Rightly Receiving the Word

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[0:00] Well, as you know, Lacey and I have the privilege of having four kids. And there have been a couple of occasions where Lacey has gone out of state and left me with the children.

! Not all four of them yet, but the older three, so Amelia, Charlie, and Ryle. And she's gone out of state before for a couple of conferences that will pour into her spiritually and be a help to her.
And I am one on three with our kids, trying to keep everyone alive, everyone happy for the most part. And Lacey is good to me in that she gives me a list of everything that needs to be done.
A beautiful list. And you'd think like, oh, it's pretty complex. No, it's like, hey, don't forget to change so-and-so's diaper. Don't forget to feed the kids. Try to keep everyone alive. Don't forget to put them to bed. You know, things like that.
So, really helpful list. Now, imagine with me, I've done okay. Everyone's lived. I've cut some corners for sure, but everyone's lived. And imagine, though, she comes back home, and I've done nothing on her list.
[1:11] No one has eaten in days. No one's diaper has been changed. No one has slept. But what would she say? This is hypothetical. This didn't actually happen. Hypothetically. What would she say? She would say, did you not read the list?

And if I responded to her, again, hypothetically, and said, no, I love your list. Like, the list is so helpful. It's so clear. I know exactly what you want me to do.
The kids and I started singing through your list. We put it to song. We memorized our favorite portions of your list. Lacey's response would be, if you love it so much, why didn't you do what it said?
That's a very clear example. It's a very easy example for us to see the contradiction of, it's foolish for me to be thankful for the list, and be grateful for the list, and not do what it says.
It's very easy to see the folly of that contradiction there in that example, but many of us are guilty of the exact same thing when it comes to the Bible. It is very easy to say we love God's Word.
[2:21] It's very easy to say we love Christ, and yet so few of us faithfully obey Him. Jesus Himself told us, whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me.

It's not just having Christ's commandments or knowing Christ's commandments. It's doing what He says that shows love for Christ. So many people in our church, so many people in this room, so many people in our world claim to love Christ, but so few actually obey what He says.
James' point tonight is that our faith is not finished until we obey. Our faith is not fulfilled until we obey what He says.
So open with me to James chapter 1. Tonight will be in verses 19 through 27, so the rest of chapter 1 this evening.
Our title for tonight is Rightly Receiving the Word. Rightly Receiving the Word.
[3:35] And James' focus in this passage is how we as God's people should respond to God's Word, how we should receive God's Word.

And we'll see James' main point of this entire book in verse 22. That's his thesis statement for this whole book. James is concerned that his hearers, and us included as his readers, not only love Christ, not only know what He says, but that we obey His Word.
So let me read our passage for us tonight. James 1, starting in verse 19. Know this, my beloved brothers. Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.
For the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls.

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But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he's like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror.
[4:54] For he looks at himself, and goes away, and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets, but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

If anyone thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue, but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this.
To visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world. Our title tonight is Rightly Receiving the Word, and we'll see that receiving the Word results in three things.
And those will be our three points this evening. Meek reception, obedient action, and true religion.
So first, we see meek reception.
Meek reception in verses 19 through 21. And James starts this section by saying, Know this, my beloved brothers. And James is going to say some very confrontational things.
[6:09] He's going to confront them in their sin. He's going to say things that need to change in their life. But he wants them to be reminded that it's coming from a place of love.

These are his dear brothers. And that word brothers is really kind of how we would say siblings. It includes the sisters as well. But he's reminding them this is coming from a place of love.
I'm correcting you because I love you. And that's a good balance to strike. So if you ever need to correct someone in your life, do it with love. And I think usually we have a tendency toward one side or the other.
Some of you are like, He needs to be corrected. Let's break him. Others of you are like, Oh, I love them, so I don't want to correct them. Both of those are wrong. We need love, and we need correction as well.
And James is a good example of striking that balance. And he says, Let every person be. And he lists three things. Quick to hear. Slow to speak.
[7:05] Slow to anger. This is so kind of proverbial. It's just pithy. It's to the point. Gets the point across in a very clear, short way. He says, Listen more.

Speak less. Don't be mad. Is basically what he's saying here. He says, Let every person be these three things. And I think based on the context, remember he's just talked in verse 18 about the word that gives life.
It's this word that has brought us forth. And he's going to talk about being a doer of the word later in this passage. And so I think all three of these things relate to hearing God's word or reading God's word.
And so we need to have these three responses in terms of hearing God's word. And so he says, Be quick to hear. He's saying, Hurry up and listen to the word.
We need to be quick to listen to what God tells us in his word. And this is how you learn. In any field of knowledge, you do not learn by talking.
[8:05] Whatever class you're in, whatever your major is in college, you don't learn by talking. You learn by listening to an expert. You learn by listening to someone who knows what they're talking about.

That's how we as human beings learn. And that's true of God's word as well. We learn by listening to his word. And so if you're talking instead of reading the Bible, or if you're talking instead of listening to someone preach the Bible, you're not learning God's word.
You're not hearing what God says. It's not a time for games. It's not a time for Instagram. It's a time to listen to what God says.
He says, quick to hear. What does hear actually mean? What does it mean to hear God's word? My wife Lacey was a teacher before we had kids.
She taught fourth and fifth grade math and science at UConn Independence Middle School. And she still likes to give me some pop quizzes sometimes. Okay, so I'll be watching football on a typical Saturday because I'm a free man, dang it.
[9:10] I'm an American. And she'll be talking to me and I will be hearing her but not really paying attention. And so I'm glued to the screen and she's like, hey, did you hear what I said?

I'm like, yeah, yeah, I heard you. And she'll say, what did I say? That's her pop quiz. And it dawns on me, I wasn't actually listening to what she said.

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And I'm like, first down. I don't know, what did you say? It dawns on me very quickly that I was hearing the words that she was speaking but I wasn't listening to her.
And so when the Bible talks about hearing, we would usually say listening. It's hearing with an eye toward actually doing. It's hearing that leads to obedience.
A hearing that leads to action. And then he says, slow to speak. Again, you can't listen while you're speaking. And you also aren't listening if you're just thinking about what you're gonna say next to someone, okay?
[10:16] So if you're debating someone, if you're talking to them, two people can completely talk right past each other if both of them are just thinking about what they're gonna say next. You're not actually listening to what the person is saying.

You're thinking about your response. And if we're not careful, we can do the exact same thing with God's word. It is so easy. I'm gonna preach about 40 minutes tonight like I usually do. It's so easy during a period of 40 minutes to be a thousand miles away.
Not listening actually to what's being said, not paying attention to the Bible. It's really easy as sinners for us to just kind of zone out or think about what we're doing tomorrow or think about weekend plans we have.
And James is saying, pay attention to the word. Don't be quick to speak back. And thirdly, be slow to anger.
Be long fused. Be patient. And it seems a little bit strange for him to talk about anger here. And he actually gives an explanation for why we shouldn't be angry in verse 20.
[11:14] And he's gonna talk about anger several other times in this book. And so it seems like this church had some anger issues. They had some anger problems. They couldn't control their temper. And so he needs to bring this up over and over again.

But again, the context here is God's word. Why would you get angry at God's word being preached? Well, I think this happens more often than we even recognize.
I think among people that claim to be Christians, they wouldn't just outrightly say, God's word makes me angry. But you will hear things like, who does that guy think he is to confront me?
Who does she think she is to share that from God's word with me? Who does she think she is to correct me? Ultimately, that's anger with God's word. You might blame it on the messenger.
You might blame it on the person preaching or teaching or speaking to you. But James says, be slow to be angry when someone corrects you. Don't respond with anger.
[12:09] And that can be a natural reaction to being confronted. But the Bible confronts us in our sin and it doesn't hold back. And if we're not careful, we can be defensive about that.

We can get touchy about that and become angry with God or what he has said. And then James explains in verse 20 why anger is wrong.
It says, for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Your anger, human anger, does not produce righteous acts.
Your anger doesn't make anyone else better. Your anger doesn't make anyone else more righteous, yourself included. Now this doesn't mean it's always wrong to be angry.
Jesus got angry a lot and he was sinless. So being angry is not always wrong. But if we're honest, most of the time we get mad it's over something that's not a matter of righteousness.
[13:07] We're angry about something sinful. We're angry about something that doesn't matter in the grand scheme of things. Most of our anger is misplaced. Most of our anger isn't actually useful.

And James says, that's not going to lead you or anyone else to righteousness. This is a helpful lesson for us because as we are all trying to grow, our church is growing numerically, which is good.
We want to see people come to the Lord and study his word. But more importantly than that, we want people to grow in depth. We want them to grow more mature in Christ. But that's a process and it's a messy process and it's not linear.
It's up and it's down and we're all working through that together. And so someone is going to sin against you at some point and you're going to sin against someone else at some point. And what's a natural reaction to someone sinning against you?
Getting angry at them, cutting them off. And James says, be slow to anger. Don't be angry at God's word. Don't be angry with each other because anger, our human anger, our sinful anger does not produce righteousness.

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[14:16] Sometimes our anger reflects righteousness. If we get angry about wicked things, that's good. But our anger never produces righteousness in anyone.

In verse 21, he says, therefore, so based on all of verses 19 and 20, therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness. This is the proper preparation for receiving the word.
We've got to remove this stuff from our lives in order to truly receive God's word. And he's talking to saved people here. So he's not saying that these people are lost and they need to clean up their life before they come to Christ.
He's saying, believers, repent of sin before you come to the word. Confess sin so that you can receive the word properly. Get rid of all filthiness and rampant wickedness in your life.
And that word for put away is used of taking off filthy clothes, taking off dirty clothes. And so if you think about someone getting ready for prom, okay?
[15:21] Some of you have gone to prom. A lot of you have. Let's say a guy is getting ready to go to prom and he's got a date. Of course he does. But before his date, he's got to mow the yard.

And so he's mowing the yard, gets done just a matter of hours before all the pictures and stuff take place, takes a shower, gets out of the shower, puts on his dirty clothes again, and then goes and picks up his date.
Your immediate reaction is, one, that's disgusting, and two, that's not fitting. Like, you're not wearing proper attire. You don't look like you're going to prom. You're not dressing to like show your date that you care about anything in life by doing that.
It's disgusting and it's not fitting. And James is saying that that's true if you walk around in unrepentant sin. If you don't put this stuff away, if you wear it proudly, it's disgusting.
It's a corruption to your life and it's not fitting. Get rid of these things so that, and receive with meekness the implanted word.
[16:30] This sin in our life will prevent us from seeing the beauty of Scripture. It'll prevent us from hearing the truth of Scripture like we should.

And it can even weaken our appetite for truth. It can ruin our appetite for receiving God's word. If I were to invite you over to my house for burgers, I can make a mean burger on my Blackstone.
If I were to invite you over, but on the way over, you made a root beer float at your house before you left. That's a solid choice. Root beer floats are good. And then on your way over, you stopped by the Brahms right over here and got a Reese's mix.
Another solid choice. I love a good Reese's mix. And then came over to my house for burgers. You would not properly enjoy that burger. You'd be full.
You would have ruined your appetite on things that are good, but things that won't sustain you. And James is saying that's what our sin will do to our appetite for the word.
[17:34] We won't receive it properly if our life is full of filthiness and abundant or rampant wickedness. He says, so that you can receive with meekness the implanted word which is able to save your souls.

It's a very weird description of God's word. He says, implanted in you. It's like taking root in your heart. It's a strange description for God's word. It's pretty unique in terms of how Scripture describes itself.
But this is what the new covenant that Jesus brought does. In Jeremiah 31, God predicts a new covenant that's coming and he says, I will write my law on your heart.
I will put my word in your heart. And James is saying that word is planted in you. You know what's right. You know the truth of God's word because it's in you. It's planted in your heart.
You've received a new heart. You have the spirit dwelling in you. You have the word of God in you. But he says, it's something that we need to receive.
[18:37] And so the spirit is in us. His law is written on our hearts but it's still something that's external to us that we listen to and take in through our ears and through our eyes. We receive it and we need to do it with humility or meekness.

And so James doesn't give us a reading plan here. He gives us a reading attitude. He doesn't tell us exactly how to go about reading scripture but he gives us the heart attitude that receives God's word well.
And it's in humility or gentleness meekness. This looks like applying it to ourselves before we try to apply it to others. Thinking about our own sin before we think about someone else's sin.

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We receive God's word with meekness. And he says this word is able to save your souls. And the New Testament talks about salvation in three aspects.
Past, present, and future. And so if you're a Christian you can say I have been saved by Christ. I was dead but now I'm alive. He has saved me past tense. I am being saved in the present.
[19:46] I'm being sanctified. I'm continually being saved by the Lord. And one day I will be fully and finally saved when I'm presented before Christ and I'm perfect.

James is thinking about that future moment. God's word will take you home. God's word will get you to that day. You don't need anything else besides scripture.
God has provided everything through his word for us to get home. To be with him in his presence.
Now how do we know if someone is actually receiving the word rightly?
How do we know if we are receiving the word like we should? Well James shows us that there's evidence for this. And what he tells us is that God's word doesn't just give us life.
It tells us how to live. And so it leads us to number two obedient action. Obedient action in verses 22 through 25. If we receive the word correctly its result is obedience.
[20:55] We start to obey it. And so salvation isn't just a short term feeling. It's not just a momentary feeling you have. It results in a long term obedience.

It's a pattern of obedience in your life. And James is going to give us two examples here. One bad and one good. He's going to show us a hearer who forgets and a doer who acts.
It is wrong to only hear the word but not obey it. And so James says in verse 22 but as you receive the word as you receive it with meekness make sure that you are doers of the word and not hearers only deceiving yourselves.
This is the theme verse of this book. James wants you to make sure that you are not just listening to the Bible that you are not just reading the Bible but that you are obeying the Bible.
And so the person who hears God's word and knows God's word and says they love God's word but doesn't obey it has deceived themselves and their life has not been changed.
[22:07] They are not saved. True faith is demonstrated by obedience to God. And this word for deceiving is kind of what we'd call a miscalculation.

They're wrong. And the scary part about verses like this is that James is not talking to people who are outside the church. He's not talking about people at your school. He's not talking about your crazy uncle that you're like okay yeah I had suspicions about that guy.
These are people who are at church regularly. These are people who know the word and claim to follow Christ. It's possible to be wrong about who you are.
It's possible to think you're saved and not actually be a Christian. these are people who would listen to God's word and they would love God's word and at the end of church they would close their Bible and walk home and not think about how it applies to their life.
Not think about how they should change their life based on what God's word says. And so people who consistently hear God's word without obeying it, without any repentance, show that they're not believers.
[23:32] And so our job as students of God's word is not just to hear scripture. That's important. James isn't taking away from listening to what God's word says. But our job isn't done until we obey it.

Our job isn't done until we're faithful to do what he says. Now if you're like me, there have been occasions where maybe you've gone to church on a Sunday morning or a Wednesday night, you listen to a sermon and you go home and like three hours later that sermon is gone.
Like you have very little recollection of what you heard. Or maybe you read the Bible and spend time in the word and the next day you're like I can't even remember what I, like what book am I in? Oh, I've been reading Jeremiah for a month. Okay, cool. It just kind of slips away from you. That's kind of what James is going to talk about next. That is a very normal occurrence that happens but that idea of kind of forgetting is how James is going to characterize an unbeliever in verses 23 and 24.
So look at verse 23. It says, if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, so someone just hears it but doesn't obey it, he's like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror.
[24:42] For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. There's the one who hears and obeys.

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There's one who hears and forgets. Now when you woke up this morning, most of you looked in a mirror. Most of you spent some time in front of a mirror and that's a good thing.
Thank you. What's the purpose of that mirror? That mirror is not an end in itself. The mirror is not hanging on your bathroom wall to be like, man, this is a really nice mirror.
I'm thankful my parents bought this for me. The purpose of the mirror is to show you your faults, right? The purpose of the mirror is to show you what you need to make corrections to for the day.
And so James is saying the person who hears the word and doesn't act on it is like someone who walks in front of the mirror and sees their hair is a mess and just walks out of the bathroom and goes about their day.
[25:43] That's not the purpose of the mirror. The purpose of the mirror is so that you would see what's wrong and make corrections that need to be made. And James is saying the hearer who doesn't actually obey is like someone who looks into the mirror of God's word and sees, oh, I'm sinful.

Okay, I need to change some things about my life and leaves church and never thinks about it again. They forget what was revealed to them. And God's word is compared here to the mirror that is held up to our lives, showing us what's wrong with us so that we can make corrections to it.
But in contrast, the one who forgets, there's the doer who acts. Verse 25, but the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, means continues in it, being no hearer who forgets.
So not the guy who looks in a mirror and forgets, but a doer who acts. He will be blessed in his doing. This word for looks into is the same word that John used to describe Peter and John looking into Jesus' tomb.
They're going to duck through the doorway and see if his body was actually there or not. This is an intentional, slow gaze into this law of liberty, this perfect law.
[27:11] Now, James has referred to the word of God several different ways here. He talks about the word that brought you forth. He talks about the implanted word. He talks about the word as a mirror. Here he calls it the perfect law or the law of freedom, the law of liberty.

Why does he change the way he talks about this? I think his emphasis is this is a law. This is something that is expected to be obeyed. This is something that makes demands on our lives and God expects us to be obedient to them.
James says he will be blessed in his doing. The truly blessed life, the truly happy life is an obedient life.
And a good question for all of us to ask is where are we falling short? In what ways are you sinning? are you angry?
Are you greedy? Are you jealous? Are you bitter? Are you divisive? Tough to get along with? Do you struggle with lust?
[28:22] Do you struggle with envy? Where are you falling short? Where am I falling short? That's a good question to ask at this point. And I want to warn you.

And I want to warn myself. It is a dangerous situation to be in, to recognize sin in your life and not repent of it.
That's a recipe for hardening your heart. That's a recipe for being a hearer who forgets. And so do not waste opportunities where the Lord brings sin to your heart helps you recognize the sin that you have in your life.
Because those are opportunities to repent and to walk with him in humility and meekness. Where are we falling short? And thirdly, James shows us true religion.
True religion. He says in verse 26, if anyone thinks he's religious, emphasis on thinks, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.
[29:35] This person's religion is worthless. True religion leads to action. If you think you're godly but can't control your tongue, your religious pursuit is pointless.

Your religious pursuit is worthless. And now James isn't saying that having sinful speech is the only symptom of unbelief.
He's just pointing this out as one example of sinfulness. If you think you're religious, you go to church, you sing the songs, you read your Bible, you pay attention to preaching, and you don't control your tongue, you're a hypocrite, is what James is saying.

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You're fake. That's not true religion. And Jesus talks about why speech is such a big deal in the Christian life.
In Matthew 1234, I remember it because it's 1, 2, 3, 4, 1234, out of the overflow of the heart, out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. The reason your speech is such a big deal is because it tells us what's in your heart.
[30:51] And so if your speech is filthy, if your speech is all over the place and uncontrolled, that's a reflection of what's in your heart. And Proverbs 29, 11 says, the fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.

It's the mark of folly, of foolishness to run your mouth. Whatever comes into your head, you spit out to someone that's by you. tongue reveals what's in the heart.
It's possible to think you're religious but not actually be. What does your speech reveal about you? I was doing some reading earlier this week and read that the average teenager speaks about 15,000 words per day.
15,000 words per day. Some of that will differ based on your life situation and what social settings you're in or not in depends on how much you'll speak, but on average 15,000 words per day.
And every single one reveals what's in your heart. Every single one tells us something about where your heart is at. What is your speech like?
[32:09] What does it say about what's in your heart? And so James says that false religion, manifests itself in a loose tongue, but what does true religion look like?

Verse 27, he says, religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this. And he lists two things. To visit orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained from the world.
Again, James is not saying here that this is all that religion does. He's just pointing out these two examples of these two things reveal what true religion looks like.
And he mentions visiting orphans and widows. These were incredibly needy people in the ancient world. You think of the story of Ruth. Ruth and Naomi were both widows coming back. They had nothing in Israel.
widow. And this word widow could refer to men or women. So anyone who's lost a spouse in the ancient world, someone was considered an orphan if they had lost a parent.
[33:20] So not necessarily both parents, but just one of their parents would be considered an orphan. This was an incredibly desperate situation to be in. And so James says true religion looks like visiting them.

And that word visit carries with it the idea of taking care of them, supplying things that they need, taking care of things they need, checking in with them, praying with them, sharing the gospel with them, talking about God's word with them.
Now why does James highlight this? I mentioned these people were needy. They could not pay anyone back. They couldn't boost anyone's status in society.
They couldn't do you a favor in return for your service to them. They couldn't increase your popularity or increase your influence in society. The only reason you would serve someone in this state is just to serve the Lord and do something kind for them.
This would not have been a symbiotic relationship. There would be no favors flowing in return for this service to widows and orphans. The reason someone would do this is because they know it's pleasing to the Lord and they know it's what the Lord desires.
[34:35] others. And that's a good picture of true religion. You're doing it not so anyone notices you. You're doing it not so you get a favor in return.

You're doing it simply to please the Lord and to love people. And we have a great example of that in our own student ministry.
I should have asked before I do this but Peyton Miller, P. Mill. So I don't think she knows that I know this but Lacey's grandpa was in Arbor House and passed away earlier this year.
He's a believer so he's with the Lord. But his next door neighbor at Arbor House was a guy by the name of Bob. And Bob as far as I know is not a believer. He's an older gentleman obviously and Peyton has gone to see him and visit him and was with him on his birthday and has given him a Bible and shared the gospel with him and prayed with him and gone to see him.
That's a beautiful example of true religion. It's a beautiful illustration of what James is talking about. This is pure and undefiled religion in God's sight because there's no reciprocity.

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[35:47] There's nothing coming back someone's way who serves the destitute or serves those who are alone in this world. And the second thing he mentions is to keep oneself unstained.

from the world. This world and its desires have a polluting effect on your soul. A corrupting effect on your soul.
Be careful with how you live your life. Be careful with the things you watch and listen to. They can corrupt you.
They can ruin your effectiveness in your pursuit of Christ. I want you to imagine for a moment you're wearing a nice white shirt and going to eat barbecue.
It's a dangerous combination. You've got to be careful. You don't want to stain your shirt. There's no guarantee that will come out. That's the picture James is painting here.
[36:52] This world can stain your soul. Be careful. Be careful with sin. It's not something to be played with. It's something to be repented of and run away from.

Keep yourself unstained from this world. This world is evil. This world wants to corrupt you and wants you to pursue sin.
James is saying true religion looks like visiting people who can't pay you back and being pure. And if you do those two things you will stand out from this world.
James's point is that if you're not obedient you haven't rightly received the word. Rightly receiving God's word should lead to obedience.
And this danger is much closer to home than we could ever imagine. It's right around the corner. And if you think of we just spent this summer in Sunday school going through the Sermon on the Mount.
[37:54] It's the greatest sermon ever preached by the greatest preacher who ever lived. Jesus himself. Jesus preaches this magnificent sermon. Searches the heart. Confronts sin.

Condemns hypocrisy. There are crowds probably in the thousands listening to his every word. And do you know what it says about the crowd after he finishes that sermon?
It says they were astonished. They were impressed by the way he taught them. And that's it. They heard God's word.
They were impressed by what Jesus said. But they were only spectators. There are people who are impressed but were unchanged by what Jesus said.
They loved listening to him. They loved the way he used his words but they didn't receive them rightly. They didn't obey them. And so if you're here tonight and that's your life, the unbroken pattern of your life is hearing God's word and knowing it but your life doesn't change.
[39:08] Your life will end in hell. Your life will end with God's wrath being poured out on you if something doesn't change. And if you're here tonight and you're a believer, you've repented of your sins and believed in Christ's death on your behalf, our life should produce obedience.

Not to earn a spot in heaven or a spot on God's team but to demonstrate the love we have for him. We want to obey Christ because we love him. And obedience so often looks like confessing our sin and getting rid of our disobedience in this life.
James is about wisdom. He wants us to be wise. He wants us to have wisdom. And Jesus is wisdom personified.
So go with me to 1 Peter chapter 2. Just one book to your right. Jesus was both God and man and as man he lived a perfect life here on this earth.
And he puts these things into practice even at his death. Look with me at 1 Peter 2 verse 22. Talking about the suffering of Jesus.
[40:28] He, Jesus, committed no sin. Neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return.

When he suffered, he did not threaten. He was slow to speak and slow to anger. But he continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.
He trusted himself to God who judges justly. And here is our only hope of obedience. Not in our own strength, not in our own intelligence.
patience. It's in verse 24. Jesus himself bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.
Our task is not complete until we live to righteousness. By his wounds you've been healed. For you were straying like sheep but have now returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls.

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[41:41] God demands that you obey him. He commands you to obey him. And his commands are not burdensome. It's not, we're not trying to please an angry father.

We're striving in his grace because he has loved us. And so I just want to encourage you with Galatians 6.9. Do not grow weary in doing good.
For in due time we will reap if we do not give up. Whoever perseveres in these things will be blessed in his doing. We want to be doers of the word and not hearers only.
And so what's the evidence of that? How do we know if we're understanding God's word? Well, it's not so much what your life looks like right now in this room.
What does your life look like tomorrow? tomorrow? When there's less accountability, will you please the Lord when no one is watching? Will you please the Lord and serve someone that can't pay you back?
[42:44] Will you be pure? Will you be undefiled? Will you seek to please the Lord and be a doer of his word? Let's pray. Amen. Father, thank you so much for allowing us this time together to spend time with each other.

I pray that we would help one another be doers of your word. We cannot do this alone. We can't do this in our own strength. We need your grace. And so I pray for students here who are not saved that you would open their hearts to the beauty and the truth of who you are and that you sent your son to pay the price for all of our failings, all of our sin, all of our rebellion against you.
And I pray for all of us that we would continually be in awe of your grace and that we would strive to be obedient. We don't just want to be spectators who are impressed by the literature of the Bible. We want to be faithful followers who fulfill their faith by being obedient. diligent to do your word.
And I pray for people in our church, people in our state who are deceived, they've deceived themselves, they think they love you, they think they love your word, but have never been faithful to it.
[44:08] I pray that you'd wake them up, help them see their deception before it's too late. It's in Christ's name we pray. Amen.

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