

James (Quality: Average)

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[0 : 00] I will base my remarks on the fifth verse in the second chapter of the epistle of James. James chapter 2, verse 5.

Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

James continues in his thoughts and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to discern the mind and will of God, setting forth that mind and will in a practical application of it which appears again and again throughout this epistle, so contrary to the general bent and turn of mind that is in us all by nature.

And my friends, how we have to learn in seeking the truth of God again and again that my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways, my ways, saith the law.

So much as that we may judge if our minds naturally incline to a certain direction, that it is almost invariable that the mind of God is in exactly the opposite direction.

[1 : 40] Now James had been laying before us the fruit, one of the fruits and evidences of a pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.

Remember, the fatherless and widows were the poor and needy. Those that had nothing to give to us, but yet had a great call upon us.

The spirit of the gospel is not to give with an eye on the return, but to give with no eye on the return at all.

You see, when we think of the giving of the Lord, this principle holds, doesn't it? What return does the Lord get for his giving?

I realise, my friends, that thanksgiving becomes us, and we fall short in our thankfulness, both for providence and especially for grace.

[2 : 58] What returns does the Lord receive from you this week? It's in him you've lived and moved and had your being. Without God, your table wouldn't have been spread, your needs wouldn't have been supplied.

But what has God heard from you in response to his bounty through the days of the past week? My friend, are you living a life of ingratitude?

Are you living a life of indifference? And do you no wonder that your soul is a wilderness, and your life is under a cloud of spiritual darkness?

You see, we must look at the principles, mustn't we? Thanksgiving in everything give thanks, for this is the will of God, in Christ Jesus concerning you, says the apostle.

If the Lord is not going to receive returns of gratitude from the souls of the gracious, to whom he's given grace to appreciate, where is he going to receive thankfulness from mankind?

[4 : 15] Mankind's position in the world is to consume the bounty of God, forgetting all about the giver, the bountiful giver of every good gift.

I think I've mentioned this to you before, but it will bear repetition. I've often felt condemned by the morning song of the birds.

Where we live, at the back of our house, is the high-haiden wooded area, with the disused railway line that ran originally from Old Hill as a branch line to Hales Owen and beyond.

And in those trees, congregate through the night season, a multitude of different birds. And the dawn, the light of dawn, the day spring, has hardly shown itself before the chorus sets up.

And a wonderful chorus it is. I've often laid and listened with appreciation of the facility that God has given to me and the faculty he's given to these little creatures to sing forth his praises.

[5 : 49] But my friends, how sometimes the appreciation of that song has returned to me. What about your song? You've partaken of the protection of God through the night season.

You've had many comforts denied to these little creatures. But what thanks has God received from your heart? What return have you given as the morning has broke?

And my friends, oftentimes the birds and the beasts condemn us now. For now, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, or we could render it to relieve the fatherless and widows in their affliction.

to be ready to communicate. To be, as it were, in harmony with the bountiful mind and heart of God.

Not to kind of withdraw with our little nest egg and say, this all belongs to me. Oh no, it doesn't belong to you. And you'll soon know it doesn't belong to you too.

[7 : 06] because God will take it from you. As sure as you're alive. What you have won't be yours much longer.

You see, my friends, we get so possessive, don't we? We get so introspective. We get so selfish that that characteristic is not found in God.

Look at the bounty of divine giving that sustains this world, that maintains every creature in every area, be it in the heavens or in the sea or on the land.

to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction. I believe God places conditions of need round about us to prove our spirit.

To prove our accord in heart with his own heart. and if our hearts are gracious, if we're under the influence of his spirit, there'll be no discord.

[8 : 25] The spirit of Christ in his people and the spirit of Christ in the person of Christ are in absolute unison. There's no discord.

So that when our heart is at discord with the heart of Christ, when our spirit is in conflict with the spirit of Jesus Christ, we must be around. We must be in the flesh.

These are simple deductions. Now to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Having spoken from this last Lord's Day evening, I do not intend to pursue further that great consideration to keep himself unspotted from the world.

And he goes on, my brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory with respect of the person. You see, James is jealous for his brethren.

[9 : 44] The very burden of his heart is for the brethren's well-being. He wants them to be right. He wants God to be glorified in them.

And he wants the cause of God and truth to prosper. So he gives them gracious exhortation. He says, my brethren, the closest relationship of all between man and man.

That relationship that's begotten by the spirit between the souls of men. My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory with respect of person.

Why does he enter this consideration here, the Lord of glory? Why does he say, the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory with respect of person?

Well, my friends, for this reason. the glory of the Lord is the glory that is to be appreciated and that which proves attractive to the faith of God's people.

[11 : 16] have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.

Now, what is the glory of the saints? The glory of the Lord imparted. Imparted. what is that which makes a person attractive to faith?

The glory of the Lord through the grace of the Lord given. And whoever, whatever the position, whatever the station of a person in this world is, my friends, the attraction to that person is the glory of the Lord in them.

Isn't it? This is why James introduces at this point the Lord of glory. Because this is the glory of the world.

Look, apart from the Lord of glory, what glory is there in the world? sin has brought death and decay universally, hasn't it?

[12 : 45] And to faith. For it says, I live in a dying world. I see everything dying, everything perishing. Except that which is of the Lord, the Lord of glory.

And that lives and lives forever. And my friends, what an attraction that is as we consider the word of God.

The word of God that liveth and abideth forever. Heaven and earth shall pass away, he says, but my word shall not pass away. This is the glory of the word, isn't it?

It's the glory of the Lord. This is what attracts us to the scripture. This is what holds us to the book of truth because there's a glory in it, an unfading glory, an eternal glory.

Now, what attracts us to the people of God? God? You say they're a living people. They have a peculiar glory attaching to them.

[14 : 04] They are a separated multitude scattered over the earth. when you read of them in the word of God.

There's a glory attaches to them, isn't it? You can read of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. You can read of the great Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and you can read of the great emperor of Babylon in all the glory of his empire, and you can read of Nero of Rome and all the grandeur of his position and power in the earth, but is there any glory in it, really?

Is there any glory in it? It's a fading glory, isn't it? Pharaoh and his host are destroyed, Ahab and Jezebel come to untimely ends, Babylon is fallen, Babylon is fallen, the empire and its emperor fade away and perish, perish.

So we can go on, what is earth's glory? It's a fading glory, it's a fading glory.

James says, let your standard be different from this. looking at the glory which attracts the understanding and the appreciation of fallen mankind.

[16 : 17] He says, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory with respect of persons.

Don't judge according to human standards standards. Because those standards are false standards.

He said, let, he says, let a right understanding be found among you, my brethren. for if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring and in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, sit thou here in a good place, and say to the poor, stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool.

Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? You see where the Lord of glory comes in, don't you, in James' approach to this matter.

He says, the things of this world, there's no real glory there. There's no real glory there. A man may come in with a gold ring and goodly apparel, and you may say, well, yes, he is a man of substance, but such a man may be wanting true glory.

[18 : 01] Such a man may be destitute of the glory of Jesus Christ imparted. He may bear no reflection at all of the Son of Righteousness.

Now, James says, don't be carried away with outward appearance. Don't be carried away with earthly consideration. The poor man may show forth more glory than the rich.

Look at the record of Scripture. people who are not looking at the subjects of Christ's personal visitation and attention.

Look at those who were miraculously delivered from their infirmities. Look at those who were forgiven their sins, male and female. Look at those who partook of the benefits of Christ's incarnate work when he was here under the sun, doing the will of God, typical of the mind of God and will of God in all generations.

My friends, look at it. Look at it. Have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

[19 : 29] persons. The wise man in the proverb says it is not good to have respect of persons in judgment.

Very natural, isn't it? Very natural, but not good, not good. Have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

Have you sufficient understanding through faith of relative circumstances to judge according to the glory of the Lord.

Faith wants to see Christ and the glory of Christ is the attraction to faith.

The women at the tomb. Why, my friends, what distress they were in, weren't they? But when the Lord appeared, when the glory of the Lord risen, was manifest to them, why?

[20 : 59] The whole situation, the whole scene changed, didn't it? Look at the two on their way to Emmaus. They were disconsolate. They were in darkness and distress.

We thought it had been he that would have saved Israel. But today is the third day since these things were done.

But when the Lord made himself known to them in the breaking of bread, my friends, the glory of the Lord appeared, you see, and that changed the situation.

That changed their hearts. Did not our heart burn within us? As he talked with us by the way, as he opened to us the scripture. Now, I'm going to pursue this just a little because I feel it's so profitable as a consideration and an exercise to us.

when you read your Bible, what are you looking for as you read it?

[22 : 14] The page has no glory in it, has it? As far as your appreciation, until you're brought in the exercise of faith.

And when you're brought into the exercise of faith, the scripture has a different aspect, altogether. There's a glory in it.

There's an authority with it. There's a power. There's an attraction. My friends, it's the glory of the Lord, in the word of the Lord, isn't it?

And you don't need I was going to say a great amount of scriptural word, do you?

Don't need to read, as it were, whole chapters. Sometimes a syllable of truth can be more than a meal spiritually.

[23 : 23] so that you feel to be so enlarged in it as to be overwhelmed by it. The glory of the Lord, in the word of the Lord.

Some of you know what it is to read the word and be disappointed, unprofited. on the other hand you know what it is to take the word and be filled with it, filled with it.

A word in season, a word applied. You see the glory of the Lord. That may be a simple expression like fear not, silence is your fear, lifts up your soul with gracious anticipation of divine deliverance.

Your crooked things are made straight and your rough places are plain and you can commit it all into the Lord's hand and you can go on. I was going to say careless and indifferent of the consequences because the Lord has spoken.

The glory of the Lord has entered upon the sea. My friends, what a difference the glory of the Lord makes, doesn't it?

[24 : 54] And you may come into the house of God to wait upon the ministry of the world or at the prayer meetings to listen to the brethren pray.

It's the glory of the Lord, isn't it, that we're looking for, that we're speaking after. So, I mentioned in prayer the unsatisfactory communication of man with man.

for me to speak to you in the relationship of natural communication is not the great end of the ordinance as God has established it.

I hope I am not fulfilling a role of satisfying a kind of religious turn of mind in your experience.

what I hope is the fact that from time to time the glory of the Lord appears through the ministry of the gospel and the word is not in word only but in power and in demonstration of the spirit and much assurance.

[26 : 24] You see, it's the glory of the Lord. God. Our young people may ask the question comparatively, why don't we have stained glass windows and why don't we have altars and candles and why don't we have various items of artistic interest scattered around in our place of worship?

Why is our sanctuary so plain? Well, my friend, the simple answer is this, that we see the benefit in the glory of the Lord, that which is known to faith, that which is appreciated by the eye of faith and the heart of faith.

You see, the glory of the Lord makes the house of the Lord, doesn't it? I've referred to this before but I'll repeat it.

Under the direction of God, in that old dispensation, Solomon was appointed to build a temple.

Solomon's temple was the most remarkable edifice of divine divine wisdom and direction given unto Solomon that those things it contained bore a signification which relates, I believe, to the true church through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[28 : 12] Christ. But when Solomon had built the temple and done all things that were necessary to its perfection, according to the wisdom and direction of God, he held the feast of the dedication.

and he prayed while Israel was together, and he prayed a most remarkable prayer that's found recorded in the early chapters of the second book of Chronicles.

But when we come to chapter 7, we come to the conclusion of Solomon's prayer at the end of chapter 6.

Then chapter 7 opens like this. Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house.

And the priests could not enter into the house of the Lord because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord upon the house of the Lord, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement and worshipped and praised the Lord, saying, for he is good, for his mercy endureth forever.

[29 : 59] Now you see, my friends, nothing in the house of the Lord was of any real consequence until the glory of the Lord appeared.

That is the secret of worship, the glory of the Lord. That's what we want, isn't it? That's what I'm waiting for, that's what I'm burdened about, night and day, that the glory of the Lord shall appear in the house of the Lord and among the people of the Lord.

My friends, social connections and family ties and all these other things, which are good and right and pleasing in their place, well, no, they do not arrive at the great end of the ordinance of worship, do they?

We must have the glory of the Lord to worship the Lord. That's a divine gift.

My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory with respect of person. Now let us turn with respect of person.

[31 : 30] What a wonderful thing the grace of God is. It's the glory of the Lord in and through a person. The grace of God.

sometimes you haven't to be in contact with a person very many minutes to see the glory of the Lord.

You see it. A gracious soul sees a gracious soul. Either they witness the spirit of grace in them by the works of grace through them or they hear them speak gracious words which manifest a gracious heart, a heart which the Lord has touched.

But what distinguishes such a person from the rest of mankind? The glory of the Lord. The glory of the Lord. When we talk about so and so being a godly person or so and so being a gracious person or so and so being a true Christian, we mean don't we, we can see the glory of the Lord in them.

That's the secret. And that's the secret of the union in the church of Christ. The relationship which exists among the people of God. It's the glory of the Lord.

[33 : 09] God is not a person taking up with religion and being a kind of a religious turn of mind. Oh no! This is a heavenly, a divine gift, sovereignly bestowed.

Now to whom does the Lord give this gift? Well he gives it to whom he will.

to whom he has sovereignly chosen the gift to be given. Hearken my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him.

You see where James' mind is running don't you? that those things which distinguish and impress men naturally should not obtain within the church of Christ.

But the church of Christ is looking for the glory of Christ. It matters not what the social status of a person is.

[34 : 26] If the glory of Christ is manifest in that person that person should be appreciated for the grace that God has given to them. God has chosen them who are we to reject them?

If God has bestowed upon them his free grace who are we to despise them? Be they very poor be they very insignificant be they very despised socially should they be despised in the church of Christ?

If God has chosen them who are we to despise them? You see my friends this is where James mind is directed of the Holy Spirit and his instruction is passed on to us through the Holy Word of God.

We have a great natural tendency to look down on some and to look up to others. I'm not inculcating the suggestion that there is not a place for respect and appreciation among men.

I'm rather trying to establish a right regard of the poor than to speak in any way critical of respect to those who God has advanced and God has prospered in this world.

[36 : 34] James goes on and he says but ye have despised the poor. Ye have despised the poor. Have we despised the poor?

Is our standard God's standard in our approach to this or are we purely natural? Hath not God chosen the foolish things of this world?

Great word the apostle Paul directs to the Corinthians who were obviously far removed from the standards of James and in consequence the standard of God the thinking of God but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty and base things of the world and things which are despised God chosen yea and things which are not to bring to naught things that are that no flesh should glory in his presence hearken my beloved brethren hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith those of you that have been worshipping at Ebenezer for many years look at the generation that's now to some great degree underground those of the fathers and mothers look at the sovereignty of God can you say the most gracious worthy most able most prosperous it may be the people that took the great initiative in establishing this cause of truth were not the most gracious people that entered into it when it was built it may not be

I'm not sitting in judgment you see my friends what I'm trying to get at is God's grace God's grace and the grace of God is given by a sovereign God to whom he will sometimes we have to say some of the most gracious people that we've met in life have been some of the most simple and poor people in this life I remember in my early church life at Coventry I hadn't been a member many weeks before three applicants came before the church my brother

John was one there was another young woman who is now in membership at Luton and there was this old lady a simple old lady she's still alive and the deacon that was appointed to chair the meeting in the absence or in the want of a pastor at that time he was a most godly old man Francis Negus by name and after this old lady simple as she was and still is had given her testimony to the church the old saint in the chair he stood up and he said real divinity wasn't it that was his remark as this old simple soul had entered into some of the things which the lord had revealed to her in her kitchen some of the profound doctrines of our faith concerning the high priesthood of the lord Jesus Christ and so on and the lord had revealed that by his spirit to this woman as she had gone about her daily calling her home commitment and she brought it all out before the church in such a way that the church was somewhat dumbfounded by reason of the glory of the lord that was present in the testimony of this simple soul now that was in 1948 we're now thirty years forward aren't we and that woman she's a very old lady now but she's endured she's gone in and out and she's born a good profession and she's spoken from time to time a word in season and she's greatly appreciated as a mother in

[42 : 31] Israel a woman of grace and of godliness but you see my friend the glory of the lord that's the secret that's the secret this is what we want to see isn't it this is what we want to attract one another to one another the glory of the lord how is it manifest well it's manifest in the spirit it's manifest in the conversation it's manifest my friends in the manner of life the glory of the lord doesn't matter where we see it does it doesn't matter if it's a young person we'll rejoice if we see the glory of the lord doesn't matter if it's an old person we'll glory and we'll rejoice in it we see the glory of the lord we can see it in some of our old friends god it doesn't matter if it's the poorest person in our congregation in our fellowship if we see the grace of god we'll rejoice in the grace that the lord has given them my friends if it's the most enriched person the person shall i say with substance who has been prospered in this world and is a possessor of possessions if we see the glory of the lord no we're not going to be too concerned about the other things all we're after is the glory of the lord because this is eternal in its consequence this is the true union which binds the people of god together if they come in a man with a gold ring and goodly apparel and they come in a poor man how are we going to judge the situation are we going to be partial are we going to say sit thou here in a good place and we're going to say to the other man stand thou there or sit here under my footstep are we my friends the grace of god produces an equality an equality an impartiality not a lack of respect no not a lack of respect but an appreciation that we're all lost sinners we appreciate that grace in that poor man if he's given it to a rich man we rejoice in the grace of god that he's given to a rich man we're not going to let the balance tip in the other direction as to be wrong but my friends the tendency the natural tendency the inclination of mind and spirit james warns against doesn't we need the warning we need the warning hearken my beloved brethren hath not god chosen the poor of this world rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him in some ways

I've cleared the ground in approach to the text may the lord add his blessing amen