

Anger Danger

Introduction

James is the half brother of Jesus. He came to believe in Jesus only after the resurrection. He became the leader of the new church in Jerusalem which was under severe persecution. He wrote about trials because his congregation was a ground zero.

Their faith in Christ seemingly ruined their lives. They were no longer welcome in the synagogues, at their jobs, in the public square...and soon, their lives were being threatened. They were in the midst of trials...and they needed God's truth to get them through it.

So we have been learning how God instructs His children to respond to trials....

We learned last week that when we surrender to Christ we are immediately reborn in the Spirit of God. We undergo a new birth....a spiritual birth....a completely new being....that only God can do. We are not an improved version of our old self...we are a completely new improving version of the person God planned for us to be.

In other words, you don't need any more of the Holy Spirit in you. God gave you and I the full dose at our birth. In fact, spiritual growth is the process of letting The Holy Spirit take full control over your flesh. You don't need or get more of the Holy Spirit, you surrender and allow the Holy Spirit already fully \ in you to have more expression through you.

We have to learn how to surrender....how to allow the full Holy Spirit that is in us to have more control in our lives. We surrender more, He does more. God did not give us doses of the Holy Spirit in some kind of installment plan. We already have all the power that we can ever have, we are just learning how to allow God to express that power in our lives.....just as kids go through growing spurts physically...we do so spiritually....

James has told us that if we will persevere through trials, stop doing stuff to fix it, surrender and allow God to work through you and for you, that you will be literally changed by God into someone who is perfect, complete and lacking nothing.

Which brings us back to persevering in trials. It is in trials that we go through Spiritual Growing Spurts...It is in trials that we learn to trust and surrender to what the Holy Spirit leads us to do instead of what we decide to do.

Controlled by our minds we do what we have always done before. We place our self protection above all else. We do whatever we can think of to protect ourselves and our reputations. We are driven to end the trial and get out with the least amount of damage possible. But James says, if you want to be complete...if you want to truly follow Christ...stop hindering what God is trying to do in you....through you...and yes...for you.

Trials disrupt our plans. James says that we fall in to them...unexpectedly. Part of what bothers us so much about trials is that they are disruptive to the future that we planned for ourselves. We thought life would go one way....God directs it somewhere else. Our

initial response to that disruption is usually anger. We may not admit it, but we hate being reminded that we are not and have never been in control of anything.

The problem for many, particularly control freaks...and by the way..that is all of us, is that we have in our minds an idea of how life should go. We decide what God really owes us. For some reason we think cancer, birth defects, accidents, violence, poverty, and hundreds of other problems should happen to someone else. That God somehow owes us protection...He owes us a wrinkle free life....we actually embrace that fantasy as our reality....and then we fall into a trial.

Our knee jerk response to things not going our way...is always anger. Ok call it disappointment if it makes you feel better, but remember we said that in trials we have to be honest...we have to be real...because God is being very real.

So James has just told us that in trials we must persevere and God will, through the process, regenerate us. Make us into someone totally new...a perfect child of Christ in an imperfect world and imperfect body. Last week we ended with James telling us we are a kind of first fruit of those to come. Those who, like us, will walk in the Spirit and be regenerated by God.

let's dive back in

James 1:18–20 (ESV) 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:

What do you expect James to say next?

Perhaps God will surely do what He has promised to do.

A lot is expected of us as first fruits because we must represent Him to a fallen world.

Or...The truth of God can transform anyone who surrender to Him.

Or...You and the truth of God are now becoming one and the same...

All of those are true...powerful and helpful...but that is not what God through James decides to tell us.

James 1:18–20 (ESV) 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;

Do you see how quickly James seems to jump to a new topic? You are a firstfruit of God...reborn spiritually....a first fruit....and then James basically sends us to time out.

You are now a firstfruit...followers of Jesus be quiet and follow. Your out of control flesh tries to control you though anger. In your entire life, every trial has resulted at some level with you and I getting angry about what has happened to us. As we become more mature we may cover it up better, but it is still there. I don't deserve this...someone else is to blame for this....this shouldn't

be happening to me...things like this happen to bad people...God loves me. Our flesh always asks "Why Me?" and inside we think...bad things should happen to bad people....forgetting that we are all bad...none follow God in their flesh...none...not one...

So lets unpack this a bit...Someone in your life told you that when you are angry or frustrated that you should count to ten.....

My problem is that when I am angry I tend to count by tens. One...ten. then explode. The problem is that they and thus you...think they meant seconds.

James is more like...count to ten days....or maybe months..or maybe years before you understand enough to respond in righteous anger.

You have fallen into a trial...you realize it....what are we instructed to do as God's firstfruits? First, consider it Joy, second commit to persevering through the trial. Third, surrender everything to the Spirit....Abide in Christ...Hold on to His promises...His truth...and let God take you through a Spiritual growth spurt.

And now James adds to that...and here is how you manage your surprise, anger and frustration.....

James 1:19 (ESV) 19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak

When you find yourself in a trial..be quick to hear. Have you realized that cannot hear if you are talking? Have you noticed that you cannot hear if you are carrying on a conversation in your mind with yourself? People who are reacting in extreme emotion are unable to hear and listen.

The next time you see someone who is angry...**IMAGE 1** just watch them...watch how poorly they listen...hear...and interpret what is happening around them. Most of the time, people make the situation worse than it is because they open their mouths.

It doesn't take long to begin hearing someone say..."That is not what I said" Or " You don't know that is true" or "why would you think that?" or "Why are you acting this way?" Just calm down...or as James would say...be quick to hear. Listening involves receiving the words but hearing implies a degree of listening with a desire to understand. James says be quick to hear..to try to understand.

Often when we are in trials we fail to listen or hear. We don't really try to understand the situation and we misinterpret what is going on because we are busy talking, scheming and trying to fix everything. When we think we are in control we start doing exactly that....trying to control We become focused on doing instead of hearing.

In trials, we must learn to let the Holy Spirit take control...We must learn to trust His truth...When we realize that we are in a trial...we should first become a sponge. Allowing God to shape the situation for us....allowing others to share their beliefs or feelings....hearing the information being given to you. Taking time for the shock to wear off....Looking for God's truth in the middle of the chaos.

While most of the world is listening to the advice of people and presumed human experts...James moves us to higher ground.

The voice that you and I need to be laser focused on...the one we are to be quick to hear...is God.

God allowed this trial into your life for a reason...to get you to finally listen to Him. To get your attention. To shake you out of the world's truth and to show you His.

There is an anger response built into our flesh...so immediately after James tells us that we are new creations...He tell us by example, that we now have a new way of responding...and new way of manifesting the righteousness of God.

On my car radio, I have several presets. Favorite stations that I like to listen to....I am almost always listening to one of those stations...in fact one of them is my go to. It is really my home station. I tune into that frequency almost all the time. Throughout my life, different frequencies have held that prime position depending upon my life circumstances.

James is telling us that now that we are reborn we need to tune into a new station as our go to. While the world is spinning around us...people around us are freaking out...we are to turn off all that noise...and listen to our new news station...God's truth. James tells us to be quick to listen...

We must be in a quiet place to hear the still voice of God.

In trials, we must learn to quiet our mind....to control what used to control us. That is a key part of trials...Letting the Holy Spirit overpower the mind that used to control you.

Without the Holy Spirit...we are were left with trying to understand this world based on what our minds tell us to think. We have been under the control of our mind since birth. Something happens...our mind tells us what to think and doand then we respond. Satan loves that response because He is really good at messing with your mind to convince you to do what he has deceived your mind to believe.

We have spent years abiding in our mind. Praying to ourselves...trying to understand and interpret what happens to us and then responding in the way that best protects us and our interests.

If you want to see this played out watch the news on TV. Something happens...they immediately report it...they haven't heard enough to really know what is going on. Half of what they say...ok 95% turns out to be false. They are so quick to report that they have not realized that they have nothing yet to accurately report...Yet there they are...inspiring millions to join them in their uninformed, unreliable, and uninvestigated definition of truth.

Then just when you think it can't get worse, they bring in someone with some form of credentials to tell you what might be happening...what you are supposed to think it means....and how you should respond based on this misinterpretation of a non truth.

Only days later do they sort of admit that they got most of it wrong. Instead of investigating to find truth they report and shape situations to move you to their truth.

Imagine a news team reporting on your latest trial. **IMAGE 2** You turn on the radio and they are talking about your situation...experts are telling you what is happening...what you are likely thinking and what your next actions will likely be. They don't really even understand what happened. They miss half of the facts...they make assumptions based on lies and even well meaning interpretations.

Picture them going to your neighbors...someone you have never met...who now weighs in on your situation. Casting doubt on your character or worse making the famous statement of accusation..."I never thought he could do this" As if it is a given that you did.

IMAGE 3 Now they are outside of your house and outside of your families house...They are "Reporting" "The News" We bring you this breaking news...they have spotted you...through the windows...looking at them....Jim what do you think this means....how will that change the investigation? They are looking out of the window....Janet can you tell from there which direction they are actually looking? Is there something specific happening there? No, they appear to be just looking out of the window....perhaps they are waiting for someone....but one thing that we know for sure...they are in there...and they are looking out of the window. We will get back to you as this drama unfolds.

Can you imagine if the news swarm was reporting on your latest trial How fast would you turn off the TV/ How quickly would you close yourself off and run to your shelter? How fast do you find your safe place, surrounded by those you truly love, trusting the advice of those who you know love you.

You would immediately say, why do people listen to these reporters. They don't know what is going on and all they care about is being sensational at my expense. They are using me for their own benefit. They don't care about truth, aren't seeking truth and probably don't know where to find it anyway.

That is exactly what James is teaching here....TURN OFF THE WORLD...Be quick to listen...You new spiritual beings...tune into another frequency...turn off the lies that you have been believing...run to your safe place...abide in Christ...and listen for His truth...Tune into what He is doing. Turn off the world and all of their ignorance...be quick to hear.

We have the Spirit of God in us...We have His truth literally soaking every cell in our body We are in Christ and He is in us. Through the Spirit we have the mind of Christ....Why in the world would we listen to the world's view of what God is doing in our lives? It is like watching the news and thinking you have discovered truth not realizing that you have been manipulated once again by man.

New firstfruits of God...when trials hit run to the safety of God's protection....tune out the storm being played out in the minds of men...be quick to hear what God wants to share with you. Abide in Him...Let Jesus deal with the world and its ignorance...Let Him fight the battles for you...You just abide in Him and His truth....

Let time wash over your situation. Allow God through time to better define for you what is truly going on. No event in your life catches God by surprise. He promises to give wisdom to those who are going through trials but not if they waver in faith.

In other words, when you go through trials...you will have a choice of frequencies to listen to....the old frequencies of Satan and your mind full of exaggerations, fears and worries with the pressure to do something right now....or the new frequency of first fruit believers in Christ full of truth, joy and faith and the command not do anything right now. You can't tune into both...you can't hear anything if you are poised between stations....in trials you must be quick to hear and the only frequency is that of the voice of the Holy Spirit. Who teaches you all things and empowers you to do them.

While the world freaks out about your trial....you position yourself to hear Him. Put aside all the noise....Abide in Him and tune your frequency to hear only His truth and His voice. Respond to nothing else.

James says that we must allow the Holy Spirit to guide us through these trials. We must surrender and turn off the voices and opinion of those who are following Satan. We must allow no one in our lives to determine truth for us. We need to be slow to anger.

James is going to contrast for us the difference between man's anger and God's anger. Man responds to anger immediately, fully and with judgment and revenge. God's anger is measured, calculated, never in judgement and always with perfect timing. Godly response to anger allows truth to be fully understood before a response is forth coming.

Most of the time our quick response to situations leads us to anger and that anger is fueled by misinformation or misinterpreting information.

James tells us that as first fruits of Christ, our opinion and our interpretation is irrelevant. God doesn't need to hear what we think is true...He is truth and we abide in Him and realize, trust and act on that reality.

Our human anger usually causes trials or exacerbates them. James say be slow to anger. Think about Jesus getting angry in the temple.

John 2:13–17 (ESV) 13 The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. 15 And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. 16 And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." 17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

At this point, as an adult, Jesus had attended 20 Passover celebrations. These money changers and vendor did not just show up in this moment. They had been there every year....20 plus of them...Jesus recognized that it was wrong each and every time....That is counting to ten in years...twice. They were taking advantage of the travelers who had to buy sacrificial animals and had to trade in foreign currency to do so. They were being ripped off. It was wrong every

years...they were in and around the temple every year. Yet this year, in this moment, Jesus erupts in anger. Why?

Because it was the Father's will that this happen in this moment and at this time. How did Jesus know that? When He first noticed this sin, he was quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger. He took the situation to the Father and only did what the Father told Him to do.

As he processed with the Father his anger built....but it was a righteous anger steeped in time abiding with the Father. He didn't lash out...pun intended...on a whim in a moment of lack of control. His action was measured, appropriate and done focused on the righteousness of God rather than the anger of a man.

Anger is not a sin. Our response to anger usually is and the reason is that we act out in human anger based on our fallen flesh and deceived minds....Human anger is always associated with judgment and thus is sinful. And anger is the emotion that we use to try to bring our form of justice. We use anger to protect our reputation....Godly anger, anger that does not sin, is nothing like that. Godly anger comes from time spent abiding with Christ and surrendering to only what He instructs you to do, if anything. His response is measured, appropriate and never lashing out in anger...but rather righteousness.

Notice what John says...they remembered the prophets said, "Zeal for your house will consume me"

Notice a very key point here. Jesus wasn't acting out in an uncontrolled moment of anger....He was not angry at the merchants...He had long ago forgiven them....He has acting out in His zeal for God's house. They were desecrating it and He put a stop to it. Doing so in the time and moment that the Father preordained.

He didn't kill them...He didn't belittle them....curse at them...or turn the crowds against them...He simply responded in measure. ..Take these things away and the instruction...Do not make my Father's House a House of Trade.

This is one of the best examples of anger that has been soaked in the Spirit of God. The focus was not the men...it was the value of the House of God. It is God's righteousness that must be protected and guarded...but only as God leads. Thus James' next verse.

James 1:19–21 (ESV) 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.

The anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. That is the goal you know right? Please don't miss this.... The only thing that matters in any trial we are going through....is to preserve the righteousness of God. ...not your reputation among men.

The goal of those who have been reborn in Christ is to manifest their new life through the way they respond in trials. As believers, our new purpose in life is to seek the righteousness of God in all circumstances.

How do we do that? We stop acting in our flesh and we abide in Christ. Or as James says, put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness....Die to your flesh...Stop feeding that part of you driven by Satan. And note each word here...

Receive....accept....embrace...recognize the gift.. of the implanted word. You cannot earn and don't deserve God's truth revealed to you and now implanted in your soul....You didn't earn it...didn't choose it...and are in no way worthy of it. That realization brings you to receive it with meekness.

Meekness

The world defines the state of being meek as having a quiet, gentle nature, easy to get along with and is submissive. Meekness describes someone who shows patient restraint and doesn't take offense easily. That's what most people think of meekness as, but many have the misconception that meekness is also a human weakness.

Godly meekness.....Meek people do not jump to conclusions or judge people in the sense of condemning them.

John 7:24 (ESV) 24 Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment."

Meekness doesn't judge base on our appearances or interpretation of what is going on. The meek only judge based on God's truth and in the manner determined by Him.

The Prophet Isaiah said it this way.

Isaiah 11:3–5 (ESV) 3 And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, 4 but with righteousness he shall judge

If meek people judge anyone, it is they themselves. James will tell us in just a few verses.

James 2:1 (ESV) 1 My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.

How important is meekness....Well Jesus thought it was huge.

Matthew 5:5 (ESV) 5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Meekness is not weakness....Meekness is strength under control. A meek person doesn't over estimate their own self-worth, but they do esteem others better than themselves, as we're commanded to do

Philippians 2:2–7 (ESV) 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

Only those who are spiritually mature can be strong and meek...and can with joy be worldly weak. Jesus is the perfect demonstration of everything of God....He was meek...Strong and Wise....yet willfully chose to appear weak and to do so with joy. James will later say...

James 3:13 (ESV) 13 Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.

Colossians 3:12–14 (ESV) 12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

I hope it is obvious to all of us that if we have to put something on, we are not wearing it now. These are gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit.

Meekness is not something that in our flesh we aspire to. Meekness comes from the Holy Spirit. It is an inner strength. A strength that allows us to put God's righteousness ahead of our reputation. To care more about what people think about God than what they think about us.

Closing

CS Lewis wrote...."God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

The world is deaf to the things and truth of God. So it is not surprising that James tells followers of Jesus to be quick to hear. God is speaking to His creation constantly. We just aren't tuned into His frequency and we don't do so frequently.

We are first fruits. We are the evidence of transformed lives. We are the best example of what Christ would do if He was still on the earth. Nowhere is that more evident than when we go through trials. It is in trials that we allow the Holy Spirit to shine through us.

We should look so weird to those around us that they think we are crazy. They shout for us to do something and we choose to abide. They tell us how sorry they are and we tell them how joyful we are. They give their opinions and we focus only on God's truth. They expect us to be worried, concerned, angry and freaked out and instead we have God's peace, God's power and God's truth and God's patience. They expect us to attack others in violence and anger and we cover them in forgiveness and love. They expect us to power up and we power down.

The world fears meekness. People who have inner strength and no fear. People who put God's righteousness ahead of everything else including their own lives and reputations. People who live out what we often sing....This world has nothing for me...I will follow You.

The world can't wait to weigh in on your trial. To explain their truth and to tell you what you should do and what you should feel. They want you and I to freak out like they

would in the same circumstances. Misery, they say, loves company. James says consider it joy...surrender and abide....Let God's truth wash over you and define you....trust in God and He will make you complete and lacking nothing.

You may be struggling with a trial right now...You may need help learning what God is trying to teach you. After the service we have a prayer team ready to come alongside you and join you in your trial. You need to surround yourself with people who know truth and can encourage you to persevere. They are available at the altar after the service.

When trials strike. Surrender, abide, and clothe yourself in Meekness, Righteousness, and Truth. Then let God show His power through you to an unbelieving world. It is in trials that you and I get to be God's megaphone to a deaf world by being quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger. Let's Pray.