

Series: James
Title: Converting From Error
Text: James 5: 19, 20
Date: April 11, 2010
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James 5: 19: Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20: 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.

James is speaking to brethren about true brethren. If any of you do err from the truth. This conversion is that of a believing brother or sister "from error of his way" to the truth of Christ THE Way. James has shown us the way this is to be done.

1. By the Gospel of Christ Jesus.

James 1: 17: Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. 18: Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.... 21: Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

2. Through prayer.

James 5: 16: Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

3. Waiting on God to do the work effectually in the heart. Like the farmer:

James 5: 8: Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

No better example: Luke 22: 31, 32.

Christ Jesus is the Righteous Man. Simon Peter was a believer, erring from the truth. Christ Jesus converted him--from his error. How?

1. James says set forth the Word:

Christ is the Word, the Truth of God. HE is the Way. He both told Peter he alone would save him and Christ made himself known to Peter.

2. James says pray for the erring brother.

Luke 22: 31: And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: 32: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not:

3. James says wait on the Lord. The Lord Jesus himself, was Peter's pastor and his brother. He could have spoken and turned Peter, but he waited, in order to teach Peter his need for Christ.

Luke 22: 32: ...and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

That is why the Lord teaches us to be patient and wait on the Lord. It is a trying of the faith of the unerring brother as much as the trial is for the erring brother, but the trial is to strengthen both, so that we might be able to strengthen one another. Rather than merely save Peter from death, and cover a multitude of sins in

Peter, the Lord taught Peter so that as Peter taught his brethren many more would be saved from death and a multitude of their sins would be covered.

Now lets see what Peter learned through his trial. As we read this, notice how it is exactly what James has taught us throughout this epistle.

I Peter 5: 1: The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3: Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 4: And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. 5: Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 6: Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: 7: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. 8: Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. 10: But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. 11: To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Do we know of a trial James may have faced wherein the Lord taught him as he did Peter?

James' Jewish brethren were zealous for the law of Moses. They had heard Paul preached against the customs and they were in error. In seeking to convert them from their error, rather than simply encouraging Paul to declare the gospel of Jesus Christ to them, rather than simply praying for God to give the increase and waiting on God to make it effectual, when Paul came to Jerusalem, he asked Paul to purify himself and be at charges for 4 brethren--pay what they owed--so that they could be free from the law which they had zealously put themselves under.

Brethren, that is what Christ Jesus did for his people.

1. He sanctified himself
2. He paid the debt we could not pay
3. He freed his people from the curse of the law.

But when the Lord laid down his life, the veil in the temple rent in two.

It declared to all that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes. Christ is the Way into the holiest of all--into the presence of God--the new and living way is Jesus Christ himself. This is the truth of the gospel which James instructs us not to err from. Christ is the Way, Christ is the Truth and Christ is the Life. Our gospel is Christ.

Christ knows the feelings of our infirmities.

And having our conscious purged and our bodies washed in pure water--not the symbolical water of purification in the temple--but through the Holy Spirit we are washed in Christ's blood. The believer has free access to draw near to Christ in faith, to ask grace of him in every time of need. James says in his epistle: "if any lack wisdom let him ask God" He says "Pray for one another that ye may be healed." Over and over James encourages us to patiently wait on the Lord. Wait on the Lord to heal in his time, not yours.

Now, when Christ laid down his life, this glorious New and Living Way was manifest by the veil in the temple being rent from top to bottom. Yet, after Paul took James recommendation, before he was allowed to do what was suggested, something different happened by the providential hand of God:

Acts 21: 30: And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

The Spirit of God never records that it converted one of the Jewish brethren from the erroneous view of Paul or from their zeal for the customs. But it caused much suffering for Paul. The good instruction James gives in this epistle is much like what Peter gave. And it is nothing like what James recommended that day at Jerusalem.

Truth is: you and I can will be used of God as instruments to convert an erring brother by continuing in the perfect law of liberty: by setting forth this glorious good news of Christ, by petitioning God to work effectually in the heart and by patiently waiting on the Lord to do so. That is the same gospel Peter learned by his trial. It is the same word James sets forth through this entire epistle.

James 5: 20: 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.

Earlier James said if we are led away, the opposite of this will result:

James 1: 14: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15: Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

James has been declaring the fruit of the Spirit and the works of those wrought in us by God.

Galatians 5: 22: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23: Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

The fruit of the Spirit is: love. And love covereth a multitude of sins. Nathan was very tender and faithful in the manner when he discovered to David his sin. But Nathan left the matter was between David and his Lord. The Lord alone breaks the heart, and when he does he heals: **Psalm 130: 4: But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.** This is how brethren convert brethren from error back to the truth: through the good news of Christ.

Zechariah 4: 6: Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. 7: Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.

If you continue in this perfect law of liberty--you will convert brethren from death. Turn from it and the result **will be sin and death**. Be a doer of this word and not a hearer only and you will hide a multitude of sins--turn from it and you will uncover your brother or sisters sins--and **where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work**. The only way you and I will do this is if we are truly born of the Spirit of God and kept by his grace.

James 2: 26: For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

These works are the effectual, inwrought, working of God. These are the works which God has foreordained that his children shall walk in, these are the works which we delight in, these are the works for which we thank God and praise him. Amen!