

Faith Without Works is Useless

An Expository “Journey” Through the **Epistle of James**

7- In Humility Receive the Word Implanted

April 18, 2021

James 1:17-25

17 Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

18 In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

19 This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger;

20 for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

21 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror;

24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

To the Glory of God

Now in my last Sermon in **James** I told you that, according to one of the men God used to bring Reformation to the Christian Church (John Calvin)- “true Wisdom” consists of two parts:

1. The Knowledge of God
2. The Knowledge of Ourselves

So, according to Calvin- the understanding of “*Theology proper*” (the

“Study of; or the Science of; or the Knowledge of God Himself) and the understanding of “*Anthropology*” (the Study of; or the Science of; or the Knowledge of Man) is where “true Wisdom” is found. So, knowing two things:

1. Who God is
2. Who we are

... allows us to be wise. And both of these Subjects are *best* understood- by what the Scriptures reveal and by the Scriptures- alone.

Needless to say, I agree with Calvin and have said as much. I truly believe that one of the most glaring fallacies of the modern church is that the people, who lay claim to be God’s people in the 21st Century- have a paper-thin understanding of Who God is; and a mostly incorrect understanding of themselves. And this lack- fuels most of the false Teachings that abound in our day. And that is why I spend so much time teaching those two aspects to you.

Now it is fairly obvious that the Knowledge of God is deep and Profound. And in many ways- coming to understand the one, true, and living God- is difficult to comprehend and embrace. Because we can only know God- *rightly*- to the extent He has chosen to reveal Himself to us- through two Means:

1. The created Universe (the “*General Revelation*” of God)
2. The infallible Words of the Bible (the “*Specific or Special Revelation*” of God)

Yet with all we can see in both Creation and the Bible- we still don’t know everything about God- and never will. And that is true because, for some reason- God has not chosen to reveal *everything* about Himself to us. And that means there are Qualities and Attributes and Characteristics about God- that remain unknown to us. And we will *never* know them- until we stand before Him and see Him as He is (**1John 3:2**).

But what is not commonly discussed- is that the Knowledge of ourselves- is *just as deep and just as profound*. And in many ways- *Anthropology* (the Knowledge of Man) is *just as difficult* to comprehend and hard to embrace- as God is. Indeed, knowing ourselves may even be *more* difficult- for two reasons:

1. A true Knowledge of ourselves *assumes* a true Knowledge of God
2. We tend to think we actually know ourselves, when, in fact, the depths of our Condition are beyond our Comprehension- without the Help of God

Now, as it pertains to Salvation- when I speak of the Knowledge of Man- I am *primarily* referring to that terrible Event, when Adam and Eve sinned against God- called, “the Fall”. And specifically,

- What is the Fall?
- How did the Fall affect Man?

As I told you- I have been in the Church for almost 50 years and I have never met anyone, who denied the Fall; or that it negatively affected us. But the Issue is NOT the *existence* of the Fall- but *how* negatively did it affect us? And I ask that Question because almost everyone will tell you that the Fall “separated us from God”. And while that is absolutely true- that Answer is *woefully* inadequate- because the Fall did much more than simply separate us from God. And when an Answer of this magnitude is inadequate- it tends to actually give us the wrong idea. And that is why we must know ourselves as the Bible describes us in how we exist AFTER the Fall. And as I told you last time- there is, what I consider to be, the best summary Statement of what it means to be “fallen” found in **Genesis 6:5** that says:

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Here Moses was “moved” by the very same Holy Spirit that dealt with Paul to tell us what being “fallen” looks like. And when Moses wrote,

... the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth ...

... the word, “**great**” here comes from a Hebrew word that has to do with being “Pervasive or ‘All-encompassing’”. So, there was NO area of human existence- *anywhere on the earth*- where the Wickedness of fallen Man was NOT pervasive- or did not dominate. And that is terrible. But it is the *last* phrase of this verse that is actually the most damning. So, in addition to every area of human existence being dominated by the Wickedness of Man- Moses also said,

... every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually

Now look at three words Moses wrote:

- Every
- Only

➤ Continually

... because these are words that will box us in- very quickly. It is simply not possible to get around these words. They include every single human on earth.

And what Moses wrote means that not *some* of the intent of their hearts- but EVERY intent of the fallen human heart was Evil. And Moses infallibly said that every single one of the intents of their hearts was ONLY Evil! So, after the Fall- there were NO “Good intentions” dwelling in the intentions of our hearts or the thoughts of our minds. None. ALL of the intentions of the human heart- after the Fall- was ONLY Evil! It was nothing *but* Evil. And that is a horrible Indictment. But it gets even worse. Because then Moses said that ALL these Intentions of the fallen human heart were Evil- CONTINUALLY- meanings All THE TIME!

And this means that ALL of the intentions of the human heart were NEVER pure; they were NEVER God-honoring; they were NEVER holy or godly. No, ALL of the heart-intentions were ONLY Evil- and they were ONLY Evil- all the time!

And that means there is NO capacity for “Good” in the nature of the fallen human being- in a God- honoring way. None. There is NOTHING internal in the fallen human heart that would allow anyone to EVER become godly or holy or God- honoring- in, by, or through something they do for themselves. All of that was lost in the Fall. So, All Lost people are “ALL Evil- All the time”. And so, with that in mind- I ask the Question: *“How do people, who have these Characteristics, ever get to a place of being saved and of loving Jesus and of striving to obey Him?”* Jesus said we MUST be born again. We MUST have the Gift of this new, spiritual Life- or NOBODY will be saved!

Yet, because we are fallen- not only do we NOT have the Power or the Ability to make this happen by our own Choice or Decision or Act of our Will- we CAN’T even WANT it! We lost the ability and the power to pray to God to help us; or to even desire to be rescued from our fallen Condition. Truly, this is what Paul meant when he said, we were:

... dead in your trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1)

And that means that our Problem was NOT caused by a lack of Information. Our Problem is also NOT a lack of Commandment. We have plenty of Rules and Laws and Commandments. But dead people don’t need Rules; Commandments; or Laws. They are meaningless to people, who are spiritually dead. But if we don’t need Rules or Laws or Commandments- what do we need? We need new, spiritual Life! You see, we are lifeless- from a spiritual basis. We are spiritually Dead. And until we get that new, spiritual Life- and until that new life produces in

us a new heart; and new eyes; and new ears; and a new spirit- all the Commandments in the world will not change us. And as a result of having NO spiritual Life:

- We CAN'T hear the Gospel
- We CAN'T believe the Gospel
- We CAN'T see the Glory of God in Jesus Christ
- We CAN'T love God
- We CAN'T want God
- We CAN'T value God
- We CAN'T admire or delight in God
- We CAN'T repent
- We CAN'T comprehend our great NEED for God

So, what is the Remedy? We need new, spiritual Life. Yet, in our Lost and Fallen Condition- we can neither fully comprehend our NEED for this spiritual Life nor can we even *want* it- much less go out and get it. And this brings up a very important Principle about the New Birth:

We Can't "Get" the New Birth- it must be "Given" to us

... yet being Born Again is *mandatory* if we expect to go to Heaven.
Jesus said,

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'" (John 3:3, 6&7)

Yet, because we are "fallen, unless God graciously and mercifully gifts to us – this new, spiritual Life- NOBODY would ever be convicted of their Lost Condition; NOBODY would ever repent; and NOBODY would ever be saved.

So, the very thing we desperately NEED- we CAN'T want; or ask for; or provide for ourselves. And this is *why* God has to sovereignly give us this Gift of spiritual Life- BEFORE we ask for it; and BEFORE we even know we NEED it.

And this is why the Apostle Peter said,

1Peter 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

... and why the Apostle Paul said

1Corinthians 1:30b

... **by His doing you are in Christ Jesus ...**

... showing that we were born again- NOT by an Act of our Will- but “by His [God’s] doing. And then Paul also said,

Ephesians 2:4-7

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Now look closely again at verse 5:

even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

But even though being “spiritually Dead” made it impossible for us to *initiate* our own Salvation- God was NOT hindered by our Impossibility. So, look how God fixed this Problem:

[He] made us alive together with Christ...

God “**made us alive**”- which is simply another way of understanding what the New Birth is: the Sovereign Gift of new, spiritual Life. And this is *why* James said,

In the exercise of His will He brought us forth ...

... in the exercise of His Will- He brought us forth- in other words, He birthed us!

And this is the Mystery of God’s Sovereignty in Salvation. How does the Miracle of new, spiritual Life happen? By a sovereign Act of God, yes! But that’s not all the Bible teaches. The Bible also teaches that God uses various “MEANS” through which He sovereignly works. So, the Miracle of the New Birth happens- it is graciously given to us- BY the Spirit; and it is given to us- THROUGH the

Word. So, what did James say was the “Means” that God used to sovereignly give us this new, spiritual Life? He said it was,

... by the word of truth ...

So, the New Birth- the beginning of the entire Christian Life- is a Miracle of the Word. And I suggest to you that the 40 biblical writers intended that the Nouns and Verbs and Adjectives and Adverbs and Prepositional Phrases they were moved to write down- would act as a “Means” to give us that Miracle of New Life.

So, it’s not surprising, then, that if the lifelong Drama of the Christian Life *began* by the Word - with the Miracle of new, spiritual Life- then *everything else* that pleases God; and *everything else* that counts for Eternity also comes by the Word- through that supernatural Work- because you’re already alive!

So, how are we born again? And one of the most crucial answers to that Question is given right here in **James 1:18a**:

In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth ...

And the phrase “**brought us forth**” is a reference to: *being created; produced; or born*. And the reference is NOT to our *first* creation; or our *natural* birth, but to our *new* creation or our *new* birth. And we can see this because of how James says it happens, namely,

... by the word of truth

... which is a reference to the Gospel (**Colossians 1:5; Ephesians 1:13; 2Timothy 2:15**).

So, James is saying that our *second* Birth- our *new* Creation in Christ, happened “**by the word of truth**,” when we were given the ability to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Now look again at verse 21:

Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

Now verse 21 ties in with verse 18 in the Miracle of our New Birth- because the Command in verse 21 *assumes* that the Word has already been *implanted*. And it has! That is what happened in verse 18:

In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth ...

So, we began our natural existence on this earth as people, who were spiritually Dead. And that means we had no place for the Word of God in us. And we did not desire this Word- nor did we love it. Jesus said of the leaders who were trying to kill Him:

John 8:37

I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.

... so, the Word of Truth was NOT “implanted” in them. But before we move on from this- we need to be careful how we take this. Because those Leaders knew their Bibles better than anyone in this Church. Those people studied the Old Testament their entire lives. Yet the Word of God **“found no place in them.”** It was NOT “implanted” in them! And that tells us that this amazing new Birth happens- not *solely* by us reading and studying the Bible. It is a sovereign Act of God.

These people could read and even study the Bible all day long and yet nothing they did- created this new spiritual Life in them. How tragic to be so close to the Truth and yet so far away!

Now for the Word of God to NOT have a place in someone means that before we are born again, our hearts are full of other things that push out the Word of God. So, *before* our New Birth- we are like people who are so stuffed with candy between meals that when the feast is offered- we are not even hungry. In fact, our stomach turns at the thought of eating another bite. That is how unregenerate people relate to the real meaning of God’s Word. They sense no need for it. At all. So, the Word of Truth has NO place in them. It has NOT been “implanted” in them.

So, James says in verse 18- that the Way God sovereignly CAUSES the New Birth is BY the Word of God- the Gospel. The Holy Spirit carries the preached Word into our dead hearts and CAUSES new Life to allow us to see the Truth and the Beauty of Jesus- like we never have. And BY the Word of Truth- God sovereignly gifts us with new, spiritual Life.

But verse 21 says that this Word didn’t just “come and go”. No, it was **“implanted”**. In other words, the Word took root. It is *in* us and is now a *part* of us. And this is an amazing Miracle- seeing as how we are really nothing but creatures of the dirt. And James says that this implanted word **“is able to save your souls.”** So, please don’t ever underestimate the Power and the Importance of the Word of God. Because James said,

In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth ...

Now what is amazing is that the Word of God is treated here in James the very same way that the Bible treats the Spirit of God- Himself. For example, **John 6:63a** says,

It is the Spirit who gives life...

... and this tells us that we are born again by a sovereign Work of God the Spirit. God's Spirit gives us this new, spiritual Life that we DON'T already have- because we are fallen. And we can't do something to "get" this new, spiritual Life- precisely because we are "spiritually Dead" and don't care and we don't have that kind of Power. We can't *initiate* our own *spiritual* Life anymore than we can initiate our own *natural* Life. So, this spiritual Life must be "given" to us.

Okay, but James says here we are born again BY the Word of Truth- NOT by the Spirit. So, is this a contradiction? No. The Spirit *dwells* in us, and the Word is *implanted* in us. And this indwelling Spirit is God's Way to keep us; and bring us to Heaven. And the implanted Word is God's Way of preserving and saving our souls- in the End. And you simply couldn't say anything more important about the Word than this. So, please don't misunderstand the Power and Importance of the Word of God.

Here is the way Paul talks about this implanted, saving Word. In **1Thessalonians 2:13b**- he said,

... when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

So, the Word of God does not "come and go". It does not leave believers. Paul said, it "**performs its Work in you who believe**". And that means that the writer of **Hebrews** was correct when he said that the Word of God is both

"living and active." (Hebrews 4:12)

Here is the way the Apostle John wrote about this implanted, living, active, and saving Word:

I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one. (1John 2:14)

... and once again we see that the Word of God does not come to individuals and then leaves them. The Bible teaches that when the Word of God creates spiritual Life and Faith- by the Spirit- the Word “abides.” And that is why Jesus said,

John 15:7

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

So, the Word of God is “implanted” in us; it “is at work” in us; and “abides” in us. And then in verse 21- James says the Word of God also “saves” us. So, we cannot overstate how profoundly powerful and important the Word of God is for our lives. If the Word of Truth does not rank with your most cherished possessions- then you need to do a reality check on your life. Nothing apart from God Himself is more important and powerful than His Word.

But here is the amazing part that makes this Passage so relevant for this Message. Verse 21 says (right in the middle of the verse),

... in humility receive the word implanted ...

... which tells us that there are two kinds of the Word of Truth.

1. The *external* Word of Truth
2. The *implanted* Word of Truth

... so, there is the *external* Word of Truth- that is- God’s Word recorded in the Bible. And that *external* Word is every bit the Word of God. But it is *external* to us. But then there is the *implanted* Word of Truth- that God has sovereignly put IN us.

Now it is true that we are supposed to read and study the Bible. And in doing that- we are taking the *external* Word and we are placing it into our minds and into our hearts. And that is wonderful. But that is NOT what James is talking about here. The implanted Word of Truth that James refers to in verse 21- is something that God has done in us and for us- all by Himself- *sovereignly*. How do I know that? Two reasons. First, the Pharisees read and studied the Bible (the Old Testaments Scriptures) for twelve hours every day. And yet, in John 8:37- Jesus said,

My word has no place in you.

But secondly, I know that God has to implant the Word of God in us- sovereignly- because of what James said at the end of verse 21. James tells us that this implanted Word of Truth is,

... able to save your souls

... and that means that we were lost when this Word was first implanted in us. And as lost people- we were not able (or willing) to cooperate with God in giving us this new spiritual Life- which is what being born again is all about.

So, James tells us to “receive”- this Word that has already been “implanted”! In other words, if you treat the Word of God like your kidneys- you are making a big mistake. Your kidneys were implanted by God in you as you were being developed in your mother’s womb. But you don’t go on “receiving” your kidneys- after they have been implanted. They just sit there- doing their work- and you rarely think about them. But you certainly don’t “receive” them. They are already there- firmly implanted.

Yet James says, “*Receive* the implanted Word.” So, James tells us to do something very strange. Now please note that he doesn’t tell us to simply “receive the Word of Truth”. Instead, he tells us to receive the Word of Truth that *has already been* “implanted” in us. You see, the Command to “receive” is *present* tense- it is something we need to do- right now. But the word, “implanted” is *past* tense- which tells us that the Word of Truth was implanted at some point BEFORE we are told to “receive” it. And this tells us that BEFORE we can “receive” the Word- God has to *first* “implant” that Word in us.

And this shows us God’s *intentionality* in saving us. From the very beginning, God *determined* to save us- or He would have never implanted His Word in us- in the first place! And that tells us that, whoever already has this implanted Word in them- is chosen by God for Salvation.

So, what James is saying is: “*This Word of Truth is already in you. And you should now receive it. It is rooted and planted in you. It brought you spiritual Life. And it is there- sustaining that Life by feeding your Faith in Jesus. But it is not there like kidneys are in our bodies. It is there like oxygen. It gives Life. And in giving Life- this Word of Truth causes us to breathe. And in breathing- we receive oxygen.*”

The implanted Word of God and the external Word of God are so united- that we live by “having it already implanted”; and we live by “receiving it”. It is at work in us, as Paul says. And the Work it does in us- is it makes us *want* to receive it. So, receiving the *external* Word *replenishes* the Power of the *implanted* Word. And the *implanted* Word *creates* the Hunger to receive the *external* Word. And

then, to make us very serious about this whole Process, James adds, at the end of verse 21 “**which is able to save your souls.**” Okay, but what saves our souls? The implanted Word- which we receive.

In other words, our souls *depend* on the implanted Word. But our souls also depend on *receiving* the Word. So, for example, if you decide that you don’t need to receive the external Word- you are like a person who decides he no longer needs to breathe. You reason to yourself, “*But I already have breath in me. I already have oxygen- so, I don’t need to breathe.*”

And if you are spiritually dead (lost), you can carry through with that decision. You can choose not to breathe. But if you are spiritually alive- you can’t. Why? Because the implanted Word is powerful. And it produces Life. And it produces Life- by *causing* us to breathe. It takes over the spiritual diaphragm and it *demand*s oxygen. It *demand*s the Life-giving external Word.

So, if the Word has already been implanted in you- meaning you have been chosen by God for Salvation- you can’t hold your breath forever. The implanted Word will, sooner or later, conquer your rebellion- and it WILL be replenished. And so, you WILL receive the Word again.

Now here’s the kicker. You might think that because the Word of God and the Spirit of God MADE you; or CAUSED you to receive the implanted Word- that this might cause you to resent it. But the Nature of the New Birth- is that after God MAKES you; or CAUSES you to receive the already implanted Word of Truth- you will love it!

So, my Message today has two simple parts:

1. Receive the implanted Word
2. Receive that Word with Humility

The middle of **James 1:21** says,

... in humility receive the word implanted ...

Now in the context of hearing the Word of God- Humility surely means something like “Teachability” or a “Readiness to Submit” to God’s Word. And so, the opposite of “receiving the Word in Humility” would be to “receive the Word *suspiciously*” because you doubt that all of it is true or good for you; or to “receive the Word *partially*” because you want to reserve the right to pick and choose what parts of the Word you will obey; or to “receive the Word with the *cocky Self-assurance* that you can understand it and apply it to your life without God’s merciful Help.”

But James tells us to receive the Word in Humility. So, when you open your Bible, you say to God: *“I trust You. And so, I gladly submit to You. But I desperately need You to help me do this. Please incline my heart to love your Word. Please open my eyes to see the Greatness of what is really there. Satisfy my soul with the Glory of Christ revealed in all of this Book. I bow. And I yield to the supreme Truth and Value of this Book. In all meekness and lowliness, I look to You. I wait for You. O, Lord Jesus- come to me through Your Word- for You alone are my Savior; and my Lord; and my God; and my Friend; and my highest Treasure.”* That would be an example of receiving the implanted Word in Humility.

Now, finally, I want to try to illustrate what it looks like to receive the implanted Word, with the Hope of inspiring you to do it every day of this year, so that if you miss a day- you will feel like your spiritual lungs are going to burst with desire for another breath.

When it says in verse 21 “receive the implanted Word,” I think there is an implication that the Gospel remains the *center* of the Word that we receive every day. It is the Gospel- the central Message that Jesus died for our Sins and rose again and gives us eternal Joy in God through Faith. It’s this Gospel that took root in our lives when we were born again.

So, God has taken the biblical Gospel and He has already implanted it in us. And we should rejoice at that. But in *addition* to rejoicing- we also need to breathe the Gospel in- every single day. Here is what we always need to remember:

Nobody grows higher than the Gospel.

There is no such thing as anyone “maturing in the Spirit” to the point where the Gospel is no longer vital to our lives; or that it becomes *secondary* in importance. Those, who think that they no longer need the Gospel; or that the Gospel is “baby food” that they have outgrown- are deceived. A human being never outgrows our Need for the breathtaking Good News of forgiven Sin; and imputed Righteousness; and eternal Life; and of God being totally for us. And a human being never outgrows his Need to understand that all of that is by Grace alone; on the basis of Christ alone; through Faith alone- to the Glory of God alone.

You never graduate to a place where the Gospel is not the very *center* of your entire Life. And I think this is implied in saying that the Word that saved us; and the Word that is implanted in us- is the *same* Word we should go on receiving every day.

But God’s Word, Scripture, is *more* than just the Gospel. And Paul says *all* of it is “inspired” and *all of it* is “profitable” **2Timothy 3:17**. So, why

emphasize the Gospel here? God's Word is *one* piece of fabric. And the Gospel is the supremely glorious Design in the very *center* of the fabric. And all of it is woven together as one fabric- with the Gospel at the very core- or we will get off base.

So, my biblical exhortation is this: Every day- in Humility - receive the Word of God that has already been implanted by God in you. In other words, be in the Bible every day. Breathe the Bible. Don't try to hold your breath from Monday to Wednesday. Breathe every day- by inhaling the sweet aroma of the Word of God.

And don't miss the implications of the word, "receive" (Greek *dexasthe*). It means: *welcome*. It's not *receive* like you receive a blow on the head. It's *receive* the way you receive a feast; or the way you receive a friend; or the way you receive surgery. It isn't always pleasant- but it is always Good or you; and it is always Life- giving. That's how we should receive the Word every day. That is the humble way to receive the Word that God has implanted in us.

But we must understand that there are two ways to read and study the Bible. There is a way to read the Bible that "receives". But then there is a way to read the Bible that resents having to read it; and so it does not receive it at all. And believers should read the Bible with a Passion to receive. We must approach the Bible with a desperate cry to God that He will empower us to receive it with Humility. And that means we must make our time in God's Word- a receiving time.

And that happens, the Bible says, by meditating on the Word. Listen to the way that you become like a tree that receives all that the Word has to give.

Psalm 1:1-3

1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.

3 He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.

... that is the effect the Word has on us- when we "receive" it. That is, when you meditate on it; and ponder it; and mull it over; and savor it. So, the phrase that James uses- "*Receive the Word*" means: to take it in deeply. Take hold of it, and don't let it go till it blesses you.

Recently, I received an E-mail from a lawyer that I have known for a long time. And in the E-mail he made a Profession of Faith! He and I got together

several weeks ago- and I told him that he needs to be reading the Bible and seeking God. And I invited him to join us here in Church. But he said he couldn't come. But a couple weeks later he called me and said, *"I believe that Jesus is God! I know it 100%! And I believe that God raised Jesus from the dead! I know I am a sinner; and I am looking to Jesus alone to forgive me and make me acceptable in God's Sight!"* And as I asked him more about this- he told me that since I saw him- he had been reading his Bible every day!

Now this is the way God causes the New Birth. James said,

In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth...

Now most of us have never heard of Thomas Bilney. He was born in Norfolk England in 1495. When he was enrolled at Cambridge to study Law- he began to read the Greek New Testament which had been published by Erasmus in 1516. During his reading of the Epistles- he came across Paul's writing in **1 Timothy 1:15:**

It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.

... and Bilney said,

"Immediately... I felt a marvellous comfort and quietness, insomuch that my bruised bones leapt for joy (**Psalm. 51:8**). After this, the Scripture began to be more pleasant unto me than the honey or the honeycomb; wherein I learned that all my labours, my fasting and watching... being done without truth in Christ, who alone saveth his people from their sins; these I say, I learned to be nothing else but even, as St. Augustine saith, a hasty and swift running out of the right way".

At first, Bilney preached with great zeal and passion. But in 1526- he was *coerced* by the Leaders of the visible church into taking an Oath that he would not hold to; nor would he teach the Doctrines of Martin Luther. Yet he was still arrested soon after. And when questioned- he said, *"I was merely teaching the Scriptures and knew not that Martin Luther held those views."* Bilney was convicted of Heresy and while awaiting his sentence- he was again, coerced to recant his position.

As he was being held prisoner in the Tower of London for more than a year- Bilney immersed himself in God's Word. And the result was that he was overcome with remorse for having recanted what he knew to be the Truth. Once

he was set free- he saw that the churches were no longer opened to him. So, Bilney preached openly in the fields with the Passion he once enjoyed. Soon after- he was arrested again; and Bishop Nix sentenced Bilney to be burned alive. And on August 19, 1531 that sentence was carried out. But as he watched Bilney being burned alive- and as he heard Bilney cry out, *“Thank You, Jesus for allowing me to find Favor in Your Sight!”* Bishop Nix said, *“I fear I have burned a modern- day Abel”*.

This is the Power that the implanted Word of God will have in our lives- as we receive it- in Humility!

Amen. Let’s pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.