James Devotion – The School of Hard Knocks.

Unique: One liners, metaphors, and illustrations.

Date: 45 A.D. (Earliest if not first book of the N.T.)

Theme – How to deal with Trials and Tests

Theological Points

1. Test and Trials
2. Social injustice and inequality
3. Correct a corrupted faith and to Present a true faith in Jesus
4. Faith and Works

Outline:

I. The Trial of Faith (James 1:1-18)

II. The Characteristics of Faith (James 1:19- 5:6)

III. Triumph of Faith (James 5:7- 20).

I. The Trial of Faith (Chapter 1)

 A. Outward tests of faith (v 2-12)

 B. Inward temptations (v 13-18)

James 1**:1**James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

A Slave (Bond slave) – totally owned by his master, existed to do the will of his master, belonged to his master.

Title: Lord, Jesus, Christ.

Author: James the brother of Jesus (Matthew 13:55, Mark 6:3, Galatians 1:19)

Special Appearance of Christ (I Corinthians 15:7)

Leader of the Church in Jerusalem (Galatians 2:9, Acts 12:17, Galatians 1:19)

Presided over the great Jerusalem council (Acts 15, Galatians 2:9)

Audience – Chapter 1:1 – Jews scattered abroad

Acts 8 – persecution had become so severe; they had been scattered throughout the land. New Christians under severe persecution. He writes to strengthen their faith and say this is something to live for, to die for. He wants to talk to them about trials of faith.

A. Outward Tests will produce –What we are facing today, does not compare what they were facing then.

V 3 Testing: To try; to test; to prove. Pure Silver is more pure and stronger.

Illustration: The testing of Silver. The way he knew that it was pure, he would look down and see his own picture. God is purifying you, and one day he can see his own reflection.

This is not a waste, but it is something God wants to use in your life.

God’s aim is not to make you Happy, but to make you Holy!”

Trials are not to defeat or discourage us, but to prove us.

(Pain, Death, Sickness, separation, disappointments, emptiness, hurt, greed, accidents, anger, loneliness, cheating, loss….)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Verse | Produces | Meaning |
| 2 | Joy | **Gladness, Rejoicing**. “All this going on, count it all joy.” |
| 3 | Patience | **Perseverance, waiting, endurance.** Illustration: Running |
| 4 | Maturity | **Finished, fully realized, entire, an end, an aim, a Goal, whole, blameless.** Illustration: Baking a cake (Eggs, flour, butter….) |
| 5 | Wisdom | *Sophia* **Cleverness, skill, Scientific knowledge.** **Ability to apply the facts.**  |
| 6-8 | Stability | **Stronger, Anchored**. Illustration: Winds, Waves, Sea – like a wave that is rising one moment and sinking the next. One moment he believers and then another moment he does not. One moment he says yes, then no.  |
| 10 | Humility | **Dependence on God, Respect for others. They do not look down on others. They form quality relationships. Compassion and Empathy for others.** Illustration: Withering grass, fading flowers. Heat of the sun |
| 12 | Blessing | **Happy, Fortunate, in a position of favor**. – Reward is the crown of life. “The person who endures temptations of this life is to be crowned with eternal life itself.”  |
| 12 | Love | **Deep love even during the trials.**  |

Application: Change the way we think about trials in our life!!!!

Inward – Temptation – to test or to trap.

Let no man think – rationalize or justify his behavior.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Verse | Idea |
| 13 | Never blame sin on God, sin is contrary to the nature of God, God would never tempt a man to sin. Man is to blame. “Don’t dare make this about him.”It is about something in you! |
| 14 | Lust – Graving, urges, or longing. Illustration: Smelling something good. Feeling of knowing something is wrong but wanting it anyway.  |
| 14 | Entice – **To lure or draw away**Illustration: Fishing with the right bait. “This would be so good; this would bring so much pleasure….” |
| 15 | Sin – **wrongdoing, error, offence, an act contrary to the will and law of God.** Illustration: HookChoice – go for it or run away.  |
| 15 | Death – **extinction of that which is living, Soul leaving the body, us leaving God!**Illustration – conception and childbirth.  |
| Application | 1. If temptation attacks my thoughts, push the thought out of my mind and focus on Christ. “Swim Away and Swim to Him!”2. If temptation comes in my senses (see, hear, taste touch) turn away immediately. *It is something that can be nourished or stifled. If it is nourished long enough, it has inevitable consequence. – William Barclay.*  |
| 17 | Good Gifts – nature, job, family, provisions, talents.  |
| 17 | Father of Lights Illustration: See the first light of sun after the dark clouds of a storm.His light of direction, joy, confidence shines in the dark clouds of trials and temptations.  |
| 17 | No ChangingIllustration: the phases of the moon.  |
| 18 | God’s will is for all of us to be saved. For all to be born again.  |

Goal: I want to become more and more like Jesus every day. So, use this trial to purify me.

Goal: I want to win over temptation so help me to see and Flee.

Questions for Understanding;

1. What is the 3 divisions of the outline for our study?

2. Who is James? Explain who he was before the resurrection, after, and how important he became to the church.

3. How did James die?

4. Who did he write to?

5. Verses 2 – 12 talk about outward trials and what it can produce in our faith, what one product of trials spoke to you most?

6. Verses 13- 18 talk about inward temptations, which part spoke most to you?