

## **Faith That Works Part 1**

### **James 1:1-4**

**The Title Of The Message: “The Introduction”**

**The Key Word: Joy**

**The Thought: If we allow our faith to be tested then we can be brought to a mature relationship with Christ.**

**The Breakdown:**

**Verse 1 Bondservant**

**Verses 2-3 Count It All Joy**

**Verse 4 Perfect And Complete**

**Verse 1 Bondservant**

**James 1:1** NKJV - James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.

**James...** There are four James mentioned in the Bible...

1. **James the son of Zebedee.** He was one of the ones who was called when Jesus began His ministry, he was one of the inner circle so to speak, he would become one of the apostles, and would be there with John and Peter on the mount of transfiguration, **Mark 9:1-2** this James would be known as one of the sons of thunder, **Mark 3:17** and would ask Jesus if he and his brother could sit on His right and on His left, **Mark 10:37** he would be the one who was be at the garden and would fall asleep with Peter and John, instead of

praying. **Matthew 26:37-40** This would be the same James that Herod would martyr. **Acts 12:2**

2. **There is also James the son of Alpheus**, also known as James the younger or James the less.
3. **There is James the father of Judas**, not Judas Iscariot.
4. **Then there is James the brother of Jesus**, and he is the writer of this letter, James is interesting because he didn't believe that Jesus was the Lord until after His death and resurrection, he would go on to be the pastor of the church at Jerusalem **Acts 21:17-19**.

**A bondservant...** We should note the humility of James, rather than laying claim to being the brother of the Lord, he would rather be identified as a bondservant of the Lord, the word "**Bondservant**" is the Greek word "**Doulos**" it speaks of "**someone who is in a permanent relation of servitude to another**" that is he was a slave of his own free will, submitted to Jesus and whatever He wanted, he no longer needed to be the master of his own life, he was here to serve not to be served.

**Of the Lord Jesus Christ...** The reason James chose bondservant over brother was because he knew Jesus was more than just a brother he was Lord, the word "**Lord**" in Greek is "**Kurios**" in the context it means that James is proclaiming Jesus is God, this word is interesting because the Greek Jews used this as a name for God, plus this word Kurios Dominus was a title given to the early Emperors of Rome so that they could show everyone that they were gods.

Paul would mention how Jesus made a special appearance to James in **1 Corinthians 15:7 (NKJV) After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.**

This appearance may have lead to James finally believing, or it may be because he already believed hearing about, or even seeing from afar what happened at the cross, His appearance is a reason though for his

humbleness, prior to this Jesus' brothers didn't believe in Him as the Messiah, **John 7:5 (NKJV) For even His brothers did not believe in Him.**

What I love about James is his devotion, He was all in, he wasn't half stepping or unsure but he was convinced, he was a man of prayer early church history tells us that he prayed so much that he had developed callouses on his knees that made them look like camel knees, it also tells us that James was martyred by being thrown from the from a high point of the temple, and that since the fall didn't kill him they beat him to death on the ground all the while James was praying for those who were doing this to him.

**To the twelve tribes...** This letter is written to Jewish believers, as he says To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, the phrase twelve tribes was more of a nick name by now as they had not lived as the twelve tribes for centuries by this time, this is why James adds that are scattered abroad, they may not know exactly what tribes they are from but God does, He hasn't forgotten His people no matter how far they may be scattered on this earth. I should mention that some believe he's talking to the Jews altogether but in the context I believe he's speaking to those Jews who have become believers in Jesus Christ.

So does that mean we can't apply this letter to ourselves? No! Because all believers are just a bunch of strangers on this earth this is not our home, but our citizenship is in heaven.

**Philippians 3:20 (NKJV) For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ...**

**1 Peter 2:11 (NKJV) Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul...**

**Greetings...** Unlike Paul who loves to use both the Greek and Jewish greetings "Grace and Peace" James keeps it simple by using the Greek word "**Chairo**" meaning "**Be glad**"

## **Verses 2-3 Count It All Joy**

**James 1:2-3 NKJV** - My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 NKJV - knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

**My brethren...** James says “My Brethren” James shows his love for his brothers and sisters in the Lord, calling them “My Brethren” has a flavor of reminding them that he is writing this in a pastoral capacity.

**Count it all joy...** James instructs us to count it all joy when we fall into various trials! Notice that James didn't say if but when, he knows that trials, that is temptation whether its the physical or spiritual temptations we have to deal with at one time or another, often times we have the wrong perspective on trials, James says to count it all joy when we fall into various trials, unfortunately we don't inch into trials like a warm pool or a hot jacuzzi we fall into them and are surrounded by them.

**Psalm 116:3 (NKJV) The pains of death surrounded me, And the pangs of Sheol laid hold of me; I found trouble and sorrow.**

Why do we go through various trials? One reason is because produces a sweetness in the Christian, what do I mean, well you don't pick a piece of fruit unless its ripe when it is ripe it is the sweetest and best tasting thing you could ever have, but it has to go through the weather to get that way it has to be able to take the wind and the heat of the sun before it can begin to produce that sweetness, the same thing is true for us we need to go through the heat that produces a sweetness in our lives.

Charles Spurgeon puts it this way... **Believers who have endured a great deal of affliction exhibit a sort of mellowness that you never see in other people... A certain amount of trouble appears to be necessary to create a sugar of graciousness in them so that they may**

**contain the rich, ripe juice of a gracious character. -Charles Spurgeon**

Someone once said that Christians are like tea bags you never know what they are until you put them in hot water!

**Knowing that the testing...** Notice that the testing is not to see how sinful we are or aren't but these trials are to strengthen our faith, our faith is always the target, it is constantly being tested and tried, its the one place that Satan is always hitting and trying to break our faith, why? Because faith is at the heart of our salvation, without faith we could do nothing...

Faith is a gift of God, **Ephesians 2:8 (NKJV) For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God...**

Faith is what those who have been justified live by, **Galatians 3:11 (NKJV) But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith."**

Faith brings healing, **Matthew 15:28 (NKJV) Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.**

Its by faith that we are able to bless our children, **Hebrews 11:21 (NKJV) By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.**

Its by faith that we are able to move mountains, **Matthew 17:20 (NKJV) So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.**

It's by faith that we can do greater things than these, **John 14:12 (NKJV) "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.**

This is why our faith is constantly under attack because it has God at the core and by faith we can turn the world upside down! If Satan can keep you impatient enough, doubtful enough, distracted enough, fearful enough, angry enough, then he will keep you from exercising your faith, he will keep you from blessing others with the gospel, he will keep you from healing those who are sick, blind, deaf, lame or dead and they can be all of these not just physically but but spiritually. Have you noticed how many young people are homeless? Not just homeless but they look messed up! Not just unhealthy but they seem not in their right minds? We can heal them by faith and bring the minds back into focus on God.

Spurgeon again says, **Faith is as vital to salvation as the heart is to the body. Therefore the javelins of the enemy are mainly aimed at this essential grace. Your faith is peculiarly obnoxious to Satan and to the world... He rages at faith because he sees in it his own defeat and the victory of grace. -Charles Spurgeon**

So when our faith is being attacked whether that through the physical challenges that come our way or through the spiritual challenges that entice our flesh to act up, James says count it all Joy! WHY?

**Knowing that the testing...** here is one reason why, the testing of our faith produces patients! Again we can some of the most impatient people, we give up on prayer, on fasting, on reading the word, on going to church for fellowship, because we don't see immediate results but that like planting a seedling of a red wood and expecting it to give you shade in an hour!

**Verse 4 Perfect And Complete**

**James 1:4** NKJV - But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

**But let patience...** When we let the testing of our faith produce patience its then that we can “let” it have its perfect work, notice if we can let it, then that means we can hider or even stop it, impatience is a sign of immaturity, but when we allow patience to do its work in our hearts and in our spirit then we can be perfect and complete, that is we can be brought to maturity, this is God’s purpose for the believer to bring us to maturity, so that we won’t lack anything in our relationship to Christ.

**Application:**

- 1. How do you look at yourself? Are you a bondservant of Christ? Are you sold out to whatever He wants you to do in His church and in your life?**
- 2. When the challenges of life or the temptations of our flesh come our way, we can count it all Joy knowing that patience can be the result of that testing.**
- 3. Once patience is built if we allow it, patience can bring us into a mature relationship with the Lord and a mature view of the world.**