brush it off and let us be slow to get irritated over the repetition of monotony...

Friends, our first response to the Word must be to Listen...

Transition: But then James gives us Response #2 & #3 to the Word in verse 21...

Look at verse 21... “Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* ^[w]that remains of wickedness, in ^[w]humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.”

How else should we respond when we hear the scripture? Response #2: Rid...Rid...

When we hear the scripture it should cause us to rid ourselves of all filthiness and all scraps of wickedness from our lives...Friends, when we look in the scripture...It should force us to look in the mirror and honestly to confront ourselves to rid ourselves of any filth and win...If there is any sin in our lives...When we hear the word it should cause conviction and repentance...

But the Greek here adds so much color to the passage...The two words. “Putting aside” are actually one Greek Word which is actually a clothing term...Then when you also notice that this Greek word is a **middle participle**...It tell me that we must make a conscious, continual decision to look in the mirror and purposefully take off sin as if we were taking off a jacket...

Allow me to demonstrate with an illustration...**Illustration:** When you walked in here to this sanctuary...Many of you realized that you no longer needed your jacket so what did you do? You ridded yourself of it...You took it off...Right?

In the same way, when we walk into the scripture...When we hear, read or study the text...It should make us realize that we no longer need the filthiness of sin...The scripture should make us look in the mirror and say... “Why am I wearing that?” Why am I doing that? Why am I thinking that? I don’t need this anymore...And to take it off...

Friends, the scripture should cause us to rid ourselves of sin ...Friends, let us take off sin and

filthiness to pursue the Lord all the more...

Transition: So when we hear the Word...When we read the scripture...When we study the scripture...When we lead a Bible Study...When we sermon prep...When we encounter the Word of God in any form or fashion...It should cause us to Listen up...And to Rid ourselves of any sin which we carry...

Transition: So, when we hear the Word...Let us respond by listening and by ridding our sin...But notice with me Response #3 in verse 21,

Read vs 21, “Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all ^[w]that remains of wickedness, in ^[w]humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.”

Response #3: Receive...Receive...

Now, we here in this phrase encounter a difficult interpretive issue...The difficulty comes to understand what it means “The word Implanted...”

In the original language, the word “implanted” is an adjective of the noun “word”...so it should say... “in ^[w]humility receive the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”

Yet perhaps the most difficult issue of this phrase “receive the implanted word...” is understanding what the word “implanted” really means...The word implanted is the Greek word, “ἐμφυτον” is a hapax legomenon which means it is only used once in the entire Bible...

This word “Implanted” is actually a planting term...**So what is James saying? If you are a Christian,** the Word of God is already rooted inside of you...it is planted and growing...Yet let it grow and become fruitful in your life by consciously and continually receiving it over and over again...

One commentator adds, “To receive the implanted Word” means both to **believe and act on the** Word of God...The commentator goes even further...Belief and action are essentially the same thing...That when we hear the word we must receive it showing itself through belief and action...The Gospel, which has taken root in the life of a believer needs constantly to be listened to, believed and acted upon... (McCartney, Book of James, Exegetical Commentary page 118).

Transition: So when we hear the Word of God proclaimed what should be our response? #1 Listen, #2: Rid #3: Receive...Finally James gives us a fourth response in verse 22...Look at verse 22 with me...

Read James 1:22, “But Prove Yourselves to be doers of the Word and not merely hearers who delude themselves...”

What is our fourth response to hearing the Word of God? Response #4: Do...Do the word...or in other words...Obey the Word...When we hear the scripture in any capacity let us set our minds to do what it says...

Friends, listen...Watch this...When it says Love God...Let us Love God...When it says to Love Others...Let us Love Others...When it says to Make Disciples...Let us Make Disciples...When it says to “Be Kind to one another tender hearted, forgiving each other...Friends let us “be kind to one another tender hearted, forgiving each other...”

Friends...When we encounter the scripture we must respond WITH ACTION...Because Look at what verse 22 says about the person who only hears...I mean look at it... “But Prove Yourselves to be doers of the Word **and not merely here who delude (or also deceive) themselves...**”

The People who only heard the Word of God Delude (Or Deceive) Themselves...Why? Because they think they are Godly...We oftentimes as Christians believe that hearing the Word of God is enough...Friends it isn't...

Friends...We do not grow in Godliness by Osmosis...By just merely hearing it...Friends we grow in Godliness by doing it...

Friends listen...**Hearing the Word does not lead to Godliness...Doing the Word leads to Godliness...** Friends, we must hear and do...Hearing alone leads to deceiving ourselves at our own sanctification...Friends we must respond by “Doing” the Word of God...

Transition: But then James goes into an illustration contrasting the one who only hears with the one who obeys...

Read verses 23-25, “For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his ^[x]natural face in a mirror; ²⁴for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, ^[y]he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. ²⁵But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but ^[z]an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in ^[aa]what he does.”

What is a hearer like? He is like a man who looks in a mirror...And forgets what He looked like...What is the mirror here? I believe the mirror here is the Word of God...

So, what is it saying? A hearer is a person that looks in the mirror of the Word and looks at their

wrinkles...looks at their imperfections...but then does nothing about it..A hearer is a person who encounters the Word of God then forgets suddenly about their own imperfections when they walk out of church or out of their quiet times...

Friends, when we hear the Word...We can have two reactions... We can look in the mirror of the Bible and see our imperfections then forget about them **OR** we can react as in verse 25, “But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but ^[z]an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in ^[aa]what he does.”

When we look in the scripture we should look intently... We should look intently in the mirror of the Bible and **abide** by it...We should look intently in the scripture with the motivation to abide by it...to make changes...

Allow me to illustrate... with a dirty jar... In order for this jar to be clean, is it enough for me to put a little soap in this jar and swish water around? No... What must I do to clean it? I must intently look at it and intently abide and scrub out all the filth out...

Friends...It isn't enough to just look or hear the Word...We must also look intently and wipe our sin out clean...

Transition: So when we read, hear, study or encounter the scripture our response should be to #1 Listen, #2 Rid #3 Receive #4 Do...

Transition: Now one of the most fascinating parts of this particular section of scripture is that James not only gives us four instructions but then gives us three results or outcomes of someone who truly puts the scripture into practice...**

Look at verses 26- 27, “If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not ^[ab]bridle his tongue but deceives his *own* heart, this man's religion is worthless. ²⁷ Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, *and* to keep oneself unstained ^[ac]by the world.”

What are the three results of someone who responds correctly to the Word?

Result #1: Controlling...Controlling the Tongue...

Friends, the first sign of a person who responds to the Word of God correctly is someone who bridles the tongue...Who controls their tongue...

Illustration: Friends, I imagine all of us have met Christians that simply cannot control their tongue...I knew a good man a number of years ago who actually partnered in an inner city ministry with me in Dallas, TX...Him and I partnered for two years then he took over the same

ministry when I left to return to Huntsville...Yet this man had a central problem...He could not control His tongue...I mean couldn't do it...This friend would get frustrated at the lack of spiritual progress and then start calling people out then he would absolutely unleash and spew venom on everyone...He would confront you at every turn, and would bring up the past only to beat it with you...

And Friends, guess what happened to this man? Guess what happened to this ministry which I once led? It completely imploded...And actually is no longer around...Friends, the first result of responding well to the scripture is **controlling...controlling the tongue...**

Transition: What is the second result? Read verse 27, “Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, *and* to keep oneself unstained ^[a6]by the world.”

What is the second result? Result #2: Visiting...Visiting the Lowly...

I believe we should take this verse both literally and figuratively...We should literally visit widows and orphans in their distress...But I think we can also understand it metaphorically.... IN this culture, widows and orphans were the downcasts of society...We should visit the needy and downcast of our society

Think about it: Jesus visited the lowly...Jesus visited the downcast of society ...Jesus did not see distinctions in His love...Jesus loved the lowest of the lows...Jesus cared for the Samaritan women...To the despicable tax collectors...To lowly fishermen... **Obedying the scripture...I mean truly obeying the scripture causes** us to be like Christ...

Friends, if we wish to live Godly lives...Let us obey the scripture resulting in visiting the downtrodden...

Transition: What is the third result? “And to keep oneself unstained by the world...”

Result #3: Santizing...Sanitizing...The third result of responding properly to the scripture is internal purity or internal cleanliness...

The result of responding correctly to the Word is that it should cause our internal world to be sanitized...When we encounter the Word of God...it should cause us to look to our internal world...to the world that no one else sees besides you and God...And the Word of God should convict us to keep it clean...To keep it unstained or sanitized from the internal sin that ways us down...

Transition: My fear today is that this sermon serves as only a reminder of what we already know...My fear is that this sermon is only a reminder and not instruction to do the Word...

That we take this sermon and file it away... Only hearing the Word this morning but ultimately deceiving ourselves as to our own Godliness... Friends, My hope is that this serve is a reminder for action... That when we hear the importance of Doing of the Word that we not just hear it...

Transition: But as a preacher, I hope to also help everyone of us here this morning apply the scripture to our lives... So if you seek to apply the Word to your life... I plan to answer for you the Question... So What? How do I apply this passage to my life?

Transition: So, in order to apply, I plan to take each of the four responses and break it out into a more practical application...

YOU:

When we hear the Word of God... How should we respond?

Response #1: Listen- How do we listen? What are some practical ways to Listen to the Word of God?

#1: Block out distraction- When we enter the text... When we come here to hear the Word of God on Sunday mornings, Friday mornings, Sunday nights... When we open up the scripture to have a Quiet Time or devotion.s... Let us block out distractions... Let us put away our phones, Let us put away our to do lists, Let us put away our random thoughts and concentrate on what the Lord wants to say to us...

#2: Let us Put Aside our Ego- When a preacher preaches on something we already heard, when a Bible study reviews Hebrews for the 10th time let us put away our ego and listen to it with infant like ears... With ears as if we have never heard it before...

Response #2: Rid-

#1: In order to Rid ourselves of filthiness and sin... We must first Recognize our filthiness and sin... When we encounter the Word of God is should cause us to look in the mirror at our own imperfections and ask questions... Have I been kind today? Have I been forgiving? Am I holding onto a grudge? Have I Loved my neighbor as myself? Have I offered myself as a sacrifice to God?

#2: Once we notice our sin we must, Take off sin with repentance... We must recognize our filthiness and then repent to change our filthiness... We recognize the wrong direction and correct course...

Response #3: Receive-

#1: Realize the Word is already in you... Realize the Word is implanted and wishing to grow...

#2: Receive the Word continually with humility.... Let us not be arrogant and think "We

already know” or “I already heard this...” Friends let us receive the word humbly over and over again knowing it will lead us toward growing in our faith...

Response #4: Do-

Friends let us remember what the scholar said... Belief=Action...If you truly believe what it says in here, then we will do what it says out there...(Hold up the Bible...)

WE:

Friends, I hope this morning to remind us of what we already know...When we encounter the Word of God, Let us Listen, Rid, Receive, and Do...Resulting in Controlling our Tongue, Visiting the Lowly and Sanitizing our internal World...

As I close, I would like to close with a thought...This thought comes from a very Godly man in the 19th century...He says this...

“I saw that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the Word of God, and to meditation on it...What is the food of the inner man? Not prayer, but the Word of God; and...Not the simple reading of the Word of God, so that it only passes through our minds, just as water runs through a pipe but considering what we read, pondering over it, and applying it to our hearts...” George Muller...

Let us pray...