



Sunday, March 7, 2010:

James: The Epistle of Law and Liberty : “Hold Fast”

Scripture: James 1:1-8

Speaker: Joe Boot

Sermon Notes:

1. Despite Luther's criticism of James, it was authenticated as canonical by Origen, Clement, Augustine, and key protestant reformers.
2. Far from contradicting Paul's epistles, James establishes that works are a *proof* of living faith.
3. The author of *James* is probably James the brother of our Lord, not the son of Zebedee who is believed to have died earlier.
4. James addresses problems in the persecuted church, guiding them on the Lord's practical and theological teaching.
5. James says there's a link between our speech and what's in our hearts. The Faith is not just believing a bunch of true doctrines.
6. In James 1:1, the people of God, i.e., the true Israel of God, are called to *rejoice for their Redeemer-King has come*.
7. In calling himself a slave of Christ, not Jesus' brother, James implicitly establishes that our position with God is all of grace.
8. Wisdom is to face trials with steadfast faithfulness.
9. In the biblical view, wisdom comes not from man's abstract reflection, but through God's word and the trials He sends.
10. James calls us to count it joy to face trials, which bring us wisdom and maturity.
11. In the face of trials, persecutions, moral tests, inner tests, and tests from without, we must **hold fast** with an active endurance.
12. Trials are a purposeful sequence of events in our lives which are preparing us for eternity.
13. By God's goodness trials are turned to aids for our salvation.
14. We don't seek to suffer, but when it comes about we know it's because of God's purpose in our lives.

15. If we ask God for wisdom He'll give it to us generously. The price, however, is testing.
16. We don't get wisdom by reading, meditating, talking. James says to ask God for wisdom. (James 1:5)
17. In Job 38, the Lord *answers* putting the finite thoughts of man in their place.
18. In the face of oppressive acts by the state, we must have hope that God is bringing us to salvation and maturity
19. James calls us to ask without wavering. We're to ask in faith.
20. Faith is active endurance in believing God's promise no matter what our circumstances.
21. If we're fearful, we're always being acted upon and we're never taking faithful action.
22. Both the trial and the strength to endure are from the Lord.
23. Double-mindedness is found among many modern seminary academics under the guise of nuance.
24. Much so-called scholarship today is opposed to biblical wisdom.
25. Doubts and openness to all possibilities are paraded as a virtue; biblical orthodoxy, however, requires holding fast to the truth.

Application Questions:

1. What does Proverbs 2:6-10 say about the source and fruits of wisdom?
2. How are you seeking to grow in wisdom?
3. What perspective does Job 38 put on modern man's claims of superior wisdom and scientific mastery of the universe?
4. What is the significance of trials for the Christian life?
5. How have you responded to trials in the past? How should you respond when God purposes trials for your life?
6. How might we appropriately manifest the joy commanded in James 1:2? Is your joy so deep that you can't dig it up?
7. What is the character and content of faith in James 1:6 ?
8. Does doubt and compromise characterize my faith as I seek to live in God's promises?
9. Am I fearful, or am I taking faithful action?