

The Book of James

5:19-20

Today on It's a Good Life, we conclude our study in the book of James. We're going to pick up with James chapter 5 and verse 19. I'd like to go back just for a moment and recap some of the things we've seen. Actually, not recap the whole chapter, but by way of introduction. Now, it may seem odd that I'm going back to an introduction, but I believe this is necessary for us to understand what's going on in the book of James as we conclude our study here. And I believe much of what James speaks of in the epistle of James is right behavior. Doing right is not something confined to the Jewish Christian. Right behavior and living is for all Christians.

As we stop and look back, although James begins the letter by addressing Jewish believers who are scattered, in James 1:1, the epistle goes on to address other believers as well. Not only were the 12 tribes scattered physically; they were evidently scattered spiritually. And we can also find this spiritual scattering in local congregations today as we look around. And James instructs believers not to be scattered, but to love one another as the Lord has instructed in James 2:8. Also you can go back in the Old Testament in Leviticus 19:18 and there are many other Scriptures.

We are to come together with believers in the local congregation and then recognize that there are saved people who are not in our local congregation. Come together not in the sense of holding hands with others simply because they say, "I am a Jesus follower." We are not to come together or endorse and have communion, fellowship, and so forth with those who have adopted the mindset of the world. On the contrary, James instructs believers throughout this epistle to exhibit unworldliness in their

Christian life. And James actually points out that part of the problem causing divisions within the true Christian community comes from adopting worldly actions and attitudes.

James 4:4 says this: *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

Now, it's not talking about that we should separate ourselves from the people of this world, because that's who we are to reach. We are not to conform to their way of living. We are not to conform to the world's ideas of what is right and what is wrong. We are of God, and therefore, we are to do what is right and we are to help these people of the world. We are to love them and help them to understand that God loves them and that God wants everyone of us to go to Heaven one day. And of course, the only way that people will ever go to Heaven is by accepting God's Son, Jesus Christ.

James is speaking to his Jewish brethren and, of course, we know this in this epistle. And he is also speaking to individual believers, as well. Plus, James is not only speaking to one individual; he is also speaking to the church collectively, and we need to keep in mind the theme that seems to be prevalent in this chapter and in this book and the other chapters and in particular the entire book of James. And it seems to be that it's pointing to practical Christian living.

Now, as we look on, we pick up our study today in the book of James with verse 19. It says, *¹⁹Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; ²⁰Let him know, that he*

which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

Well, James 5:19 talks about the brethren, about that brother who errs from the truth, and it says "if any of you err." Anyone can go astray. This could happen to anyone. In I Corinthians 10:12, it talks about the person who errs, and the Bible talks about, if you think you stand, take heed, because, you know, pride goes before a fall. None of us are above the sin that is prevalent in this human body. We need to stay close to the Lord.

And it talks about the brethren who errs from the truth, the Gospel, or the doctrine, the precepts of the Gospel, the precepts, the very foundation that says God so loved this world that He gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. We do not want to err from that. We do not want to stray away from the Gospel truth, the doctrine that God has set forth in His Word.

And the words there talk about conversion. It says, *Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him....* Now, notice the words, "any of you." This points to the fact that anyone can err or be led astray. In I Corinthians 10:12, it says, *Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*

And then we see the words "from the truth," if anyone strays from the truth. This would be the Gospel, the doctrine, or the precepts of God, the teachings of God that we find in this book called the Bible, God's Word.

And notice the word "convert" in James 5:19. "Convert," this means to turn back to the Gospel doctrine, teachings. And once again, Galatians 6:1 says, *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an*

one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

And thinking of that, we need to realize that James is speaking here of forgiveness, not necessarily and not totally of God's forgiveness, but the forgiveness of the brethren, the forgiveness of people who are around someone who errs from the truth. And that verse once again says, *Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him....* And I remind you Galatians 6:1 says that, if that happens, we are to help that person be restored.

And also Matthew 7:3-5 speaks of this. This is in connection with James 5:19, I believe. We are to examine ourselves. Once again, we're to take heed. We're not to judge that person, but we're to help that person who errs from the truth. Because why? Because, once again, God first loved us, and we are to help our brothers and sisters in Christ who have a problem. And not only that, the same thing could very well happen to us.

Matthew 7:3-5 says: *³And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?* The two-by-four. In other words, there's a small speck in your brother's eye, but look at that big beam that's in your own eye, that fault that you have. And verse 4 of Matthew chapter 7 goes on to say: *⁴Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?* *⁵Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.* In other words, get things right with God yourself and then you can help your brother.

We go on to understand that God is love and that we in turn can love our brothers and sisters because we have first been loved by God, and we need to keep in mind that God loves everyone.

God loves our brothers and sisters and, therefore, we need to do what we can to help those who name the name of Christ when they have a problem.

Now, let's look at James 5:20. It says, *Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.*

Notice the words "let him." This would be the one brought back or converted to the reality of the Gospel. Once again, in comparison with verse 19, the doctrine, the teachings of the Gospel. And that reality of the Gospel is that Christ came. He was crucified. He was buried and he resurrected on that third day. Let him, the one brought back, know, the Bible says there. Let him know. Let him be aware. We are to be aware of what is going on around us and understand that we're going to help that brother or sister come back to the Lord because they've made an error. They've made a mistake.

And it says "shall save." This is future, "shall save." The result of salvation will ultimately be seen, not only in others coming to Christ but in the day the saved go to be with the Lord. Second Corinthians 5:8 says, we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

And I Corinthians 15:55 says, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* We're going to see everything one day as it really is. We're going to see the evidence of people who have been saved, because they're going to be with us. It's going to become sight. Their salvation will become sight. Now, we can't see the heart of each individual that claims to be a Christian or who is a Christian, but one day, that's going to be revealed. "Shall save," that is future.

And notice the term there "shall hide a multitude of sins." "Hide," this means to cover

with Christ's atonement. Now, Christ's atonement takes away sin, but once again, we as saved people, we can see individuals' faults, and once again, the Bible says that we're to take care of those faults that are in our own lives and then we can help our brothers and sisters. And we can help them get away from that sin that is prevalent in their lives.

But notice Christ's atonement. First Peter 1:18-19 says, *¹⁸Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; ¹⁹But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*

First Peter 4:8 says, *And above all things have fervent charity... (or love...) among yourselves... (and there's the word "love" again...): for charity... (that's love...) shall cover the multitude of sins.* And Proverbs 10:12 says, *Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.*

In other words, we know that Christ's blood has taken away sin, but when we look at our own lives as Christians, we need to have the forgiveness that God has allowed us to have in our hearts as Christians. We need to be able to love our brothers and sisters in Christ. Although they have made mistakes, we still need to love them, and the way we do that is, first, we have been loved by God, and it's through His atonement that we can love our brothers and sisters. Now, we are called to help and restore stray sheep, according to the Word of God.

And I'd like to go one step further with James 5:20. Let me read it again. *Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.* We can also look at this verse as instead of being concerned about the other person's spirituality, we need to be

first concerned for our own, and then, instead of being concerned about another local church or denomination, we need to get our own house, ourselves, and local church in order. We should not be scattered at odds with each other in our local assembly. And I believe verse 20 of James chapter 5 is also speaking of soul-winning, of leading others to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember this, our short-term setbacks can produce long-term results that glorify our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, if we are willing to listen to the voice of our Heavenly Father. Practical Christianity is the key. Listening to the voice of God through His Word, letting Him lead us as Christians. Remember, the unsaved person cannot receive the things of God. The only thing that that unsaved person can understand is, first, they're sinners, they need to be saved, and they can't save themselves.

If that describes you today, if you recognize that you can't save yourself and you're in need of a savior, you need to ask Jesus Christ to come into your heart right now.

“Lord Jesus, I know I'm a sinner. I know I can't save myself. And I believe You came and You died on the cross for me. I want to be saved. I want to see you one day, Lord, in person. Save me right now.”

If you'll pray a prayer like that, then the Bible says that you will be saved. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Ask the Lord to come into your heart right now. Live for Him. Serve Him, and let Him bless your heart.

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