



COMMUNITY **DISCUSSION**
gr:ups **GUIDE**



SERMON PASSAGE: James 1:1-4



REVIEW THE SERMON

1. Read the prep verse (1 Peter 1:3-9) and the sermon's Bible passage to recall the content.
2. Briefly review the sermon outline:
 - a. Introduction of the person James
 - i. Servant of Jesus
 - ii. Half-brother of Jesus
 - iii. Leader of church in Jerusalem
 - b. You will face trials
 - i. "When" not "if"
 - c. Our response to trials should not be surprise or dread
 - i. God is not surprised
 - ii. Dread kills hope
 - d. There is a purpose/reason for every trial; that is, to make us closer to Jesus
 - i. There is purpose behind the pain
 - ii. Hebrews 12:2-3
 - iii. Proverbs 3:5-6
 - iv. The reason for trials:
 1. To test out faith
 2. To test our testimony
 3. To test our heart
 4. To test our endurance
 - a. Don't be an opt out Christian
 - e. The result: to produce perseverance "so that" we may be mature, complete, not lacking anything
 - i. When do we know if we are mature?
 1. If we are learning to let go of control

2. When we submit to being led
 3. When we are not waiting for circumstances to validate our hope
 - ii. Complete
 1. Content
 2. If all you had was God, would that be enough? Take inventory of what you have in Ephesians 1:3-14
 - iii. Not lacking
 1. Mark 6:30-44
 - f. Joy
 - i. A predetermined settled disposition to trust that God is doing something
3. Resource Pastor Allen mentioned
- a. The Perfect Christian, Tony Evans¹



DIGGING DEEPER

1. James Has More to Say About Trials

The letter James writes has three key themes and James outlines them in the letter's introduction in vv. 2-11: trials in the Christian life (vv. 2-4), wisdom (vv. 5-8), and riches and poverty (vv. 9-11). Pastor Allen elaborated on the first theme.

- a. James goes deeper on this theme of trials in the Christian life in vv. 12-18.
 - i. Do you see a beatitude in v. 12? How does this beatitude help us acknowledge God's goodness in testing?
 - ii. Look at vv. 13-15.
 1. Notice that James switches from trials as being a test that is to be passed to trials as being temptations that can lead to sin.
 2. Who should we blame for temptations? Who should we not blame and why not?
 - iii. Now, look at vv. 16-18.
 1. Who is the source of everything good?
 2. What deception must we guard against?
 3. What is the best illustration of God's good gifts? (see v. 18).
- b. James elaborates on the theme of testing further in 4:13-5:8, in the context of the temptation to worship riches (4:13-17), experiencing economic exploitation (5:1-12), and suffering severe illness (5:13-18).²

¹ <https://www.amazon.com/Perfect-Christian-Sinners-Like-Jesus/dp/0849942519>

² James - Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, CL Blomberg and MJ Kamell, Zondervan, 2008, p. 59

- i. Want to dig even deeper? **Attend the 10-week discipleship class on the book of James**
 1. Begins January 24 at 9:00-10:00.
 2. In the Wright building
 3. See the Realm message to sign up.

2. Psalm 46

For several weeks we have been singing “Psalm 46, Lord of Hosts” by Shane & Shane³. In April 1521 Martin Luther was summoned to appear before the Emperor and the Catholic church to give account for the new “heresy” he taught called “justification by faith alone.” Johann Eck presented all of Luther’s writings and asked him if he would recant. That night, Luther retired to consider his answer; his Bible fell open to Psalm 46. The next morning, Luther stood before his detractors and stated:

Unless I am convinced by Scripture and plain reason—I do not accept the authority of the popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other—my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen.⁴

Psalm 46 was Luther’s favorite psalm and during difficult times he often stated to his friends, “Let’s sing the 46th Psalm, and let the devil do his worst!” Psalm 46 inspired his great hymn “A Mighty Fortress is Our God.”

Read Psalm 46 and reflect on the psalm’s three stanzas (each separated by *Selah*):

- A. The help of God is greater than any crisis (or, reflecting on James 1, any trial) (vv.1-3)
- B. The peaceful provision of God (vv. 4-6)
 - a. The confident chorus (v. 7)
- C. The Lord is exalted among the nations
 - a. Beholding the works of the Lord (vv. 8-9)
 - b. A word from God (v. 10)
 - c. The confident chorus (v. 11)

This is a victory psalm that helps to understand James 1.

- A. In thinking about the purpose of trials, who are we supposed to run to?
- B. Why can we have confidence and peace in running to God?
- C. Why can we dispel dread in the midst of trials?
- D. How does having God’s perspective help us understand and persevere through trials?

³ <https://genius.com/Shane-and-shane-psalm-46-lord-of-hosts-lyrics>

⁴ <https://www.luther.de/en/ws.html>



PRAYER

1. We are all going into, coming out of, or in the midst of a trial. Pray that we “count it all joy” and “let steadfastness have its full effect.”
 2. Pray that we turn to Jesus rather than succumb to the temptation of sin during trials.
 3. Praise God for His victory.
 4. May we be able to exclaim individually and corporately “Let’s sing the 46th Psalm, and let the devil do his worst!” when we are confronted by trials from this world and the Prince of this world.
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