

Listening and Living

James 1:19-27

*Papa's Story – Swedish Covenant Children's Home in Princeton, John Deere at 18, WWII, Wheaton, marries Mimi, full-time ministry begins (doers of the Word).

-Pastor Brian giving me the opportunity to speak on James 1:19-27

It's good to hear; it's better to put it into practice. It's not enough to hear God's Word.

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.

22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. **23** For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. **24** For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. **25** But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

26 If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. **27** Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

-Pastor Brian covered our words and the tongue extensively in Proverbs series...

v. 19-20 – We live in a culture that wants to be heard (angry when others disagree)

-Wait to speak (or post) even though you want to be heard (practice self-control)

1. Quick to hear
2. Slow to speak
3. Slow to anger

v. 21

I Peter 1:23, 25 – Since you have been *born again*, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding **word** of God...and this **word** is the good news that was preached to you.

-Being *born again* through the word of God is followed by the command to 'put away' evil behavior and to embrace the word of God.

-We are not done with the word of God after we have become Christians. That word becomes part of who we are, a commanding and guiding presence within us.

**To receive the implanted word, then, is to accept its teachings and live by them.*

Mark 4 – But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones *who hear the word and accept it* and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and one hundredfold.

*The implanted word in our hearts will grow if there is good soil.

Luke 11:28 – Jesus said, “Blessed are those rather who hear the word of God and keep it.

*The word has not been truly received until it is put into practice

v. 22

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

*A young minister preached his first sermon in the church to which he had been called. It was well received and the people expressed their appreciation as they shook his hand at the door of the sanctuary. The next Sunday, the young man preached the same sermon. He continued to preach it for the following three Sundays. Finally the board of deacons met and inquired whether or not he had any other sermons. When he said yes, they asked why he kept repeating the first sermon. He asked them, “Well have you put into practice the first one I preached?” They admitted they hadn’t. “Then why should I preach another until the first has been put into action?”

People who know the truth...

*Unwillingness – say you love Jesus but are unwilling to demonstrate by your actions.

Doers of the Word:

1. We must have a willing spirit

James 4:17 – So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin. (sin of omission)

2. Knowing and doing is not the same thing

Matthew 7:24 – Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

3. Being a doer of the word makes resisting temptation much easier.

v. 23-24

For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. **24** For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.

-James gives us an excellent illustration...

*A mirror is no use unless we take notice of what it reveals!

-We look in the mirror to see if anything needs to change (not just to look)

v. 25

But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

Romans 2:13 – For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.

-The perfect law of liberty is Jesus' fulfillment of the law and His teachings...

*Contrast

Hearer only characterized by – self-deception, forgetfulness, hypocrisy

Doer characterized by – perseverance, action, blessedness

-If we hear the word of God and hold His truths inside of us, they must never remain dormant

*Hearing + obedience = blessing

-A revolution of our lives would take place if we would just obey!

-As believers we live by our convictions, not our feelings...

*Obedience

Discipleship – a long obedience in the same direction

Q. Are we being obedient to the Word of God?

Matt 5-7 (Sermon on the Mount), Matt 28:19 (Great Commission), Luke 9:23 (Take up your cross daily and follow me), James 1:22 (doers of the word) James 1:26-27

v. 26-27

If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. **27** Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

*The real litmus test of *religion* is not traditions and rituals but obedience

3 examples of obedience from v. 26-27:

1. Increase in self-control
2. A genuine social concern
3. Spiritual watchfulness

-The 'pure religion' of the Christian combines purity of heart with purity of action.

To visit – episkopos – to care for, look after, take oversight, pastor/minister to

Matt. 25:36 – Jesus said, “I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you **visited** me, I was in prison and you came to me.” (the *least of these* passage)

Orphans and widows

orphan – loss of only one parent or “fatherless” in the OT

widow – often associated with orphan (husband/father was the sole provider)

- **Exodus 22:22** - You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child.
- **Deuteronomy 10:18** - He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow,
- **Psalms 68:5** - Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.
- **Isaiah 1:17** - bring justice to the fatherless; plead the widow's cause.

Widows:

- The book of Ruth (kinsman redeemer)
- Acts 6:1-6 – caring for widows (distribution of food in the church)

Widow – examples

Neighbors, Dale Steele, pastors visiting shut-ins (Granny, widow for 42 years)

John 14:18 – Jesus said, “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”

Orphan – examples

Church at Brook Hills – called the county, 150 families needed, 160 showed up

Doc story – he and wife adopted Kayleigh when he was 50

Papa’s Story – doer of the word who was once an orphan in need of care

Highlight adoptive/foster families of Edgewood

***show pic**

-Half a million orphans in U.S. in need of a home (a million churches)

***Other social concerns of today?**

(Abortion, trafficking, refugees, homelessness, etc.)

“Please don’t abort your baby, we will adopt them!”

-Not just social justice issue but a spiritual one, a gospel one

***Christian care throughout history** – orphans/widows, Christians elevated the status of women, cared for the sick and dying during epidemics, fought to abolish slavery...

"You Can Easily Judge the Character of a Man by How He Treats Those Who Can Do Nothing for Him" –Unknown

-Won't make sense to the rest of the world, and that's a good thing!

Elissa Debrey (recent baptism)

Romans 8, 9, Galatians 4, Ephesians 1 – *adoption as sons*

-We are spiritual orphans without Christ

Communion

Closing Prayer