

Readings

Scripture

¹² Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. ¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. ¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ¹⁸ Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

¹⁹ Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰ for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. ²¹ Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

- James 1:12-21 (*English Standard Version*)

Reflection

Now as regards the relationship to each other of these two different ways of speaking, it is immediately clear that the imperative rests upon the indicative and that this order is not reversible. For in each case the imperative follows the indicative by way of conclusion.

- Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (p. 254-255)

The mark of solitude is silence, as speech is the mark of community. Silence and speech have the same inner correspondence and difference as do solitude and community. One does not exist without the other. Right speech comes out of silence, and right silence comes out of speech.

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (p. 78)

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

- Philippians 2:12-13 (*English Standard Version*)

Sermon Outline

A New Paradigm - Part 2

James 1:12-21

True Religion

Brad Anderson

What if our trials are in fact the very instrument God uses to make us whole?

(James 1:12)

If that is to become our vantage point in this life, James indicates that certain themes must also become our norm...

Trust in receiving... (James 1:13-18)

- This is all God's fault!...Failure to understand love is what makes trusting difficult.
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Trust in rejecting... (James 1:19-21)

- I have to stop living this way!...Saying "NO!" to an old way of life is what makes trusting difficult.
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Reflection Questions (taken in part from the *Serendipity Study Bible for Groups*)

- When has it been difficult for you to receive a gift? What made it difficult?
- When have you cried out something like this: "God, this is all your fault!?" Can you think of places in the Bible where God's people have cried out to him in this way? How do each of your examples speak about a failure to understand love? (Use James 1:12-18 and Psalm 44 to help shape your answer.)
- James indicates that God cannot be tempted with evil and that he himself tempts no one. How does James say that temptation hooks us? What is the end result of the birth of sin in our heart? What is the end result of the seed of God's word sown in our heart by his will? What image comes to mind when you read the phrase "brought forth"? Does it remind you of John 3? How?
- Looking at James 1:21, where does the power for real change come from? What would it look like for you to receive God's word with meekness?
- In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus says that the meek will inherit the Earth. How are meekness and the kind of anger described in James 1:19-20, opposed to one another. What is Jesus saying to his disciples in Matthew 5:5? (Read Psalm 37 to understand the context of Jesus' promise.)
- Read the quote by Herman Ridderbos. How does James 1:16-18 set the proper foundation for James 1:19-20? What is at stake if the ordering of the command and the statement of identity are reversed? What is the remedy when we fail to live up to the commands of God? How do the trials of life create a greater awareness of our need for gospel grace?