

Sunday Service Sermons

23 May 2021

Practicing Your faith

A doctor practices medicine all of his career.

Does a Christian practice being God's person for a lifetime?

The more you practice something the better you get at doing it.

I have learned that we get better at being God's person and living a Godly life.

It is progressive throughout our lifetime.

The longer we live the more we know about God, and the more we give ourselves to him and, the more we live for Him and His Kingdom.

But it is not knowing about God that does it.

It is knowing God and Him knowing us that helps us become what He wants us to be.

Surrendered or sold out to God.

When do we become 100% sold out to God?

I think a few people accomplish this while still on this earth but it is very rare.

For most of us the 100% comes at the time of death, maybe.

Or maybe it is after entering the Kingdom of God and learning to live completely for him.

Who knows?

The point is for each of us to realize that the goal is to be 100% sold out to Jesus and be working toward that goal.

And we must realize that we cannot do it; it only happens when we give control to God through the Holy Spirit.

I guess that would be 100% sold out to Jesus.

The actual title for this sermon that I am using as a resource is: How to "Practice" Your Faith.

The text is: "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" *James 1:22*

Total text is *James 1:22-27*.

Try this translation: Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it, he will be blessed in what he does. If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. Religion that God, our Father, accepts as pure and faultless is this, to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

You might say that James wants to see your faith in God at work doing good for others.

And this will only happen when you live by a standard other than what the world promotes.

It is said that James was a pastor so he knew what people were believing and how they were practicing their faith.

There must not be a gap between our profession and our practice of our religious beliefs.

James makes a proposition, an illustration and an application about how to practically apply one's faith.

The proposition: In *James 19* we are told to be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath.

We are to "hear" the Word of Truth but not stop there.

It is easy to "hear" but not put into "practice" what we have heard and claim to believe.

There are two types of Christians in this regard.

Those who faithfully listen to the Word and even feel a "spiritual high" because of what they hear,

but never apply the truth of God's Word to their lives.

Then there are those who receive the Word with joy and allow it to be incorporated into their life and behavior.

When James states: "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only," there is an imperative in the present tense which suggests continuity.

He is saying for us to be those who keep on doing the word.

To accomplish this is a process of development and growth, it takes time and purpose to accomplish this.

It is a process of taking on the characteristics of our Lord Jesus "The Christ".

Doers of the Word are those who take the truth of God and, in the power of the Holy Spirit, translate it into an everyday practical illustration of what God can and will do in one's life.

The illustration is of a man looking at himself in a mirror.

He immediately forgets what he looks like.

Christians who merely "hear" the Word of God do something similar to this.

They hear the Word but soon forget it, and it has no influence on them.

James implied that the Word of God is like a spiritual mirror to a person's soul.

When Christians look into the mirror of the Word, they see the correct and complete delineation of their souls.

They see the areas that need to be altered or cleansed.

The mirror of the Word has a dimension that is not found in an ordinary mirror.

God's Word not only shows us where we are; it shows what we can become.

What is being said here is the difference between a glance and really seeing what is before us.

The really seeing is a searching inspection of something.

The Word can show us who we really are and who we need to become.

Why is this mirror of the Word a perfect law of liberty?

It is because it is the standard by which the Christian life is regulated and directed.

And by "liberty" James means that it is a law that gives spiritual freedom to those who bring themselves under its authority.

The application James give has three examples of what it is to practice the Word.

Bridle the tongue: which is to control carelessness in conversation.

To restrain, to discipline, to curb careless talk that injures others.

The imagery he used indicates that the tongue is like an unruly horse that needs a bit and bridle to check its wild tendencies.

James gave two more examples of practicing one's faith: having compassion for the needy and living an unstained life.

He is saying that the "externals" of worship are unacceptable to God unless they are accompanied by loving service and a holy life.

Jesus said that we are to be in the world but not of the world.

The proper place for a ship to be is in the water, but if the water gets into the ship, it sinks.

The proper place for Christians to be is in the world, but if the world gets into Christian, they sink to the depths of unhappiness and sin.

It is only as believers practice their faith that they are set in contradistinction to the world and its standard.

For we live by a higher standard.

The standard of the Living Christ.

Jesus, the Son of God, who lives in us, and supplies all that we need through the Holy Spirit in order to live a life that glorifies God and serves others.

Thus bringing the Kingdom of God to earth as it is in heaven!