

Thank God For Poverty

Text : **James 1: 9-11 ; Luke 12: 13-23**

A. The Christian religion is really rather paradoxical. For Example :

S#1.
S#2.

1. Our text explains that the rich and powerful have no advantage over the poor.

James 1: 9-10 But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position; ¹⁰ and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away.

2. James is “*The Elder’s Handbook On How To Be Poor And Downtrodden.*”

S#3.

- a. The epistles of Peter might well carry the same title.
- b. Both Peter and James were elders of the congregation in Jerusalem.

3. The primary recipients of their writings were most likely members of their congregation who were scattered by the persecution referenced in Acts 8.

B. The Epistle of James begins by explaining the proper view of their circumstances.

1. **James 1: 2** – Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,
2. This same theme is at the core of the writings of the Apostle Peter.

I Pet. 4: 12-13 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³ but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

S#4.

3. This attitude is also exemplified by the Apostle Paul.

Col. 1: 24 – Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.

S#5.

C. James started with the argument that trials are good because they produce spiritual growth if accepted with the proper attitude.

S#6.

James 1: 3-4 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

D. James follows up with a second argument, life on earth is temporary and not reflective one’s eternal condition.

S#7.

James 1: 9-11 But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position; ¹⁰ and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. ¹¹ For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.

I. Expressions of gratitude are expected to be characteristic of all Christians. S#8.**A. Jesus was one who was given to prayers of thanksgiving. S#9.**

1. He gave thanks before eating food.
 - a. **Matt. 15: 34** ... When He fed the 4000
 - b. **Matt. 26: 27** ... When He ate the last supper
2. **John 11: 41** ... When raising Lazarus, He thanked God for hearing His prayer

B. In the Apostle Paul we have an example of a man with a grateful heart.

1. **Acts 28: 15** ... He thanked God when the brethren near Rome came to meet him.
2. Paul thanked God for the faith of brethren in many places. **For example :**
 - a. **Rom. 1: 9** ... The brethren in Rome
 - b. **I Cor. 1: 14** ... The church at Corinth
 - c. **Eph. 1:16** ... The church in Ephesus. (Philippi, Colossae, Thessalonica,)
3. He gave thanks for the Christian people in his life : (*coworkers*)
 - a. For Prisca and Aquila ... **Rom. 16: 3-4**
 - b. For Titus ... **II Cor. 8: 16**
 - c. Timothy ... **II Tim. 1: 3** (Philemon, Archippus)

C. The giving of thanks is a vital part of every Christian's life. S#10.

1. **Eph. 5: 19-20** Be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; ²⁰ always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;

2. We give thanks for salvation. S#11.

Col. 1: 9-12 – ... we have not ceased to pray for you ... ¹⁰ ... ¹¹ strengthened with all power, ... ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

D. The giving of thanks is a vital part of our worship. S#12.

1. When foreign tongues were spoken in the assembly, it was to give thanks.

I Cor. 14: 15-17 What is the outcome then? I will pray with the spirit and I **S#13.**
will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also. ¹⁶ Otherwise if you bless in the spirit only, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying? ¹⁷ For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not edified.

2. We should all thank God for the privilege of serving Him.

I Tim. 1: 12-14 I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, **S#14.**
 13 even because He considered me faithful, putting me into service,
 though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent
 aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in
 unbelief; 14 and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant,
 with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus.

3. The giving of thanks is a spiritual sacrifice of praise to God.

Heb. 13: 15 – Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of **S#15.**
praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.
 16 And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices
 God is pleased.

II. God is generous, but He expects gratitude for His generosity.

S#16.

A. While God was on the earth in the person of Jesus, He expected gratitude.

1. **Luke 17: 11-19** While He was on the way to Jerusalem, He was passing **S#17.**
 between Samaria and Galilee. 12 As He entered a village, ten leprous
 men who stood at a distance met Him; 13 and they raised their voices,
 saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" 14 When He saw them, He
 said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they
 were going, they were cleansed. 15 Now one of them, when he **S#18.**
 saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud
 voice, 16 and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And
 he was a Samaritan. 17 Then Jesus answered and said, "Were there not
ten cleansed? But the nine — where are they? 18 Was no one found
 who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?" 19 And He
 said to him, "Stand up and go; your faith has made you well."

(received a blessing
 in the midst of a
 horrible life)

2. Jesus knew how many He had healed and was disappointed by the lack of gratitude.
3. What is your response to Jesus cleansing you from your sin ?
 - a. Those lepers were separated from the people by their disease. **(stood at a distance)**
 - b. You were spiritually unclean and separated from God by your sin.

B. Christians are instructed to receive God's blessings with gratitude.

S#19.

1. **I Tim. 4: 4** – For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be
 rejected IF it is received with gratitude; 5 for it is sanctified
 by means of the word of God and prayer.
2. God expects for us to be overflowing with gratitude for our salvation. **S#20.**
Col. 2: 7 – As you have received Christ ... so walk in Him, 7 having been firmly
 rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith,
 just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

3. The overflow of gratitude is expressed in more than just words. S#21.

Heb. 12: 28 – Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken,
(show = demonstrate) let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable
(service = actions) service with reverence and awe; **29** for our God is a consuming fire.

a. Attitudes and values are manifested in our lives. “show you my faith by my works”

b. Gratitude is manifested in productive service.

* c. *How does our gratitude for salvation manifest itself in our lives ?*

III. The Christian's gratitude is not just in response to physical blessings. S#22.

A. Citizens of the world are consumed with thoughts of physical things.

1. **Matt. 6: 31-33** “Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' **32** 'For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. **33** 'But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. S#23.

a. The Christian's value system sets him apart from the world. Christians are in transit

b. The unbelievers are concerned about the things of this world.

2. The unsaved person has his mind set on houses, cars, carriers, prosperity.

3. He measures his success by comparing himself to other people. (cf – **II Cor. 10:12**)

a. He feels blessed only if he is advancing socially, financially, etc.

b. Those with this mindset are never satisfied with what they have. S#24.

Eccl. 5: 10 – He who loves money will not be satisfied with money,
nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity. S#25.

B. Citizens of the kingdom of Heaven must keep their focus on their eternal home.

1. Vs. **33** .. “Seek first the kingdom of God” Jesus establishes one's priority in life.

2. The Christian's mind must stay focused on the priority set by his Lord.

Col. 3: 1-4 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking S#26.
(Temporary resident the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
citizen of Heaven **2** Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on
Phil. 3: 20) earth. **3** For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be
revealed with Him in glory.

3. No matter how much one accumulates, he leaves it all behind.

Eccl. 2: 18 – Thus I hated all the fruit of my labor for which I had labored under S#27.
the sun, for I must leave it to the man who will come after me. **19** And who knows
whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the fruit
of my labor for which I have labored by acting wisely under the sun. This too is vanity.

4. **Luke 12:13ff** ... This is perfectly illustrated by the story of the rich fool.
 - a. In the eyes of the world, the rich man was imminently successful.
 - b. He focused on this world, but when he left this world he was eternally bankrupt.

C. James instructs the Christian not to view his life by the standard of the world.

James 1: 9-10 But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position; **10** and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. **S#28.**

1. If you are poor in this world, remember you will be rich in Heaven.
2. If you are rich in this world, remember you will leave it all behind.
3. Life is temporary, one's station on earth is totally irrelevant to his life in eternity.
 - a. The rich will lose their advantage.
 - b. The poor Christian will be elevated.

ILL. – “Smokie” Jett was a truck driver. Last two years before retirement he practically lived in his truck. He made lots of money and was pour it all into a fabulous house for his retirement. He kept bragging about it and showing pictures to everyone. Weeks before his retirement he died. His wife lamented, “*He worked himself to death building that \$%#& house.*” Not very long after he died she remarried and moved her new husband in.

CONCLUSION :

A. So what is the lesson James is teaching us ? Thank God for salvation ! **S#29.**

1. No matter how tough life gets, view your trials as stepping stones to Heaven.
2. Life is fleeting; one's status on earth is not of any eternal significance.

B. As an American Christian, your challenge is keeping focused on Heaven. **S#30.**

1. You have been born in a land flowing with milk and honey. (*This is a test.*)
 - a. An American family can be below the poverty line and still be in the **top 1%**.
 - b. The government gives the poor a free apartment that is better than other nations.
 - * c. You have fabulous physical blessings for which to give thanks.
2. **BUT ..** This is the worst you will ever have it .. your eternal home defies description
 - a. **If** you are in Christ, all you have to do is remain faithful and Heaven awaits you.
 - b. If you are **not** in Christ, God is eager to receive you into Christ if you will .. **S#31.**

INVITATION :

S#32. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**Luke 12: 13-23**

13 Someone in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." **14** But He said to him, " Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?" **15** Then He said to them, " Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions." **16** And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive. **17** "And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' **18** "Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. **19** 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.'" **20** "But God said to him, ' You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' **21** "So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

22 And He said to His disciples, " For this reason I say to you, do not worry about your life, as to what you will eat; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. **23** "For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.

James 1: 9-11

9 But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position; **10** and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. **11** For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.