

READ

James 1:2-15

Matthew 5:10-12

CONSIDER

Wisdom for the sake of itself is found wanting as it lacks human experience and interaction. Our minds may be filled with the knowledge of the universe, but if it is not lived out and demonstrated, it remains useless and meaningless. Maturity and growth as people require the internalization and implementation of what we know into our actions and process of being formed by experimentation, practice, and reflection.

When we explore the wisdom literature of the Bible, we see the similar mentality of how we live in relation to God and to others. The wise are the ones who pursue goodness, righteousness, and justice that stem out of their faith. It moves us into a deeper communion with the Lord, the imitation of His character, and engaging the world from His perspective. As we enter into our summer months, our hope through our sermon series is to dive deeper into the everyday practicalities of biblical wisdom as seen through the book of James.

In many ways, this letter follows the patterns and structure of wisdom literature, such as the Old Testament's Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, but with the added advantage of the person and example of Jesus. James extrapolates out of Christ's teachings and model in a helpful way for all believers to embed and embody this wisdom into their lives and communities. Throughout our journey over the next several weeks, we will hear the echoes of Jesus' own words from the Sermon of the Mount as we wrestle with the encouragement and challenge to daily live the life He is inviting us into.

In our first passage, we see the correlation between Jesus' Beatitudes and James' exhortation to consider the joy of trials. More than just the development of perseverance, but how do we have the singular focus and devotion to live in allegiance to God, especially during difficult seasons? What we discover is that every opportunity is a trial to intentionally live with and for God or a temptation to be ruled by our own selfish desires. The pursuit of God's righteousness and goodness in the world can find its home in every decision and choice, requiring us to rely on the Holy Spirit's strength and wisdom to follow and be faithful. At every moment, who will we follow?

Grateful for our time together in the Word this Sunday! Hope you'll join us for worship as we attune our hearts and ears to God's ministry among us.

Pastor Jon Nip

P R A Y

Gracious God, we ask for the wisdom to trust and devote our lives more to you. Would your Holy Spirit transform us to be more like Christ in our understanding and practices. We ask for your help to give our full allegiance to you and to see every opportunity as a way to live according to your heart and ways. Heavenly Father, help us to resist the temptation to place ourselves at the center of our lives, but rather that we would be undivided in seeking your glory and Kingdom purposes. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

D I V I N G D E E P E R

What might it mean to consider it “pure joy” when we face trials? Would you say that describes your experience when you encounter opportunities and challenges?

How do you wrestle with the conflicting tension of following God or following your own desires?

What do our actions and schedules reveal about who our allegiance belongs to? What are the parts of our lives that are hardest to give up for the sake of following Jesus?

How might you encourage or challenge someone this week to know Jesus more or to practically live out their faith?