

James (Quality: Average)

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Date: 01 January 1900

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[0 : 00] Now with the Lord's help we will again look at the 17th verse in the first chapter of James Epistle.

James chapter 1 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.

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.

This morning we spoke of the good gifts being the gifts of God's providence.

My friends, what we owe to providence. It is a good thing to consider the goodness of God in our lives day by day.

[1 : 29] How sad the day that passes without consideration of the goodness of God. There's nothing in the truth but what will exemplify that goodness to our understanding.

For my friends, that the Lord is good in the bountifulness of his giving, is verified in the circumstances of life.

And how much more when we, under the convictions of our own sinful weaknesses, get just a sight of what we deserve. How much more shall we appreciate the goodness of God in the light of our undeservings of the least of his favours.

You know, there's no place to appreciate the goodness of God more than a lowly place.

A lowly place. The more humble we are, the more appreciative we are. And my friends, it is a great mercy, as is consistent with the whole tenor of James' epistle, to look upon the Lord's mercy under a sense of our reduced position and condition through sin.

[3 : 05] Truly it is of the Lord's mercy that we're not consumed because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning.

Great is his faithfulness. Would that with the returning mourning, by mourning favours of God's goodness, you and I were thankful, morning by morning, that he is good, even to us.

For now, every good gift. You see, James has been blending upon the principle that man tends to attribute to God that which does not belong to God.

To blame God. But my friends, there's nothing to blame God for, isn't there? If God were not God, where should we be?

Well, we certainly wouldn't be here. We should be in that place where hope and mercy can never reach us. The very continuation and prolongation of our unworthy lives is an abiding testimony of the goodness of God.

[4 : 36] Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. Now, I was speaking latterly this morning from every perfect gift.

the gift of God's grace. And I spoke of the Lord Jesus Christ, particularly, the perfection of his person and the perfection of his work.

Salvation stands in the perfection of deity. And it all comes from above. My friends, it's a sad religion that wants a salvation from unharmed.

Oh, salvation is of the law, says Jonah. And such a salvation suits the needs of perishing sinners.

And my friends, it is such a salvation. The Lord has provided for his people perfect as God's work is ever perfect.

[5 : 52] Now, this evening, as I express this morning, it is my desire as the Lord may help me to consider the perfection of God's ways among his people in giving them the gifts of his grace.

And when the Lord gives grace, he gives salvation. But there are the graces of the Spirit which constitute the grace of God.

And every gracious soul is a favored recipient of these graces of the Spirit which all come from above.

A gracious soul is not made a gracious soul by environment, by background, or anything of that nature. My friends, a gracious soul is made a gracious soul by nothing less than the exercise of omnipotence.

God, in the power of his Spirit, condescends to set apart such an one and make that person a gracious soul.

[7 : 14] it would not have the slightest influence upon the heart of a person to dwell among gracious people for an indefinite period.

There's not such a thing in spiritual things as conforming to the company we keep. Naturally speaking, there is an almost proverbial expression that we grow like the company we keep.

And we would say to our young people, be careful in choosing your companions. Be careful with whom you associate because there is an influence exercised person to person which has a bearing upon our spirit and our outlook.

my friends, if we associate with the wrong type of person, we shall soon begin to become a subject of the wrong outlook.

Young people particularly need to watch against associating with a bad influence.

[8 : 41] when we turn to spiritual things, my friends, that influence of person to person is insufficient to transform our souls from one condition into another condition, from one outlook to another outlook.

world. The whole matter of the transformation of a soul from darkness to light, from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God's dear son, rests in the exercise of divine power, the operation of the Holy Ghost.

Now every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. Going on in James' mind, to which I referred this morning, you will see that his continuing thought follows in the line that I'm seeking to pursue.

For he says in verse 18, of his own will begat he us with the word of truth. And that's where I'm going to begin this evening. Regeneration. Regeneration.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. Now my friends, regenerating grace is from above.

[10 : 22] We must be born again. There's no salvation. Except we are born again.

And to be born again, we need the gracious, personal operation of the Holy Spirit within our own hearts.

The Lord Jesus Christ left Nicodemus under no doubt at all with regard to this cardinal doctrine of our faith.

ye must be born again. Now my friends, it comes down from above. Regeneration comes down from above.

God calls by his grace, his chosen, his children. And what a powerful, effectual call is the call of God in the heart and conscience of a favoured sinner.

[11 : 41] we might refer to it as the entrance of light into a dark heart.

Paul puts it like this in the sixth verse of the fourth chapter of his second epistle to the Corinthians.

For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

God hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

You see my friends the personal character of this miracle of divine grace and saving power. The Lord shines in the heart and light reveals doesn't it?

[13 : 05] And when the light of the spirit shines in our hearts there's a revelation there's something to be seen something to be known something to be felt that's not exalting that's not to our comfort and satisfaction naturally speaking that's to our conviction and condemnation we see ourselves as sinners the light of God doesn't reveal deception it reveals fact it reveals truth it shows us what we are but my friends those that are born again of the spirit of God and receive the enlightenings of the Holy Spirit within their own hearts begin to know in a personal solemn searching and sobering way that they are sinners that they are sinners that brings me to another point doesn't it?

The grace of God in conviction you know I can tell you that you're sinners other ministers can tell you that you're sinners you can live in an environment where sin is sung about where sin is recognised and often brethren will stand up and pray that their sins may be forgiven that the Lord will manifest to them the grace of pardon through Jesus Christ and all these influences being brought to bear upon the heart and mind may cause you to accept a kind of nominal designation and yes we're all sinners but my friends a hymn writer has it in this language to see sin smarts but smite won't with live confession is easier still this is where the Holy Spirit comes in but oh to feel cuts deep beyond expression my friends if the light of truth enters into our hearts the grace of conviction is there realised from above we shall know ourselves as sinners what influence does that have ever have upon the heart of man well it causes him to fall fall down before God conviction never left a person in pride and arrogance to boast before their maker the influence of conviction has ever been to humble to humble and he could not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven but smote upon his breast saying

God be merciful unto me a sinner there is such a thing as natural conviction what do you think was the cause and reason for those that came with stones accompanying the woman of whom we read in our lesson that was caught in the act of adultery and presented before Jesus Christ with the law of Moses upon their lips asking the question what saves them and my friends the Lord wrote upon the ground didn't he and those men they went out from the oldest to the youngest one after the other there wasn't one left there wasn't one left and I'm not here to say tonight that those that went out were the subjects of the gracious conviction that I'm trying to speak on

I believe it could well have been that under the writing of the Lord Jesus Christ they were naturally convicted of their unworthiness to sit in judgment of that woman and to cast their stones at her they went out one by one but there's a difference between natural conviction and the conviction of the spirit in a gracious and saving way and what I mean in my remarks this evening is that light that is from above that shines into the heart and conscience and reveals the necessity of Jesus Christ you know those men as they went out they left

Jesus Christ didn't they as well as leaving the woman they left Jesus Christ they went out my friends what a mercy if the conviction of our hearts is such by the Holy Spirit gracious influence saving efficacy to turn us to Jesus Christ not to leave him but to cleave to him in the spirit of prayerful desire be merciful unto me a sinner every good gift and every perfect gift is from above the Lord the spirit under the convictions of the law and to the conscience will create that gracious repentance and godly sorrow for sin repentance is an essential to salvation and for salvation you shall all likewise perish we don't learn so much today of repentance do we but my friends repentance is an essential to salvation to acceptance with god it's broken hearted sinners that god looks down upon with approbation and forgiveness therefore my friends it's another favour from above every perfect gift is from above and how the

[21 : 07] Lord in the perfection of his grace bestows upon his people that brokenness and contrition of heart whereby they fall before god without one thing to say to commend themselves but pleading before god that mercy which he has to bestow in and through the name and for the sake of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ every good gift and every perfect gift is from above from above we have to appreciate that the the Lord works by the graces of his spirit faith and hope and love in the hearts of his people they don't always live in the spirit of love they don't always live in the spirit of faith they're not despondent but the lively hope is not always in active evidence is it you know it's as God gives it's as

God gives and the graces of his spirit are given and my friends they're given as the Lord sovereignly sees fit to bestow them and to exercise them in the hearts of his people every good gift and every perfect gift is from above Lord it is my chief complaint that my love is cold and faint yet I love thee and adore oh for grace to love thee more that's the language isn't it of a dependent sinner looking to the Lord and realising that every perfect gift is from above God love you know when we think of the children of Israel finding their way from the land of destruction to the land of promise we realise how dependent

Israel was upon the gifts of God there was nothing in the wilderness to sustain them independently of God was if ever there was a nation that had to realise day by day their dependence upon divine bounty as they traversed that wilderness condition it was the people of Israel and my friends how good God was and what gifts he bestowed upon his ancient people that they never perished for want of sovereign supply did they every day saw its sufficient provision and so the people of God the spiritual Israel they receive from the Lord a daily supply but they have to realise from whence the supply proceeds every perfect gift cometh down from above do you know what it is to wait upon the

Lord for the graces of his spirit to look to heaven you can't find your needs supplied from any other quarter you can't realise help from any beneath the sun you certainly can't produce it in your own heart you have to realise every perfect gift is from above every good gift and every perfect gift is from above my friends the grace of strength and the grace of health the grace of endurance continuance all these graces they're from above and the apostle Paul had to acknowledge it in his own heart when he said by the help of God I have continued unto this day it all come from above by grace are ye saved through faith than not of yourselves it is the gift of

God you see Paul was convinced that his religion was sustained maintained from above so my friends the Lord was glorified in the experience of the apostle as he was compelled to acknowledge that his religion stood in nothing less and nothing else than the power of the almighty well every good gift and every perfect gift is from above now when those gifts are withholden what is the alternative well what ever will be the alternative if we're not in the spirit we're in the flesh aren't we if we're not being granted those fresh communications of grace and health we're no better than we've ever been and my friends there's no goodness to be found in us is there but every good gift and every perfect gift is from above it cometh down from the father of lights and what do we understand by this expression it cometh down from the father of lights for now light is used again and again to illustrate the benefits of the gospel the father of lights let me ask you a question can you think of impurity in light impurity can be introduced to almost everything but can impurity be introduced into light and I believe this is one of the expressions used according to the wisdom that God gave to the apostle

[28 : 43] James to signify that the gifts of God are pure they're pure in their nature we can't ascribe to God any impurity impurities proceed from us this is where we're blame worthy but my friend there's no impurity proceeds from God God is pure his gifts of pure that we misappropriate misapply these gifts and make multiplied impurities as a consequence of them can by no means be attributable to God the giver of all good now the apostle says every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the father of light another significant consideration is this that I believe the apostle has his mind toward the great and glorious gifts of God in nature in the means of light which God has established in creation for the benefit and help of mankind one of the things which signifies the state of things before creation's work was perfected is this the earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep now what a description that is of man's condition spiritually until the

Lord the father of lights bestows upon man those influences of his grace and spirit the father of lights God has given the sun to rule the day and the moon to give light by night you think of the stars of the firmament so many that they're incomprehensible and yet all communicating in their measure light to the world and so my friends we may see the hand of God in the heavens above bestowing light upon this dark world and can we not see the father of lights using means greater and smaller for the communication of spiritual benefit to his people upon the earth who could not consider the scriptures of truth and relate them to the testimony of heaven or the testimony of the heavens look at the great light the son of righteousness who is revealed in the sacred page the son of God but my friends not only this there is the church the church the church throughout all ages and we have the testimony of

God concerning his goodness and mercy toward his people collectively his church in the earth but then we have the great cloud of witnesses that are like the stars in the firmament aren't they the people of God in all the generations and ages of time who have subscribed as it were their personal witness and testimony to the record of divine truth what a testimony we have from the individual records of the people of God as to the sufficiency of the grace of God to uphold maintain illuminate and sustain the people of God the father of light I've often thought of the church with regard to the stars of the firmament that the psalmist says for that he is strong in power not one faileth that is the stars of the heaven are maintained by the power of God and my friends the significant application of the stars to the individual personalities within the church incomprehensible in their number yet all individually maintained by the power of

God for that he is strong in power not one faileth the father of light the father of light and there's one source from which all have received the benefit there's one father the father of light you see the grace of God has always originated in God not a different source from the present source was the source from which the patriarchs received their grace the prophets received their grace the disciples received their grace the apostles received their grace the early church received its grace the generations through this gospel age of all received their grace from one source the father of lights the father of lights now the apostle

James goes on and he says with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning the eternity of God the eternity of God I'm touching on it in regard to the origin of the graces that have been responsible for the church being what it is down through the succeeding generations of time but my friends God the I am of all ages all generations no variableness neither shadow of turning what stability and what eternity is set before us in every revelation of deity we sing a beautiful hymn at times together his eternal thought moves on his undisturbed affairs no variableness neither shadow of turning he doesn't say no variableness or turning he says shadow of turning not the slightest indication of turning not the slightest degree of deviation no variable nest or shadow of turning we live in a changing world don't we we may say of the days in which we live the changes are more devious than ever before it seems sometimes that there's nothing remaining as it was everything is on the chain you hear that expression many times from this quarter and that quarter well nothing is as it was everything is on the chain well my friends it seems to be so but we make an exception we essentially profess a doctrine that is very dear and very precious to our hearts that our

[38 : 48] God doesn't change his word doesn't change his promise doesn't change his grace doesn't change no he's the unchangeable the immutable I am now you see 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 what's happening amidst all the changes of life all the changes of the generations all the changes of time well this is happening that God is doing all his pleasure all his pleasure this is the grand and glorious outworking of all ages that nothing can turn

God from his purpose nothing can deter deity from the accomplishment of his eternal design my friends there's no variableness neither shadow of turning with our God you know we may sometimes consider the sun as the strong man to run his race he rises in the morning his circuit is in the heavens and he sets at a given second doesn't this sets before us the great doctrine of God's creative purpose in signifying to us by these means principles of truth but my friends the sun is not forever is it the sun is not forever but God is forever

God is forever God there's no variableness from eternity and to eternity there's no shadow of turning he goes on when the world ceases to be when time is no more God will be the same changeless being that he's ever been and my friends his purposes will go on to be fulfilled his promises will be verified to everlasting now James lays hold of this doctrine doesn't he he says this is the secret every good gift and every perfect gift cometh down from above from the father of lights with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning he's going on he's doing his work he's fulfilling his purposes he has as it were in mind everlasting decrees this is the God that we worship this is the God whom we serve amen