

HOLY OBEDIENCE THROUGH THE SPIRITUAL MIRROR

INTRO: The apostle James continues his treatment of “receiving the Word of God with meekness. Our text begins with the word “But”. He is going to explain what this receiving and embracing the Word means. More is implied than a simple hearing. Be a doer of the Word, continuing therein. That Word is able to save: a transformation of character, a radical alteration in convictions, feelings, tendencies, and change from love and service of sin to the love and practice of holy obedience.

I. **THE INJUNCTION GIVEN**

- A. The idea of a doer.
 1. This is more than merely doing: the elder brother in Jesus parable obeyed his father all these years, slaving...
 2. It is the difference of external conduct and heart conduct. It is like fire in the belly of the earth that seeks release.
 3. There is purpose in the hearing “Thy Word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee (Ps.11B9:11).”
 4. It is an habitual occupation, not occasional: in every area of life.
 5. Three things make one a doer: faith, love and obedience.
- B. How one is a doer.
 1. These words are not written to unbelievers, but to saints who are in Christ Jesus.
 2. In vs. 21, James has told us that the Word is able to save. The Word has power to overcome the practice of sin
 3. Power to save from unclean practices, some defiling sin, snares and pitfalls in our present life!
 4. Power to live the life that God calls us to bringing glory to God, and used to bring others to Christ.
- C. This is a command.
 1. Become hearers, be hearers, remain hearers.
 2. In hearing apply immediately. Do not procrastinate.
 3. Various examples in our daily lives where we begin but do not bring an action to completion:
 4. O the frustration of spouses, parents, teachers, elders, and pastors of those willing to hear, but not carrying through!
 5. “BUT BE YE DOERS OF THE WORD, AND NOT HEARERS ONLY...”

II. **THE REASON FOR THE INJUNCTION**

- A. Self-deception.
 1. There are many who read the Bible, hear sermons, go to Bible societies, but do not act on its teachings.
 2. They think therefore they are doing well, all is well with their souls. Deceived!
 3. Their lack of obedience might not disqualify them as a Christian, but it certainly will disqualify for receiving rewards!
 4. The old man of sin is real and active and wicked. We are not shadow boxing. The flesh is at war with the Spirit.
 5. Why do we not act on our hearing of God’s Word
- B. The illustration of the looking glass. The contrasts: (glance vs. gazing) (miserable forgetting vs. continuing in)
 1. Daily people take a look in the mirror to look at their face, their outward person.
 2. Unless it is a vain person, it is a **momentary glance**, enough to see the dirt or sleep there and get rid of it.
 3. Then one goes on to the regular activities of the day, **forgetting** about the glance in the mirror. Straightway!
 4. The child of God must look, **gaze, behold** into the spiritual mirror which reveals the inner man, the heart.
 5. This is far more important than the outward looks, therefore the child of God **must dwell on it, meditate, apply.**
 6. We see the stain and blemish, make sure it is confessed and cleansed, careful scrutinizing view of self (Ps.119:9).
- C. We are to look into the perfect law of liberty.
 1. Does the phrase at first look like a contradiction of terms: Law and liberty?
 2. James is not referring just to the moral law but to the entire Word of God.
 3. The Word sets forth the revelation of the will of God for his redeemed children.
 4. That law is perfect, meaning complete, completed in the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 5. That law no longer condemns those in Christ, for they have been set free (John 8:31,32).
 6. Set free from the bondage of sin, they are free to live in the Spirit rather than walking in the works of the flesh (Gal 5).
- D. An obedience apprehended in faith.
 1. The Word read and preached is retained in the heart.
 2. In the mirror of God’s Word, we see not only our face, but the blessed face of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 3. By grace we remain near to the Word, We carry it in our hearts wherever we go. We think on it, and act out of it.
 4. We perform those works that are the fruit of a true and living faith, performed according to the law of God & his glory.
 5. Examples of this holy obedience: vs. 26,27.

III. **THE BLESSEDNESS OF THOSE WHO HEED IT.**

- A. We are blessed in the doing of the deed (vs. 25).
 1. There is a blessedness in the doing itself. We experience a joy unspeakable and full of glory.
 2. With the Psalmist we too say that the judgments of the Lord are more to be desired than gold...and in the keeping of them is great reward.”
 3. Our happiness is in a good conscience, that with simplicity and godly sincerity we have our conversation in the world.
 4. We have the supreme blessedness to know ourselves growing more and more like our Lord!
 5. So as we look into the mirror, we see clearly not our likeness only, but the likeness of our Master, Jesus.
- B. A blessedness that has its completeness in heaven!
 1. The King says, “Well done good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord.”
 2. We will be rewarded according to our works, whether good or evil.
 3. Then we will no longer see him ‘as in a glass darkly’, but face to face! And we will be like him!