**The Wisdom from Above**

James 1:1-12

**Good Morning Beloved**

* Memorial Day weekend… the breeze is delightful.
  + The lake calls… the setting sun splashes a variety of colors across the sky.
    - As you take in the blending of pinks, purples, and blues…
      * You hear a concerto of strings from a wedding on the other side of the point… in your chair you hear words that bright… simple… clear… even… inspiring.
* Two thousand years ago…
  + In a setting that captured the imagination of a multitude… a crowd of onlookers heard a young Jewish Carpenter speak to them with such winsomeness that all their attention seems to have been fixated on the one who said…
    - *3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
    - *4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*
    - *5 “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*
    - *6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.*
    - *7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.*
    - *8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*
    - *9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*
    - *10 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
    - *11 “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*
  + The words of Jesus Christ on that hillside made men leave their nets and follow him…
    - Made them turn from their sin and seek the kingdom that was above…
      * And made those living as orphans cherish their adoption into God’s family.
        + Imagine growing up in Jesus’ family… and then being able to learn from your brother… that God could be your father.

The Wisdom from the Old Testament poets would find its fulfillment in Christ.

The Kingdom from the Old Testament prophets would find its goal in Jesus.

The Cleanings from the Old Testament priests would be realized in the cross.

* + - * What would be the practical… take away… points of contact… for such truth?
        + That is the book of James.

**Reading of God’s Word** – James 1:1-12 (p. 1012 in the Pew Bible)

*1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,*

*To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion:*

*Greetings.*

*2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

*5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

*9 Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, 10 and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. 11 For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.*

*12 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.*

**Preaching of God’s Word**

1. **The Mark of Royalty (vs. 1-4)**
   1. *1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,*
      1. We are not exactly sure which James this is in the Bible, but he was a close relative of Jesus (cousin or brother).[[1]](#footnote-1)
         1. Yet even more important that bloodlines… is the connection of the man to GOD HIMSELF.
            1. Here the man is content to be known with the same title of the prophets in the Old Testament….

Servant of God.

With an appreciation for all that God has revealed in the past, he writes with confidence that God has spoken finally and fully in Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1-4).

* + 1. This message is for….
  1. *To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion:*
     1. Meaning this letter is for All the Churches…. It is probably the first letter written of the 27 books of the New Testament.
        1. So the question is what do you say first….
  2. *Greetings.*
  3. *2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*
     1. Jay Adams – “hardships tend to reveal that our confessional theology is different than our functional theology.”
        1. POINT: On Sunday, we say the Nicene Creed... “We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.”
           1. On Tuesday… I say… I don’t deserve to go through hardship.
        2. Ed Welch – “The gospel is always in danger of becoming a mere abstraction.”
     2. What is it that drives you to examine what you really believe?
        1. Trails… hardships… testing…
           1. QUESTION: What is the key story you would share with me in the coffee shop?

POINT: Your classic story reveals how you see the world.

* + - 1. This little passage is wonderful in telling your story.
         1. You will encounter hardships….

Hardships test… purify… refine your faith.

When life is hard… or ugly… speak to yourself… tell yourself… this is an opportunity for JOY.

This is not a moment for fretting… this is a unique moment in the history of creation for my adoption into God’s family to be validated… so that James’ greeting to *brothers* is confirmed.

* + - 1. Your hardships are not a sign that God has abandoned you… but actually the sign that He has adopted you.
         1. Illustration: Prince Charles grew up going to a school without hot water.

The depravation was mean to work a mental fortitude and intellectual perseverance.

* + 1. We can almost hear James thinking about the stories of Jesus enduring the temptations in the wilderness (Luke 3) and the terrors of the cross (Luke 22)… yet persevering.
       1. Point: When you endure hardship by faith… it will be a joy to you for it is marking you out as royalty…
          1. Just as it did Job in his sorrows.
  1. Transition: Also in the poetic thought, we hear what sounds like the distillation of Proverbs.

1. **The Mind of Royalty (vs. 5-8)**
   1. *5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*
      1. Eph. 2:7 - *so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*
         1. Do you think our Father is stingy toward you?
            1. Conversation with a person… What will heaven be like?

God will show us all the things that we could have had if we had just asked.

Doesn’t that sound like an eternity of shame.

* + 1. Instead, Dane Ortlund reflecting on the lavishness of God’s graciousness in heaven describes it like this…
       1. “It means that as we stand there, we will never be scolded for the sins of this life, never looked at askance, and never told, “Enjoy this, but remember you don’t deserve this”. The very point of heaven and eternity is to enjoy his “grace in kindness”. And if the point of heaven is to show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness, then we are safe, because the one thing we fear will keep us out – our sin – can only heighten the spectacle of God’s grace and kindness.”
          1. Beloved, for all of eternity… you will be the delighted prize of the Eternal Son and be presented as the spotless bride with the Awesome Approval of the Eternal Father.

Your God will not deck you in beauty for eternity and at the same time deprive you on Earth.

The lavish graciousness of our God will refresh you in his WISDOM with the same eternal generosity.

* + 1. Question: Jere Scott… I struggle to trust God? There are times I believe him… and there are times I am overcome with fear. I hate it… but I’m a double-minded man.
       1. John Calvin – “… no one is found who does not vacillate and tremble according to the feelings of his flesh; but temptations of this kind are at length to be overcome by faith.”
          1. Beloved, when the Apostle Peter began to sink after having walk on water…

He cried out in faith… and Jesus drew him up.

Matthew 14:31ff - *31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”*

* + - 1. Are you drowning…
         1. Say with Peter… *“Lord, save me.”*

The good news is he will… he will give you wisdom in the midst of perplexing situation.

For the Proverbs say…

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.* (Pro. 9:10).

* 1. This is the mind of royalty… a holy awe of the Lord that pleads for wisdom with expectancy.
     1. Then with the vividness of Ecclesiastes we hear…

1. **The Manner of Royalty (vs. 9-12)**
   1. *9 Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, 10 and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. 11 For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.*
      1. You are to be welcomed by angels…
         1. Counted among the redeemed…
            1. Numbered with those whose names are written in the lambs book of life….

Seated as the wedding feast of the lamb…

And associated with the Spotless and Holy One forevermore…

* + 1. Let that be your everlasting dignity and joy.
       1. Let your evaluation of others based on wealth go.
          1. Let your sobriety in the light of eternity ground you to consider all hardships as “light and momentary” (2 Cor. 4).

Let your appreciation of other be based on their dignity and worth as image bearers of the creator.

* + 1. For we all are but a few days… then we pass away like the wilted blossoms of the magnolia.
       1. Garages will be left with unfinished projects….
          1. Shelves holding half-finished books…

As caskets are prepared.

This is the way of every man…

* + 1. How are we to live as royalty in the midst of such an inescapable certainty?
  1. *12 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.*
     1. The first letter of the New Testament calls for wisdom… perseverance… steadfastness…
        1. But the last book of the New Testament complements that picture of putting your hand to the plow and not looking back (Luke 9:62).
  2. In Revelation we read…
     1. *2 “‘I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. 3 I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary.* 
        1. Does that not sound like the wisdom from above in James?
           1. Yet we also read…
  3. *4 But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. 6 Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.* 
     1. O Friends… do you love God?
        1. The wisdom from above is an invitation to the world of Love.
           1. It is what inspires poets to scratch down…

Fatherlike he tends and spares us

Well our feeble frame he knows

In his hand he gently bears us

Rescues us from all our foes

* + 1. How do we know that God will give us wisdom…?
       1. How do we persevere in the midst of trials…?
          1. How do we keep our minds set on the Beatitudes…?

How do we regard others with dignity…?

* + 1. Hebrews 12:1-2
       1. *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*
          1. By looking to the king… you become partakers of the kingdom.

By asking in faith… you will be refreshed in your adoption.

By hungering and thirsting for righteousness… you will be satisfied.

* 1. *7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’*

**Benediction – Romans 15:5-6**

*May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1. James emerges only later as an early leader of the church. In Acts 12, Peter notes James. 1n Acts 15, 21, Gal. 1 James is fronted. Also in 1 Cor. 15, we see how significant he is. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)