

NEXT STEP: STUDY & SHARE

READINGS

Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9

Psalm 15

LORD, who may dwell in your tabernacle?
(v1)

James 1:17-27

Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God our strength, without you we are weak & wayward creatures. Protect us from all dangers that attack us from the outside, & cleanse us from all evil that arises from within ourselves, that we may be preserved through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior & Lord. Amen.

SERMON TEXT- James 1:17-27

¹⁷Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ¹⁸In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures. ¹⁹You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. ²¹Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness & rank growth of wickedness, & welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls. ²²But be doers of the word, & not merely hearers who deceive themselves. ²³For if any are hearers of the word & not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; ²⁴for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. ²⁵But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, & persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing. ²⁶If any think they are religious, & do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. ²⁷Religion that is pure & undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans & widows in their distress, & to keep oneself unstained by the world.

LISTENING TO . . .

GOD- *Christian life is rooted in the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit*

1. What do the following add to your understanding of James? *See Romans 3:27-28; Galatians 2:16, 3:24-28; Ephesians 2:8-22; Philippians 3:9; Titus 3:7; 1 Peter 3:8-18a*
2. What is meant by “first fruits”? *See Exodus 22:29, 23:19; Deuteronomy 18:4; Leviticus 23:10; Romans 8:23, 1 Corinthians 15:20-24; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; Revelation 14:1-5*

EACH OTHER- *Sharing & growing with our brothers & sisters in Christ*

3. St. James connects our perseverance in everyday life with doers who act on what they hear in the Word (v25). What makes this good, practical advice for your everyday life? *See 1 Peter 1: 3-12, 16-20*
4. Surely a spiritual mirror (v23f) would show us our sins as well as our righteousness in Jesus (“put on Christ” like a robe *Romans 13:14; Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:10-12*). How would forgetting either one lead to failure when facing temptation or trying times (*cf. James 1:12-16*)? How will remembering both help you in everyday life? *See 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 2 Peter 2:9*

NEIGHBORS- *Bearing fruit for those not yet our brothers & sisters*

5. It's no good to be a critic, complainer, hater, or pearl clutching, “I'm offended” type among God's people (v26). Countless congregations are poisoned by complainers who pirate the congregation's mission. How can you be a source of positivity & missional agreement (part of the crew) in your congregation's life? How can you maintain this team spirit even when you don't get your way? This kind of missional enthusiasm is contagious.
6. Works righteousness happens any time we try to leverage/bargain our good behavior/deeds with God (*cf. vv22, 25*). Besides he doesn't need them, our neighbors do (v27). Review the Small Catechism's Table of Duties (*magistrates* =gov't authority officials, *servants*=employees, *master*=supervisors). How does this orient your behavior in a godly way toward your neighbors at home & work/school?
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14th Sunday after Pentecost
Series: Authentic Generosity

08.29.21
Rev. Jared Stillions, STS

Generous Works

*Every generous act comes from the Father;
our good works are the gift of God the Father!*

-Notes-

KEY VERSE: Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift,
is from above, coming down from the Father of lights,
with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. (v17)

-NEXT STEPS MEMORY VERSE-

God gave us birth by the word of truth so that
we would become a kind of first fruits of creation. (*James 1:18*)

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