

James (Quality: Average)

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[0 : 00] Continuing in the epistle of James, let us look at verse 17 in chapter 1, if the Lord may help me.

James chapter 1 and verse 17, every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

I've mentioned this before, but it's a very wonderful consideration to trace the train of thought in the sanctified mind of a man of God.

James, we know under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, yet the Holy Spirit leading his mind through a sequence of thought and consideration, which is beautiful, wonderful, showing the two sides of experience.

Those fearful, that fearful side of sin and its consequence, and the beautiful side of God's mercy and favour in Jesus Christ, set over against the black back cloth of man's sinful unworthiness.

[1 : 45] If you remember, James commenced his epistle with the consideration that, let us look to God for wisdom.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, not raideth not. He sets God before us as a very bountiful giver of essential wisdom.

My friends, we've considered that in detail previously. And then he goes on to show us that there is a tendency in fallen humanity to blame God for what goes wrong, but never to thank God for what is good.

And my friends, you and I know this truth, don't we? We know this natural inclination. Yes, when things are not as we would have them, why has God permitted this?

Why does a sovereign God allow that? Our tendency, our inclination is to blame God for what is wrong.

[3 : 11] What about all the benefits that we receive? If we were as ready to thank God as we are to blame God, our attitude would be completely changed.

But my friends, James tells us that, no, this is the influence of sin. This is the enmity and rebellion of the natural heart.

That the natural man is ready to invoke God to blame in every adversity, and yet not ready to thank God for the multiplied mercies and benefits that are received in life day by day.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. I wonder if we are really honest in our souls before God.

How many of us can really say that we live in abiding regard of God's goodness?

[4 : 40] I'm asking the question, what place has thankfulness to God in your life?

Or what are you taking for granted? What are you consuming without consideration of its origin? Every good and every perfect gift comes down from above.

There's not such a thing, my friends, as human independency. Now this is something that man has sought to conceive or contrive progressively through the years.

A kind of independent attitude. Ye say, ye are gods. And I suppose, no generation has expended its energy more in seeking to insulate itself in that misconception than our generation than our generation.

But my friends, how dependent we are when we realise by certain sanitary reminders how easily God could bring us to our knees by withholding some gifts by withholding some gift cards some necessary development of nature I think it would have that besit us a couple of years since.

[6 : 39] You know, my friends, God is only to restrain one of his gifts to upset the balance the balance being upset no one can really say what will result where the judgement will end we depend upon God for everything and it is only as we are appreciative of this that we're in our right spirit every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.

Now I'm going to speak more particularly from the good gifts as being the good gifts of God's providence and the perfect gifts being those things which concern the salvation of precious souls and all from above.

Let us first consider then the good gifts the providence of God every good gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning.

when God created the universe at the beginning oh what goodness was displayed what wisdom was exercised in heaven for the benefit of the earth.

we take the sun for granted we take the moon for granted we take the stars for granted we take the rain for granted we take the snow for granted we take the frost for granted but all these things have their place in the mind and heart of God for the good of mankind.

[9 : 02] and my friends if I can shall I say gather together my thoughts briefly and concisely let me say this is there anything wrong with the world as God has brought it to pass has brought it about?

it's a wonderful world in which we live its beauties its glories are only partly known and my friends the full tale will not be known by man because man's comprehension is finite and the world declares the infinite creator but you and I have seen sufficient of the world with our very contracted knowledge and appreciation of the things of creation to say it's a wonderful world we live in I remember an old friend locally saying to me on one occasion a very wise remark she said have you ever been thankful that flowers are coloured and they're not all black now my friends you may say well now that's a foolish consideration but just think if all the flowers in the world had been created black what a different world the world would have been from what it is and I remember hearing on one occasion of a certain industrial organisation in Coventry deciding that they would paint the walls throughout the factory different colours to give a change a relief to those who were largely engaged within the conflicts through the major part of the week and this was in the war time when long hours were being worked by factory hands essentially supporting the war effort and so they went through the factory and they coloured the walls different colours and after a while it was appreciated that certain departments were having eye trouble a development occurred that certain departments were suffering and a question arose in management and the answer to the question was that the most suitable colour to rest the eye is green and there was no trouble in those departments where green was the colour upon the wall so that it was decided that this was the colour to use in colouring the factory to relieve this strain from the eye now I just use that as an illustration and a conclusion arrived at impractical application to human need when we think of the green that God has used in creation the prime colour says over against that we have these multitudes of beautiful colours do you ever look at a bulb and wonder where the colour comes from you know sometimes

I've seen a bulb broken or cut through a daffodil bulb or a hyacinth bulb and just look at it and say now where does the colour come from God knows God knows my friends every good dear every good dear have you ever walked round your garden and admired the handiwork of the creator with real thankfulness to God have you praised the goodness of God for granting to you unworthy as you are the benefits of his providence in casting your light in such a world you may say well God created the world and then man fell but God knew that man would fall before he created the world the ordering so to speak of divine foreknowledge in salvation is wonderful

I referred to that recently in my ministry that the plan of salvation was completed before the fall occurred and if God foreknew the fall in redemption work he foreknew the fall in creation work nevertheless God gave the fallen man a wonderful world in which to live the mercy of God the mercy of God to fallen mankind just think of it the goodness of God is to be realized by us and is being realized by us in every way shape and form above the eternal misery of those that are lost what subjects of mercy you and

I am day by day and night by night every good gift and every perfect gift is from above now every good gift is from above God's sovereignty is to be seen in all his works and all his ways so that there are not two lives identical there are not two situations absolutely equal there's always a difference somewhere something but my friends with the great variety that exists in the exercise of divine sovereignty proportioning to each according to God's sovereign pleasure what an individual experience what a personal experience of God's goodness each and every one of us receive can anybody in the world say I have no need to be thankful

[17 : 26] I am in no wise indebted to God for my situation for my condition for my circumstances for my comfort for my possessions my friends with all the deprivation of certain as opposed to the affluence of others surely there is no one under the sun that what has reason to see the goodness of God in his lot or her lot as eyes may be given and hearts may perceive every good gift and every perfect gift is from above man has no right to any possession or any position in and of himself my friends it's all according to the gift of

God now what has God given to you what has God given to you just look around personally what has God given to you you say well I haven't got as much as so and so I'm not in possession of these benefits as so and so and so on but what have you above what the fans have in hell no situation existed for fallen angels has now exists for fallen men they went straight from heaven under their rebellion into hell but what about man oh my friends the

Lord has granted to man a world in which to live for a given period of time wherein God's mercy is manifest God's patience is lengthened now and the call of the gospel is exercise calling man to repentance ere the mercy of God ceases and he reeks the new reward of his deeds his wickedness his transgression against God my friends how are we using time how are we using time the goodness of God is lengthening out our days yes lengthening out our days but in the lengthening out of our days we have a responsibility we have a responsibility redeeming the time we read in

Ephesians 5 seeing the days in which we live are evil every good gift and every perfect gift is from above my friends having said these things in a somewhat general way let me ask this question in view of our deserts have we got anything to complain about ought we not to be thanking God rather than blaming God this is what James is saying that how unjust is the balance and bent of human all and understanding

God's gifts are so generous so bountiful and yet because one thing is denied or one difficulty is encountered man will turn against God in rebellion and bitterness and blame him so my friends we can see those things that Paul wrote in Ephesians 5 the rebellion of the human heart against God fornication all uncleanness or covetousness let it not once be named among you as become saints neither filthiness nor foolish talking nor jesting which are not convenient but rather giving of thanks a gracious soul is a thankful soul sin has such an influence upon us as it had upon king

[23 : 08] Ahab of all king Ahab had a kingdom but there was the vineyard of neighbor was Naboth's vineyard he couldn't be satisfied with his kingdom he wanted that vineyard so his wife his evil wife Jezebel she by devious means secures Naboth's vineyard for Ahab now you say well how ridiculous that a man could be a possessor of a kingdom and yet couldn't be satisfied until he got that little bit that belonged to Naboth but my friends can we throw stones at Ahab are we not possessors of God's bountiful gifts and yet because we haven't one thing more we're disagreeable covetousness covetousness which is idolatry let it not once be named among you as becoming saints says the apostle

Paul for the Ephesians my friends what of this if you and I can appreciate the goodness the bountifulness of God in giving to us what we have to enjoy every good gift cometh down from above we were born with nothing what we have we have been given who's given it to us you know sometimes in my simplicity I've considered an alternative situation to that which I have realized in the outworking of God's providential overruling you know

I was once in Egypt in 1945 1946 and the standard of life then in that country was much much lower than the standard of life in this country there was a great divide between rich and poor and the poor people were very poor very poor one could say without exaggerating that they lived in virtual squalor but you know I can remember thinking in those days of the goodness of God comparatively why was I born an Englishman why was I born to enjoy the standards that obtain in this favoured land in which we live

I could have been born to Egyptian parents and been reared in the squalor of the accepted poverty line of the masses in that land my friends every good gift cometh down from the father of lives have you ever been thankful that you were born in the situation where your lot was cast you were favoured with the opportunities education facilities that such a land as ours affords in the general principle I also sometimes have felt thankful that my lot has been cast in the situation where the truth is appreciated you know we could have been born in a heathen environment and but for the mercy of God the perfect gift of

God in regeneration in illumination doubtless we could have lived and died under the darkness of heathenism and then my friends without taking up the controversial doctrinal attitudes of Protestantism versus Catholicism let me just say this that it's a mercy to have been born in a Protestant environment isn't it freed from the superstitions of Roman Catholicism and you can narrow it down to such a degree that you may be very thankful to have been born in a situation where the truth is received and preached and believed in grace because my friends it need not have been look there are people not so far distant from where you live that don't know the things that you know don't have the things which you have don't pursue the course which by the goodness of God you pursue are you better than they have you more right to the benefits than they are every good gift and every perfect gift is from above my friends look closely at the things which are yours and can you not see the name of

[30 : 01] God upon them as the giver of them I say this that if you look closely enough with your eyes open and your hearts tender you'll see God upon everything every good gift everyone James doesn't bridge an exception does he every good gift and every perfect gift is from above what is contrary and what is evil in the world we can't attribute to God can we there's nothing wrong with the gifts of God there's nothing wrong with the goodness of God sin is the cause of all the world the world has ever seen my friends for the things which are contrary to us we must blame ourselves we must never blame

God that's what James is saying we must blame ourselves we must never blame God blame for those things that are contrary to us doesn't belong to God God saw that everything was good every good gift the good gifts of God's providence they come down from above God bestows his benefits upon the whole creation especially upon the human race every good gift is from above well then my friends James goes on and he says every perfect gift every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the father of life in matters of religion in matters of salvation where do we eliminate the interposition of

God well we can't we can't in anything we can't in anything everything originates in God concerning the salvation of mankind every perfect gift is from other we draw near to the season of the year when we remember the gift of the son of God the very embodiment of divine benevolence oh God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life what condition do we see the world to be in short of

God's interposition for the salvation of mankind well my friends man is in a lost condition a lost condition and the only way through which man can be saved from his lost and ruined condition is through the bounty of a gracious God and every perfect gift is from above the whole matter of salvation is heavenly in its origin it's not such a thing as any part or parcel of salvation associating with any other original than from above

God makes known his salvation in Jesus Christ as a revelation from heaven but that is not salvation in its completeness there needs to be an exercise from above within the soul of lost mankind to respond so to speak to the revelation which is from heaven and my friends that power commonly known as the power of faith is a gift from God that enables a man to overcome the unbelief that's inbred in him according to the fall and to believe in

[36 : 11] Jesus Christ to the salvation of his soul every perfect gift every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and how perfect is the salvation of the people of God it's a perfect salvation it's not wanting of anything it's not deficient in any regard at all it's a complete salvation yes it's a complete salvation and it's all from above now people say if you do this and if you do that as if my friends it's almost all from above but nevertheless wanting just that little bit of support from mankind no in no wise every perfect gift is from above that you see we stand firmly upon the doctrines of grace to salvation that it's the exercise of heaven that saves a soul every perfect gift is from above that

God works faith in the heart of a lost and ruined sinner causing that sinner to respond to the revelation of salvation as set forth in the word of God we firmly believe and would consistently teach that my friends the whole prerogative is in God God himself every perfect gift cometh down from above well God has provided in the person of Jesus Christ a full salvation when

God sent forth his son into the world salvation in all its fullness came to be worked out by the son of God it pleased the father that in him should all fullness well we need Jesus Christ to save us but my friends what a perfect gift every perfect gift is from above the only perfect man that could give to God what God required in the obedience of his will to justify was the

Lord Jesus Christ perfect in his nature perfect in his nature no contamination of sin in the nature of Jesus Christ a pure nature necessitating my friends the miracle of the overshadowing of a virgin by the Holy Ghost and this was wisdom's way of providing a pure nature for the Son of God we believe it we rejoice in the doctrine of him that Mary the virgin conceived the man Christ Jesus by the

Holy Spirit of God and he thereby had a nature that was free from the contamination of inherited sin he was the pure man the man Christ Jesus every perfect gift is from above a body has thou prepared me says Christ and the purity of his life oh the perfect gift the knowledge Christ never committed a sin through ignorance because he knew the law perfectly now

[42 : 01] Paul says of his unregenerate days that he did it ignorantly in unbelief didn't he and my friends how many sins are committed by you and I through ignorance but the Lord Jesus knew perfectly the will of God and in his righteousness is the outworking of his perfect knowledge of the requirements of deity by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many my friends he knew the law he kept the law he magnified the law in his life as well as by his death every perfect gift the perfect gift of the son of

God perfectly suitable to the requirements of God perfectly suitable to the needs of man and he sent forth by the Father bearing this great responsibility and he came into this world as Emmanuel God with us none other but the perfect son of God would have known the moment to cry it is finished you know it's a most wonderful truth that the knowledge of Christ was so perfect that when his suretyship had sustained the necessary suffering to give to

God the requirements of God for the discharge of his people from the penalty of their transgression he cries it is finished and gave up the gas who else who less than the son of God would have known the exercise of suffering to such a degree as to know the precise moment when a discharge was procured a penalty pain and the claw could be raised from his heart it is finished and he gave up the ghost every perfect gift is from above a perfect price paid by a perfect redeemer a perfect redeemer every good and every perfect gift is from above my friends there's everything in the person of Jesus

Christ and the salvation which has been brought out by him to instill confidence in the heart to trust him there's no weakness it's perfection wherever you touch it wherever you look at it wherever you consider it it's perfection perfection perfection as for God his way is perfect and it was a perfect saviour fulfilling a perfect salvation for his people that trust their salvation upon him every good and every perfect gift is from above now it's not man choosing a representative it's not man as it were placing confidence in a fellow my friends it's

God God chose his son God sent forth his son God gave his son as the representative of his people you see it's it's from above it's all from above in consequence it's perfectly satisfactory to God because it is from God so that those that trust in Jesus Christ have no occasion to fear the sufficiency of the salvation provided for them by God in the person of his own dear son every good gift and every perfect gift is from above salvation is from heaven salvation is by grace well now we have the other consideration have we not the consideration of the perfect gift of

[48 : 57] God in the quickening leading teaching of his people every perfect gift is from above every man left of God's interposition perishes in atheism perishes in atheism where I was going to say so at enmity to God that my friends we want nothing to do with the real and true God except as God himself has to do with us the initiative to salvation always is from above from above it commences with a call a heavenly call it goes through as it were the sequence of experiences essential to salvation and finds its consummation in the glorifying of the favoured subject of the divine gifts grace no soul ever perishes for want of the perfection of grace and its individual application to the soul but I leave it there for this morning every good and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the father of lights with whom is no variableness neither shadow turning are we indebted to God as we should be my friends we ought to be thankful to know his providence much more to know the favours of his truth and grace amen