

Frank is looking for new members for the worship team and we are coming up with a new plan to integrate church planning.

Gretel is quickly coming up to speed with office routines... and the things she will do...

It is great.. We had a staff mtg and minutes and Gretel handed me my copy all highlight in yellow with the action items for me... YES... and by the way they are all done....

This is exciting!

Over the next two weeks we will be coming to a close on our study of the book of James.

I hope that during this series the Spirit has opened your eyes up to a few things about the book of James.

If you have been coming and if you have been regularly attending the living room groups your knowledge base.... about what it means to be a Christian should have expanded.

You should know the book of James and the focus of James....

So for this morning a test... (P) What is the main focus of James.

PPP What is the book of James all about?

Now don't answer...just think about it for a moment... think about the messages.... (P) think about the book...

I hope you read it... a few times... I asked you to... it is only 5 chapters takes about 15 minutes to read... think back to the small group discussions....

Just get some ideas in your head... In regard to James....

What did the Holy Spirit plan to teach us as believers through James?

What is the book of James all about...?

Fact is.... I gave the answer so many times... just about every week....

PPP MATURITY

The Holy Spirit's purpose for James was to teach us about maturing as believers.

Now as I was reflecting on this and preparing this message.... I thought about this... and several things just kind of came to me... I clearly saw a few major themes... that surrounded this concept of maturity for believers. .

I want to look at three this week.

Hey any interest at all out there in regard to knowing what maturity is all about for a believer?

What do you think it is about?

James says that it has a lot to do with....

PPPATP 1. How we treat and speak about each other.

What is our attitude as we go through each day.

Are we positive?... joyful?... happy?
Even in the midst of hard stuff....?

Even when things don't go our way?

How do we treat other people....?

Do we put them first?

Do we talk about them negatively?

Do we let others talk about them negatively?

Do we treat them differently if they disagree with us?

Are we putting others before self? (P) Or is self first?

Is pride alive and well in your life? Church Muskoka Style... second core value... Put others first...

Hey good news.... I got an email Friday informing me that the leather churchmuskokastyle wristbands and the key chains have been shipped.

PPP wristbands...

Okay the second theme in James has to do with.... how we think of and treat things. The things of this world.... what place do we give them in our life.

PPP 2. How we think about and treat things.

PPP slideshow of stuff... alcohol cars boats atv's tv's speakers lots and lots....

What is our attitude about the stuff in life?

Not sure.... look at your house... your shop... your kids...

What is their attitude toward stuff...?

As you go through the day.... how often do you think about stuff and money... the American dream....?

Now the third theme of this book is suffering

PPPATP 3. Suffering can be used to mature us.

As we go through life the things that have the greatest potential to grow us and mature us into who God wants us to be... involve suffering. Not sure read the Bible. Think of Jacob and Moses and David and Elijah and Peter and John....

Okay let's do a quick overview of James teaching in regard to how we treat and speak about each other.

PPPHIP 1. How we treat and speak about each other.

I mean if he did really focus on this stuff... in his short book of only 5 chapters there should be some verses on it... right?

I want you to see this.... a lot of stuff about how we treat others...

PPP James 1:19-21

My dear brothers and sisters, always be willing to listen and slow to speak. Do not become angry easily, because anger will not help you live the right kind of life God wants. So put out of your life every evil thing and every kind of wrong. Then in gentleness accept God's teaching that is planted in your hearts, which can save you.
(NCV)

PPP James 1:27

Religion that God accepts as pure and without fault is this: caring for orphans or widows who need help, and keeping yourself free from the world's evil influence. (NCV)

PPP James 2:1

My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim that you have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favour some people more than others? NLT

PPP James 1:8

“Yes indeed, it is good when you truly obey our Lord’s royal command found in the Scriptures: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”“ NLT

PPP James 2:13

For there will be no mercy for you if you have not been merciful to others. But if you have been merciful, then God’s mercy toward you will win out over his judgment against you. NLT

PPP James 2:15-16

Suppose you see a brother or sister who needs food or clothing, and you say, “Well, good-bye and God bless you; stay warm and eat well”—but then you don’t give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? NLT

PPP James 3:5-6

“A word out of your mouth may seem of no account, but it can accomplish nearly anything—or destroy it! It only takes a spark, remember, to set off a forest fire. A careless or wrongly placed word out of your mouth can do that. By our speech we can ruin the world, turn harmony to chaos, throw mud on a reputation, send the whole world up in smoke and go up in smoke with it, smoke right from the pit of hell. The Message

PPP James 4:11

“Don’t speak evil against each other, my dear brothers and sisters.”
NLT

PPP James 3:13-14

“If you are wise and understand God’s ways, live a life of steady goodness so that only good deeds will pour forth. And if you don’t brag about the good you do, then you will be truly wise! But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your hearts, don’t brag about being wise. That is the worst kind of lie.”

PPP James 4:1

“What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Isn't it the whole army of evil desires at war within you?” NLT

PPP James 3:17-18

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no partiality and is always sincere. And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of goodness.” NLT

PPP James 5:9

“Don't grumble about each other, my brothers and sisters, or God will judge you. For look! The great Judge is coming. He is standing at the door!”

Getting control over our tongue... (P) to build up..... and not tear down

My friends... let's be honest we all need to work on this.... James says that the main thing that causes the problems.... self... our own evil desires... we are so easily hurt and then we lash out... and we know all the ways to do it.. But James says no there is never a right way to grumble or complain about another.

The great thing is that as we grow and mature in this area and live it in our daily lives..... we will not have to advertise our church. People will just hear and sense that something is indeed different....

PPP Church Muskoka Style! Living it - Something Different

Let's always speak rightly about each other. God is not the author of the negative stuff... that is rooted in yourself. This is hard when a friend comes with a relational struggle... we want to be caring... and listen.... But it is like raising our children.. sometimes discipline and

hard things need to be said..... Stop the complaining person... right away and send them directly to the one they are speaking about. EVERY TIME... this is maturity friends.

Hey this focus on other centered living and building others up... and being positive and not listening to backbiting or gossip or talk about another... is not just in James..... Paul loved this.... and often spoke of right speaking and right doing... and right living in regard to relationships... Jesus was all over this idea. He presents the basis in Matthew 18 first step go to the one that offended you.. No one else. Share with them first... we are so bad at this... we run to a friend almost everytime... and that plants seeds of negativity and brings no resolution... The second step is to go to the elders and ask for their help.. We still haven't brought in friends... cause that never resolves and only causes more problems...

This is the Holy Spirit leading us.

Okay.... so much for the relational emphasis... of James... How we treat and speak about each other.

Let's consider the how we think about and treat things.

PPPHIPCHART 2. How we think about and treat things.

Did James focus on this? Money and riches....

Cause if so... as North Americans.... this will hit us hard these days.

PPP James 1:11

"The hot sun rises and dries up the grass; the flower withers, and its beauty fades away. So also, wealthy people will fade away with all of their achievements." NLT

PPP James 2:5

“Listen to me, dear brothers and sisters. Hasn’t God chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith? Aren’t they the ones who will inherit the kingdom God promised to those who love him?” NLT

PPP James 3:16

“For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.”

PPP James 4:2

“You want what you don’t have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous for what others have, and you can’t possess it, so you fight and quarrel to take it away from them.” NLT

PPP James 4:4

“You adulterers! Don’t you realize that friendship with this world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again, that if your aim is to enjoy this world, you can’t be a friend of God.” NLT

PPP James 4:13-15

“Look here, you people who say, “Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there a year. We will do business there and make a profit.” How do you know what will happen tomorrow? For your life is like the morning fog—it’s here a little while, then it’s gone. What you ought to say is, “If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that.” NLT

HIS IS CHRISTIAN MATURITY FRIENDS... and it isn’t easy...

I think I have sufficiently prepared you for today’s scripture verses

James 5

PPP

Warning to the Rich
James 5:1-6

“Look here, you rich people, weep and groan with anguish because of all the terrible troubles ahead of you.

Your wealth is rotting away, and your fine clothes are moth-eaten rags. Your gold and silver have become worthless.

The very wealth you were counting on will eat away your flesh in hell.

This treasure you have accumulated will stand as evidence against you on the day of judgment.

For listen!

Hear the cries of the field workers whom you have cheated of their pay. The wages you held back cry out against you. The cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.

You have spent your years on earth in luxury, satisfying your every whim. Now your hearts are nice and fat, ready for the slaughter. You have condemned and killed good people who had no power to defend themselves against you. NLT

Woe... where did that come from...

How does it feel...? Do you want to get defensive...?

“The very wealth you were counting on will eat away your flesh in hell.”

Are you kidding me...? And I thought you couldn't take it with you....

This is worse... yes... yes...you can take it with you.... but it will stand against you in judgement.

Last week we looked at the parable in the Living Room groups... the one where the guy stored up his wealth in barns and then built bigger ones and he thought everything was good.

But that night his time was up....

RRSP's....

Investments....

Savings....

Retirement...

Some people live in the past... (P) and never really live.... regrets
bitterness... relational pain...

Some people live for the future.... and never really live....

Real life.... (P) is in the moment.... it is right now.. Right here...

Stop what you are doing... stop your thoughts...
focus on the here and now.... breathe... feel you lungs expand...
your heartbeat.... sense those around you... sense the Spirit...

God's Spirit around you and if you have received Him.... within you....

Live this moment....

Jesus taught to let go of the past and to stop worrying about tomorrow.

Come to Him... even now... rest in him... live for Him...
and receive the gift of eternal life he offers...

Live in His peace...

Don't you want that...?

It allows you to live in the moment.

Break free from what the Prince of this World offers you...
to satisfy your soul.

Embrace the peace...

Remember last week..

PPP James 4:1-4

“Where do you think all these appalling wars and quarrels come from? Do you think they just happen? Think again. They come about because you want your own way, and fight for it deep inside yourselves. You lust for what you don’t have and are willing to kill to get it. You want what isn’t yours and will risk violence to get your hands on it. You wouldn’t think of just asking God for it, would you? And why not? Because you know you’d be asking for what you have no right to. You’re spoiled children, each wanting your own way. You’re cheating on God. If all you want is your own way, flirting with the world every chance you get, you end up enemies of God and his way.”

The NLT... What is causing the quarrels and fights among you?

Isn't it the whole army of evil desires at war within you?

Evil desires... He - do - nay is the Greek Thiis were we get the word hedonist.... self seeking pleasure seeker...

a person who wants to lift themselves up above others...

wants to put their needs first in front of others...

their wants come first.... they want there evil desires fulfilled...

A ME FOCUSSED... AN.... I KNOW BEST FOCUS....

We may not want to admit but the North American culture the one we grew up in... taught us how to be self seeking pleasure seekers...

But friends we have so much and we still want more... we have been programmed this way... hey we don't even realize how much we have and how blessed we are... and how twisted our thinking is....

Is this really what Jesus called us to? Are we missing the real message of Jesus because our selfish nature is blinding us....

PPPVVIDEO ROB BELL RICH

James brings about a whole different attitude about relationships.... and also about money and things.

He calls us to maturity in these areas.

This is what being mature is all about... how we treat people and how we treat the things of this world.

Christian maturity is not what we think.

The Prince of this world has sold us a lie about maturity..

He tells us that if we are mature as Christians....

then we will know our theology and our doctrine... so well that we can and should speak out against a group who believes something slightly different. Be a defender of truth or orthodoxy.

That we know best... that we are wise.... that we have arrived... cause hey... we can quote scripture... and we have been in the church for a while... we know best and boy when you know best.... you need to let others know. And often many people who are struggling run to these people... but friends please look at their lives... not their knowledge... how do they treat people... how do they treat things...

You see yes... some knowledge can be helpful...

I have found it that way...

I love to study and learn it is part of my nature....

but as we learn more it can also puff us up...

and then we start to tell others what to do...

and we speak out against certain groups we become very very opinionated...

And this is what causes a lot of damage... among believers.

Cause we start trashing talking each other. Back biting. Accusing... speaking negatively of others...

And James says this should not be....

So it almost seems... that not knowing is better.... that knowledge is dangerous... remember James said not many should presume to be teachers...

Hey.... as a teacher fact is.... all I know....
after 18 years of being a Christian...
Struggling to stay surrendered to Jesus daily...
after a Masters Degree in Theology...
along with further study at John Knox...
after licensing in the Presbyterian Church
and accreditation.... and then ordination... in the Alliance
and countless seminars... and books...
and being honoured to help many formalize their personal faith in
Jesus... many baptisms... and countless spiritual battles....
15 years of ministry... during which I did on average 15 to 20 hours of
weekly study of the word to develop a sermon...
about 45 sermons... each year.
Small Group study every week for every one of these years for at least
half of each year.
Mentoring and coaching relationships...

After all this... (P) all I know for sure..... is.... (P)

that I don't know... And that I am messed up... and still being changed
by His grace...

That I am only beginning to learn....
and strangely enough that was how it all began...
with me bowing the knee and saying Jesus I don't understand I don't
know... I can't figure it out... and on my own....

I never will... That was the start and I have come to realize that it is the path to growth everyday... I just don't know..

There is just so much mystery to following Christ.

Maybe you are there this morning... ready to admit that you don't know and need some help from above.. That you are caught up... in the world... we'll give you a chance to pray about this later...

Strange when I first began and started to become educated in the things of God... man I was a defender of orthodoxy... I knew a couple of things about a couple of things and I would let you know... I knew... there was a lot of black and white stuff for me ... I would speak out against different ministries and against people who had different doctrine...

But the more I studied and learned and grew... the less.... I cared about this stuff...

The less I wanted to argue with someone about Calvin's views versus Arminius's or predestination or double predestination or how right or wrong some new guy was out there.... who had something that was working... and touching people.

I became more about practical ministry... touching unreached people who are on a downbound train... whatever it takes...

Cause God's hand of judgement rests on them... and we need to expend all our energies on reaching them...

Whenever the church becomes in focussed... and me focussed... self centered... problems occur.

So many believers out there seeking more healing more filling for themselves... more blessing... so they will feel better...
Yes they need healing and blessing but a big part of healing comes from serving and touching others.

And fact is as James says suffering.... not blessing....
is a big part of growth. That is the third theme we noticed in James...

PPHIPCHART 3. Suffering can be used to mature us.

Okay now before I go further let me be clear.... I want to say clearly that I do have some non-negotiables like God loves me and you unconditionally... I believe in the Bible... and in the spiritual realm.... and in heaven and hell... and in Jesus His death and His resurrection and ascension... and the Spirit's regenerating power in the life of a surrendered believer.

Oh and I believe in God's supernatural power and that He has never stopped working. God does miracles.... everyday... in our day and age!

But beyond this.... there is so much that I will leave in His hands and trust Him with..... and fact is depending on where someone is at... and where they are coming from.... I may even bite my tongue on a few of my non-negotiables... My path to faith involved a lot of stuff that so many "evangelicals" would never accept. God came into the darkness to get me... and I praise Him for that.

You see so I want to live the "living it" part of faith.

With deep loving and caring and trusting relationships....
ones where our love for each other..... is never.... ever.... ever...
on the negotiating table....

Cause my friends.... quite simply it hurts too much....

when love you thought was there.... is pulled back and withdrawn.

You see I want to share and be transparent about who I am....
and my struggles and I want to experience freedom and victory
without worry.... that during the hard stuff.... my friends...

no... my brothers and sister..... won't abandon me... ever...

Can't we do that? Be that kind of church.

Friends all I know for sure is that God loves us and that He works in
mysterious ways...

I do know what I believe about Jesus....
and I do know and feel...
what my soul and His Spirit that lives within wants...

And they are aligned and they want... no they yearn to reach out and
help broken people who are downtrodden... who do not know of
Jesus.... and are on a downbound train and many don't even know it.

This brings me the most joy and peace... cause in it.... I feel His joy...

Oh and one more thing I have learned living in the moment....
is when I am most happy.... most at peace...

You know how I shared at the beach... how jumping myself out on the
trampoline... and falling down with one girl on one side and the other
on the other side... all of us out of breathe... hearts racing and just
looking up at the trees... nothing to do... but let that heart slow down...
and just be... YES... YES.... living in the moment... with no cares... no
worries about tomorrow...

Problem is... that I feel and experience great spiritual oppression to all of these things. Relationships... money... materials things... living in the moment... not worrying...

WHY IS THIS?

I want to live and break free of the hold that things and money and relational breakdown have on us in this day and age.

I want to live simply...

Why is it so hard? Why do we feel such oppression?

Could it be that what the Bible teaches is true... that we are in a spiritual battle for the souls of men and women are in the balance.

All along the Prince of this World toy with us to make us unproductive in reaching lost souls. He doesn't want us to mature...

Do you want to break free?

DO you sense the Spirit calling you to break free... and move forward into maturity.

Next week we are going to give you the opportunity to be prayed for by someone from the elder's team...

You have a personalized inventory that you can work through on your own... bring it back if you like or just come seeking pray we will work it out that there is time for this during the communion service.

