

Organized for the Task, Part 2

June 18, 2017

James 1:19-27

We are organized in such a way for folks at Harp's Crossing Hollonville to grow individually and corporately all the while seeking to serve and reach others.

Worship:

Personal

Family

Large group

Discipleship:

Sunday School

Men's and Ladies groups

One on one discipleship

Fellowship:

Sunday School

Wednesday nights

Outside events (not during regular church time)

Ministry:

Inside God's Church (PLACE)

Personal discovery, Learning spiritual gifts, Abilities awareness, Connecting Passion with ministry, Experiences of life.

Missions:

Our community

Our world

Knowledge is one thing, but doing is another. We are organized in such a way for all the five purposes of God's Church to happen, but those will only happen for each person as to their level of obedience or disobedience individually and in God's Church.

It is not enough to hear the Word, we must follow (do it). Reread James 1:21-27

So we see from our scripture this morning that the Word of God is compared to a mirror. How?

1) Examination (vs, 23-25)

"James mentions several mistakes people make as they look into God's mirror. **First**, they merely glance at themselves. They do not carefully study themselves as they read the Word. Many sincere believers read a chapter of the Bible each day, but it is only a religious exercise and they fail to profit from it personally. Their conscience would bother them if they did not have their daily reading, when actually their conscience should bother them because they read the Word carelessly. A cursory reading of the Bible will never reveal our deepest needs. It is the difference between a candid photo and an X-ray."

"The **second** mistake is that they forget what they see. If they were looking deeply enough into their hearts, what they would see would be unforgettable! We tend to smile at the 'extremes' of people back in the days of the great revivals, but perhaps we could use some of that conviction. John Wesley wrote about a preaching service: 'One before me dropped as dead, and presently a second, and a third. Five others sunk down in half an hour, most of whom were in violent agonies' (Wesley's

Journal for June 22, 1739). Before we consign these people to some psychological limbo, remember how saints in the Bible responded to the true knowledge of their own hearts. Isaiah cried, ‘Woe is me! for I am undone’ (Isa. 6:5)! Peter cried, ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord’ (Luke 5:8)! Job was the most righteous man on earth in his day, yet he confessed, ‘I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.’”

“Mistake number **three**: they fail to **obey** what the Word tells them to do. They think that hearing is the same as doing, and it is not. We Christians enjoy substituting reading for doing, or even talking for doing. We hold endless committee meetings and conferences about topics like evangelism and church growth, and think we have made progress. While there is certainly nothing wrong with conferences and committee meetings, they are sinful if they are a substitute for service. If we are to use God’s mirror profitably, then we must gaze into it carefully and with serious intent (James 1:25). No quick glances will do. We must examine our own hearts and lives in the light of God’s Word. This requires time, attention, and sincere devotion. Five minutes with God each day will never accomplish a deep spiritual examination. I have been fortunate with the doctors who have cared for me through the years, and I owe a great deal to them. Each of them has possessed two qualities that I have appreciated: They have spent time with me and have not been in a hurry, and they have always told me the truth. When Jesus, the Great Physician (Matt. 9:12), examines us, He uses His Word, and He wants us to give Him sufficient time to do the job well. Perhaps one reason we glance into the Word instead of gaze into the Word is that we are afraid of what we might see. After seeing ourselves, we must remember what we are and what God says, and we must do the Word. The blessing comes in the doing, not in the reading of the Word. “This man shall be blessed in his doing” (James 1:25, literal translation). The emphasis in James is on the practice of the Word. We are to continue after reading the Word (James 1:25; see Acts 1:14; 2:42, 46; 13:43; 14:22; 26:22 for examples of this in the early church).”

2) Restoration

“Restoration (Ex. 38:8). When he built the tabernacle, Moses took the metal looking glasses of the women and from them made the laver. The laver was a huge basin that stood between the brazen altar of sacrifice and the holy place. (Read Ex. 30:17–21 for details.) The basin was filled with water, and the priests washed their hands and feet at the laver before they entered the holy place to minister. Water for washing is a picture of the Word of God in its cleansing power. ‘Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you’ (John 15:3). The church is sanctified and cleansed ‘with the washing of water by the word’ (Eph. 5:26). When the sinner trusts Christ, he is once and for all washed clean (1 Cor. 6:9–11; Titus 3:4–6). But as the believer walks in this world, his hands and feet are defiled, and he needs cleansing (John 13:1–11). The mirror of the Word not only examines us and reveals our sins, but it helps to cleanse us as well. It gives us the promise of cleansing (1 John 1:9) and, as we meditate on it, it cleanses the heart and the mind from spiritual defilement. It is the blood of Christ that cleanses the guilt, but the water of the Word helps to wash away the defilement. Nathan’s experience with David in 2 Samuel 12 helps to illustrate this truth.”

David and Nathan 2 Samuel 12:13

3) Transformation

“After the Lord restores us, He wants to change us so that we will grow in grace and not commit that sin again. Too many Christians confess their sins and claim forgiveness, but never grow spiritually to conquer self and sin. Second Corinthians 3 is a discussion of the contrasts between the old covenant ministry of law and the new covenant ministry of grace. The law is external, written on tablets of stone; but salvation means that God’s Word is written on the heart. The old covenant ministry condemned and killed; but the new covenant ministry brings forgiveness and life. The glory of the law gradually disappeared, but the glory of God’s grace becomes brighter and brighter.”¹

Prayer Focus:

Am I hearing only or hearing and obeying?

What specific area this morning (maybe that we haven’t even mentioned) requires action on your part? Obedience that is.

In light of how we are organized (our five purposes), which are you (just 1)? Do you need to say, “Lord, I not only hear you, but I will obey.” I will repent and make it right.

¹ All quotes from Warren Wiersbe