Eternal Perspective on Temporary Circumstances

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[0:00] Amen. If you would open in your Bibles with me to the book of James. It's our second week in this book. It'll take us through the rest of the semester to get through it.

It's a beautiful book. I mentioned last week it's very practical. It's very in our face in terms of application and just testing us as to whether or not we will be faithful to obey.
We will obey Jesus. When I was a senior in high school, we did something called senior superlatives. Anyone do that still? Know what those are?
So you'd vote on people in your class who's most likely to succeed, who's most athletic, who's, you know, class clown, who has it and spends it, who's this and who's that.
And you vote on them and then present those awards to them at the end of the year. And I'm sure someone's done this, but I would like for someone somewhere to get a picture of their award for the senior superlative, what they were voted on by their class, and then them at their 10-year reunion just to see how it panned out.
[1:17] You know, we voted you most athletic and now you don't look athletic anymore. You were voted most likely to succeed and you failed. You were a class clown and we got that one right. You're a joke.

Just kidding. Just kidding. But the point is that not everything turns out like it currently appears.
And so you can't judge what someone will be like in their 40s based on how they were in high school for good or for bad. Not everything will be as it currently appears.
And that can be a struggle for us in our walk with Christ. It's a difficult thing to remember that our earthly statuses, things that are true of us right now, many of them are only temporary.
Whether you're rich or poor, whether you're popular or well-known, suffering or enjoying an easy life, everything about this life is just a breath.
[2:30] This life on earth is short. It's temporary. But it's easy to make long-term assumptions based on short-term circumstances.

It can be easy to think that the way our life is now is how it's always going to be. The things that are true of us now are always going to be true of us.
It's easy to make long-term assumptions based on our short-term temporary circumstances. If you're poor, it's easy to feel like you're being punished for something.
If you're rich, you can feel like you're being rewarded for being a good person. If you're suffering, God can seem cruel to you.
If you've got an easy life, but you know you're a sinner, it can seem like God is okay with your sin.
But what we need to keep in mind is that there are a lot of things that are true about us now that are simply earthly circumstances.
[3:39] And because of that, they're temporary. Because this world is temporary. This world will be done away with and made new all over again. And so we can't automatically assume that just based on how our lives are right now, that's going to be true of us forever.

And James actually wants us to have this biblical perspective. He actually wants us to view our lives in the long term. What is eternally true of you, not just what's temporarily true.
But what is your eternal circumstance going to look like, not what do your present circumstances look like. James wants us to have an eternal perspective on our temporary circumstances.
Tonight we'll be in verses 9 through 18, and we'll break it up into two sections. The first one is rags and riches. Rags and riches in verses 9 through 11.
James is continuing his thoughts on trials, his thoughts on difficulties. If you remember last week in verse 2, he says, count it all joy when you meet trials of various kinds.

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[4:53] Consider it joy, not because it is enjoyable, not because it is happy, but because this is doing something to you. This is making you into a better person, a more Christ-like person.

And if I were to ask you, what are the worst earthly circumstances there are? What are some of the most difficult trials that people face? I think near the top of our list would be poverty, not having a place to live, not having enough food to eat for the day.
That would be something that would get close to the top of our list. And some of us in this room may be poor, may not be financially well off, but none of us in this room are poor compared to these Christians that James was writing to.
Remember, these believers aren't living at home. They've been kicked out of Jerusalem and are now trying to make ends meet somewhere else in the world in a place they're unfamiliar with. The strain that poverty puts on someone's life can be intense.
It drives them to desperation. But what James will actually show us is that being rich is a more difficult trial than being poor.
[6:13] Having worldly possessions is actually a greater trial for your soul, a greater difficulty for your soul than not having enough food to eat.

That's shocking to us. Being rich, that's ingrained in our culture. It's part of the American dream. It's what we strive to be someday. But there's more to life than just right now.
And James' message to these believers, whether they're rich or poor, is for them to remember that whatever's true of them right now, financially, is only temporary.
Whether rags or riches, it's not forever. Read with me in verse 9. It says, Let the lowly brother, or literally the poor brother, boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation.
Because like a flower of the grass, he will pass away. For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass. Its flower falls and its beauty perishes.
[7:19] So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits. James starts by saying, Let the poor brother, let the lowly brother, boast or glory in his exaltation and in his being lifted up.

And most of these Christians who are receiving this letter would have been considered poor.
They've been kicked out of their homeland. They're believers. They're on the run trying to make ends meet, trying to get together money and resources for their families while they're on the run and in this foreign land.
And James is saying, Remember heaven. Rejoice in what's going to be true of you in the future.
Rejoice in the fact that you'll be exalted with Christ.
You will have everything that Christ has. Christ possesses everything and you are in Christ. Rejoice in being exalted with Christ.
Christ. And then he immediately turns to these Christians who are rich. And he says, Also let the rich rejoice in his humiliation or being brought low.
[8:30] And so the rich will be brought low. And you think about this. This is true as they come to Christ. Whether you're rich or you're poor, you have to humble yourself to come to Christ. You have to admit that you're a sinner and come to Christ and ask for forgiveness.

That takes humility. And James is saying, Let the rich person boast in him being brought low. Let the one who has everything rejoice in the fact that his possessions are temporary.
Jesus brings down the high and lifts up the lowly. And now James is going to go on and describe this trial of being rich in the next two verses.
He doesn't really talk much about the difficulty of being poor, but he spends a lot of time talking about the difficulty or the trial of being rich. James' point here is that there's greater temptation and greater trial that comes with earthly possessions.
If you remember the rich young ruler who came to Jesus and said, What do I need to do to be saved? And you're like, This is a home run situation. This guy wants to be saved and he came to Jesus.
[9:45] And at the end of the conversation, Jesus says, Sell everything you have. And the man goes away sad because he has great possessions and he didn't want to part with them. And so he walked away from Christ.

And Jesus said, It's easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.
Why is that such a difficult thing? Because those who have money are tempted to trust money.
Those who have earthly possessions are tempted to rely on and put their faith in those earthly

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possessions.
And so James' reminder here is, Hey, if you're poor, remember the future. You're going to be exalted. If you're rich, remember the future. Those riches are going to pass away just like your life will. And rejoice in that.
Rejoice in the fact that what's true of us right now financially won't be true of us forever. And he goes on to describe the riches and the rich person passing away.
[10:52] And he says, Like a flower of the grass, he, the rich man, will pass away. The sun rises with its scorching heat, withers the grass, its flower falls, and its beauty perishes.

So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits. James is kind of appealing to a passage in Isaiah 40, which says, The grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.
And James kind of appeals to that and says, The rich man's going to pass away too in the midst of his pursuits. James is like describing a rich man dying on a business trip. He's going to pass away while he's pursuing more money.
So don't put your hope in money. Remember the future. Remember eternity. Remember when Jesus comes back, there's going to be a great leveling out of his people.
So both poverty and riches are trials because they test your faith. And save your spot there in James. Go back with me to the book of Proverbs chapter 30.
[12:00] There's a beautiful prayer, I think a very wise prayer, given in Proverbs 30. If you look at Proverbs 30 verse 8.

This proverb begins saying, Remove far from me falsehood and lying. But pay attention to this. Give me neither poverty nor riches.
Feed me with the food that is needful for me. And here's his reasoning, verse 9. Lest I be full and deny you. And say, who is Yahweh?
Or, lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God. Such a wise prayer given right here. It's not a very American prayer to ask for this.
He says, give me, don't make me poor and don't make me rich. And he's concerned about the trial of his own soul. He's worried about the test of his own faith. He says, if you make me rich, I'm worried I'll trust in those riches and say, who is God?
[13:21] But if you make me impoverished, I'm worried that I'll compromise my morals and profane your name. Such a beautiful and wise prayer there.

And I think the author of this proverb, you can go back with me to James, agrees with James. That both poverty and riches can test your faith.
Both of them are a trial for your soul. And James, again, is talking about trials. And he's going to wrap this conversation up.
He's going to bring this to a close and talk more about trials in general. Starting in verse 12, which leads us to our second point. Trials, temptations, and God.
Trials, temptations, and God. He continues this conversation on trials in verse 12 and says, Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial.
[14:26] For when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. James says the person who stays strong under trial, who stays faithful under trial, will be blessed.

And why is he going to be blessed? He says because when he stood the test, he will receive the crown of life. Trials test your faith.
Trials are a proving ground for your faith. It's easy to say you trust in Christ. It's easy to call yourself a Christian. But we're going to find out when you go through suffering.
We're going to find out where your heart really is when you go through trials. We're going to find out if what you've been saying about Christ is really true of you as you suffer when you go through difficult times.
And what the Bible teaches us is that trials actually come from God himself. If you want to write down Deuteronomy 8 verse 2, the Lord speaks to the nation of Israel.
[15:31] They've been wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. And the Lord says, I was testing you. Deuteronomy 8 verse 2, I was testing you to see what was in your heart.

And it's not as though God didn't know what was in their heart. It's not as though God was ignorant of who they were. He's saying, I sent you through the wilderness so that you would display

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outwardly what was on the inside of you.
So that you would act out what you've been thinking. So that you would perform the things that you've been meditating on. And so we can say that trials in general come from God.
And he rewards those who stay faithful in trials. And James says here that the person who is faithful will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him.
When we think of the crown of life, we probably think of like a royal crown, something gold, shiny, or silver. However, the actual picture here is more like what an athlete wins in the Olympics.
[16:40] In the ancient world, the prize athlete would get a crown, more of like flowers and greenery placed on his head as the champion. He worked hard.

He endured the test. He was superior. And he was rewarded with the crown. Now James isn't saying here that we're earning our salvation so that we can boast in ourselves what he is saying is that God is holding out for us reward as motivation to endure.
And I think sometimes we're scared to think like that. I think sometimes we're scared to think like, well, yeah, heaven's great, but I don't want to be motivated just by peace or by reward or by an easy life or by being with Christ.
I just want to do it because this is the right thing to do. But the New Testament actually says the Lord will reward those who are faithful. And that reward is intended to motivate you.
So a couple of years ago, our oldest kid, Amelia, she was in Kinder Praise. And she was, that's a kids choir at our church, as many of you know, and were a part of when you were in kindergarten and younger.
[17:50] And she would get really nervous to do the performances up on stage. She didn't like that, but we were making her do it because we're trying to be good parents. And I said, Amelia, if you go up on stage and do it, I will take you to ice cream afterwards.

And she nailed it. She went up there, did it, took her to ice cream afterwards. Was she motivated by the ice cream? Yes, she was. Was that wrong of her to do? No.
I, as her dad, said this will be the reward you get for doing this thing that scares you. And this is what God himself does. You will be rewarded for your faithfulness. And it's not wrong to be motivated by that.
It's wrong to pursue it out of selfishness, but the Lord says he's going to reward those who love him and stay faithful in the midst of trials. God wants you to be motivated by heaven.
And James is going to shift in topic slightly here from trials to temptations. From trials to temptations. But what's the difference between a trial and a temptation?
[18:59] How do we differentiate between something that's a trial sent from God and a temptation to sin? What James says here is that trials come from God, temptations come from our hearts.

Trials come from God. Temptations come from our hearts. Now this can get a little bit confusing because sometimes as you're going through a trial, a temptation will arise in your heart.
But there is a difference between a trial and a temptation to sin. And James will get into that here in verse 13. So read with me. Verse 13, he says, Let no one say when he is tempted, I am being tempted by God.
For God cannot be tempted with evil and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he's lured and enticed by his own desire.
Then desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin. And sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death. So James says in verse 13, Let no one say when he's tempted, I am being tempted by God.
[20:19] It can be very easy for you to blame God for the temptations that you give into. It's very easy to start talking like, Well, if God didn't want me to sin in this way, why did he make it so easy?

If God didn't want me to misspend money, why did he give me money in the first place? If God didn't want me to do this, why did he make my life so difficult? If you start thinking like that, you're blaming God for the temptations that you are giving into.
And James says, Do not do that. Don't say you're being tempted by God. And why is it wrong to say that? Why can we not say that? He goes on. He says, Because God can't be tempted with evil.
And so he himself tempts no one. God is holy. He is perfect. And so he is untemptable.
Untemptable. There is no part of him that even remotely desires something wicked or sinful.
Nothing in him wants something that is sinful. And so temptation doesn't have an appeal to him.
Temptation doesn't draw him at all. Our problem is that we desire sinful things.

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[21:26] And so temptation has power over us. God doesn't desire anything sinful. And so he can't be tempted. It's impossible for him to be tempted. God is not like us when it comes to temptation.

And, James says, He himself tempts no one. God does not love evil. And so he doesn't want his children to fall into it either.
It would be wicked of God to try to tempt us to do something wrong. Now, I just want you to notice here, some people will say, you know, you Christians, you believe in one God.
There's a lot of other people that believe in a lot of other gods. And the God of the Bible is just like the gods of paganism in the past. The God of the Bible is just like all the gods that are worshipped in Africa or across Asia.
This is something that makes God utterly unique. This is something that makes the God of the Bible completely different from the demon gods that other religions worship.
[22:30] All those other false gods that are worshipped by other religions are very man-like in the way they act and in the way they want their worshippers to act.

They're sinful, and they want their followers to act sinfully. But the God of the Bible is perfectly holy, and he never entices or tempts his followers, his people, to sin.
He tempts no one. So then where does temptation come from? What's temptation's origin?
Well, James is about to give us an anatomy lesson on temptation. It's a graphic and morbid picture, and it's a downward spiral of sin. He tells us where it comes from, how it grows, and then what it produces.
But it's a helpful picture. Because what he says is that there is a process to you committing sin. There's a process to the way you commit sin.
[23:31] Your sin doesn't just come out of nowhere. My sin doesn't come out of nowhere. There's a lead-up to it. There's a process to it. And it's step one, verse 14.

He says, Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Something that my kids and my wife and I love to do is go fishing.
Any fishers in the room like to fish? So we're not like, I don't have a boat or anything like that. We just go to ponds and creeks around town. But we love to go fishing.
And my wife loves to fish. She doesn't like anything that is involved in fishing. So she doesn't like the worms. She doesn't like touching the fish after she catches them. But she loves the activity itself. My kids are all in.
And our goal is to deceive these fish. We're tempting them with a hook. And the hook itself is not attractive. So we put worms on it.
[24:32] We put lures on it to try to, you know, trick them into giving up their life to us. And it's fun. And we enjoy it. There's probably a fish murder documentary about us. But we enjoy that.

It is fun. It's a fun way to spend time. And the terminology James uses here is actually fishing language. He says that temptation in our hearts lures us and entices us.
Those are fishing terms from the ancient world. We're lured and enticed by our own desire. The hook of sin is there. But we're baited in through desire.
We're baited in through the temptation. Sin seems fun. It seems appealing. And it might be fun for a short term, but the hook draws us in and won't let us go.
And notice it says that we're lured and enticed by what? By God? No, each person's tempted when he's lured and enticed by his own desire.
[25:35] Why do you give in to sin over and over again? Why do I commit sin over and over and over again? We want to stop sinning, but we can't.

Why is that? Because at some level, you desire it. And at some level, I desire it. It's a sinful desire. It's a sinful want. But we are broken from the inside. And so the reason we keep committing sin is because at some level, in some moment, we want that sin more than we want to obey what Jesus tells us to do.
So why are you tempted to sin? The biblical answer is because of your own wicked heart. And because of my own wicked heart.
Jeremiah 17, 9 says, The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick. Who can understand it? Your heart will trick you.
[26:40] Your heart will deceive you into walking away from Christ. When Lacey was a freshman in college, she went to Oklahoma State, and I was in her dorm, and one of her roommates had hung this banner in like the living room.

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And it said, Just follow your heart. And it was beautiful and really stupid. That's bad advice. If you follow your heart, if you let your heart be the pilot of your plane, you will end up in hell.
Because your heart is a powerful thing, but it is not wise. It does not always want what's best for you. It wants to pursue sin.
Because that's who you are by nature. You are a sinner. And I'm a sinner. We are born in sin until we naturally are drawn toward sin. And so if you just follow your heart, if you just do what seems easiest to you or seems best to you, you will not live a life that's pleasing to the Lord.
Our hearts are powerful, but they are not always wise. wise. My wife and I love to watch The Office. I know it's getting old now. Some of you may still like it, but in one episode, Dwight tells Michael, he says, Michael, your heart is a wonderful thing and it makes terrible decisions.
[28:04] And that's true of all of us spiritually. Your heart is a wonderful thing. No offense to your heart. It makes really dumb decisions because you by nature as a sinner want to pursue sin. And that's true of me as well, apart from the grace of Christ.

Step two is verse 15. So once we're lured and enticed, once we're tricked, once we're fished into pursuing sin, verse 15, then desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin.
Once you let your sinful desire direct your actions, it lays its eggs, it sets its trap, and when those eggs hatch, when that trap goes off, sin runs rampant in your life.
Our own sinful desire gives birth to sinful actions. If you are committing acts of sin, it's because before you acted, that's what you wanted in your heart.
Desire entrapped you, it tricked you, it deceived you. Sin is a result of desire. And step three, at the end of verse 15, and sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death.
[29:19] The child of desire is sin. And sin grows up and becomes a serial killer.

Sin is a killer. It's a very graphic way of basically saying the wages of sin is death. And sin's lie, the temptation that we so often give into is like, it's safe to just engage in this little sin.
It's okay to sort of play with sin a little bit. But the hook of desire is being set, and you won't be able to easily get off of that.
And sin, when it's fully grown, when it grows up, it will bring forth death. You'll be tricked into thinking that sin is not that big of a deal.
And if you start thinking that way, I hope the Lord will bring to mind James 1. Because if you start thinking sin is no big deal, you've already been tricked. You've been deceived by that.
[30:26] I was at the zoo one time on a field trip. I was in fourth grade. And the snake place, I don't know what it's called, but it was at a different part of the zoo.

And we were walking kind of behind it back towards the front. And I heard this commotion to my left. And there was a grown man yelling at these kids, telling them to get away.
And what was happening is they were playing with a little snake they'd found on the sidewalk. What they didn't know is there was a baby copperhead that had gotten out of the snake enclosure.
And so they're poking it with sticks. They're kind of messing around with it, getting super close to it. And even if they knew it was venomous, you can kind of think like, well, I mean, it's just a little snake.
Like it's a baby snake. It's probably safe to mess around with. Also what they didn't know, and if you don't know this, I'm trying to educate you a little bit. Baby venomous snakes are actually more dangerous to you than adults because they can't control how much venom they inject.
[31:26] And so they'll just give you everything and it'll kill you. So anyway, this adult man is yelling at these kids and they think they're safe because they're playing with a baby snake they found on the sidewalk.

And sin will kind of present itself to you in that way. It's innocent. It's not a big deal. No one will know. Even if things go wrong, it's not that big of a deal compared to what other people are doing. That's how it lures you in. Sin is a killer. In verse 16, James says, do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.
Don't be confused about where sin comes from and don't be tricked by sin itself. There is a process. Your sin comes from somewhere and it starts in your own heart.
It's actually a really helpful picture because this process can be reversed. This process can be stopped. If you walk down into a cave and go exploring in the cave, you'll get to a point where it's completely dark.

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[32:31] There's no more natural light coming in. And if you decide in that moment you're ready to leave the cave, it's going to take you a long time to get back out. But the good news is you got down there one step at a time and so you can get back out by taking one step at a time out.

And sin, this process of sin is the same way. If you commit a sin, you can look back and trace it through this passage backwards and see like, okay, this is what I was desiring in that moment. This is what I was valuing in that moment and this led me to commit this act of sin. And the earlier in the process you stop and put an end to it, the easier time you'll have fighting that sin.
And so this is a helpful passage in giving us this anatomy of sin. We have a natural tendency to try to blame someone else for our sin.
But who gets the blame for our sin? You and me. We cannot blame anyone else. We cannot blame our circumstances. We cannot blame God.
[33:37] We alone are responsible for our sinful actions because they came from our sinful hearts. But here's where it's easy to get confused.

Trials come from God. Temptations come from our sinful desires. But so often temptations will rise up when we're in the middle of a trial.
And so it will seem like God is the one tempting us. It will seem like God's the one who's enticing us to sin. And so God will send a trial into your life to test your faith and to prove your faith and to see what's in your heart.
And as you go through that trial, you're worn out physically and spiritually. You're exhausted by it. And in your exhaustion, a temptation will arise in your sinful heart.
And in your tiredness, in your exhaustion, you will be tempted to sin. Where did the trial come from?
[34:44] The trial came from God. Where did the temptation come from? Your heart and its sinful desires. Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.

And verse 16 is actually a transition into talking about God. He says, don't be deceived about where temptation comes from and don't be deceived about what actually comes from God.
Sin comes from us, but every good thing comes from God. And he shifts to talking about who our God is in verse 17. He says, every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.
Coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of his own will, he brought us forth by the word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.
Every single good thing in your life comes from God. Every blessing you have, every good thing in your life comes from God.
[35:57] Don't be deceived by that. You'll be tempted to think like, okay, yeah, my trials come from God, my difficult things come from God, but man, there are some good things that come from other sources. Any good thing in your life comes from God.

And look at how he's described here. It says that every good gift in your life comes down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.
It's calling him the Father of the heavenly bodies, the Father of the sun, moon, and stars, and the planets. This is a unique title that God has given in scriptures. It's the only time God has called something like this in the Bible, so we need to pay attention to it.
Why is James calling our attention to the heavenly bodies, to the sun, the moon, the stars, the planets? Because the Lord is the one who created all those things, but he's distinct from them. He's different from them in a key way. He says, with God, there is no variation or shadow due to change.
[37:04] God does not change. He's the same yesterday and today and forever. 1 John says, God is light in him. There is no darkness at all. He's the creator of the lights, but he does not change like those lights do that he created.

If you went outside, I think it was Thursday night last week, there was an eclipse. Maybe you saw that or saw about it. It was beautiful. The moon was like 96% eclipsed or something.
And so the moon and the earth are constantly dancing and sometimes they get in each other's way and eclipses happen and they're beautiful to see. But the reason those happen is because everything in our universe is constantly changing, constantly moving.
It's always varying. It's always changing. It's always viewed from different angles. That's why our moon has phases that it goes through. And God is the one who created those lights, but with him, there is no change.

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There is no movement. There is no improvement. He is the same yesterday and today and forever. [38:17] God never changes for the better or for the worse. If he changed for the worse, he would not be perfect. If he changed for the better, then that means that he wasn't perfect and is now improving.

He is perfect. He is holy. And so he never changes. And he gives us every good thing as a father. And what's the best thing he's given us?
It's salvation. And James goes on to talk about that. Of his own will, of the father's own will, he brought us forth. He gave birth to us by the word of truth.
We should be a kind of first fruits of his creature, of his creatures. Why can we call him father? Why is he our father? Because he caused us to be born again.
He caused us to have new life. He caused us to be changed and to have new life by his word. God is not responsible for our sin, but he is responsible for our salvation.
[39:22] He is the one who caused us to be born again. And he did this by the gospel, by the word of truth. And so this good news about Jesus, his death and resurrection for sinners can change your life.

It can cause you to be born again. And so that's why we preach the word. That's why we study this word. That's why you should share the gospel with your friends because it can change them. It can cause them to have new and better life with God.
God. And James says that he's given us this new life so that we'd be kind of first fruits of his creatures. Everyone in here who's a Christian is just a preview of what's to come later.
God is not done gathering his people yet. God is not done saving his people yet. Everyone in here who's saved is just a preview of the full salvation that's going to come to all of God's people in the future.
God will give us this new birth. He'll give this new birth to all of his creation and he'll gather all of his people from every nation. And as we're in heaven with Christ, there'll be no more trials or temptations.
[40:39] So I've got four things here to conclude. These will be brief. Number one, fight sin. Fight sin. You might be discouraged to see sin in your life.

But when you see sin in your life, I would encourage you to trace it back. That originated in your heart. So trace it back as far as you can through your thoughts to see where that originated in your heart.
Repent of it, turn from it, and praise God for his forgiveness. So number one, fight sin. Number two, don't be surprised when someone sins against you.
Don't be surprised when someone sins against you. You can't even figure out your own sin. Don't expect other people to figure out theirs. We're all in the process of becoming more like Christ.
And so when someone sins against you, it may hurt, it may be difficult, it may lead to challenges in your life, but don't be surprised that someone else is sinning.
[41:47] We are sinners. And so if they're a Christian, help them trace their sin back too. Help them figure out where that came from and forgive them if they've sinned against you and remember that God has forgiven you.

Number three, remember that every good thing in your life is from God. Every good thing in your life is from God.
God and you don't deserve it. It can be easy to think like, well, yeah, God's given me a good family or God's given my family money, God's given my family a good church or good friends or he's given me the ability to do well in school, but I earned it in some way.
I deserved it in some way. James describes every good thing in your life as a gift. it's undeserved. And so, remember that God has given you everything good in your life and remember those good things.
And fourthly, remember that every circumstance of your life is temporary. temporary. Remember that every circumstance of your life is temporary.
[43:11] God is good. God has been good to you. But if you're a believer, you're just now beginning to experience his goodness. He will pour out his goodness on you in full throughout all eternity.

And so, keep this eternal perspective in your mind as you approach your temporary circumstances in life.

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Let's pray. Our Father, thank you for this evening. Thank you so much for the words you've spoken to us through your servant, James. I pray it's been conveyed faithfully and clearly.
Thank you so much for these students. You know how much they mean to our church and to me personally. And so, I pray that you would guard them and keep them, help them to be holy, help them to fight their sin.
And if there are any here who don't believe, I pray that you'd open their eyes to the truth of the gospel. It's by your will that we're born again. And I pray that you'd work that miracle of salvation in hearts tonight as they consider Christ.
[44:18] Thank you so much for your grace to us and your goodness to us. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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