

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map
Pastor Roger W. Huffman

James 1:17-27
September 12, 2021

Receive with humility the word planted in you. It saves your soul.

- Lutherans often know - Luther struggled with James - all the talk of *do* and *works*
 - ◆ Luther's tender conscience to Roman's teaching: *saved by faith and works*
- James talk *saved by God's gifts alone*. Acts 15 and here
 - ◆ *¹⁷ Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the lights, ... ¹⁸ Just as he planned, he gave us birth by the word of truth so that we would be a kind of firstfruits of his creations.*
 - ◆ We are his reborn children exclusively by God's saving work of giving.
- James reminds us of the character of God's children vs. character of the world's
 - ◆ Born by the word of truth, faith trusts the Father and *says yes to his word*.
 - ◆ Sin neither trusts nor loves the Father. It despises, ignores, and rebels against him.
 - That's the character of our sinful nature - still infecting and plaguing our souls

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- ❖ The character of God's believers: they *receive with humility the word planted in them*
 - Humbled by God's love that sacrificed his Son to save us - delight to be his children
 - We *receive* - that is welcome - run out to welcome - remove all barriers
 - We don't want anything to get in the way of the God's pure & all-sufficient word
- ❖ *It is able to save your souls.*
 - Wait! The word *saves our souls*? I thought Jesus did!
 - Jesus paid for our sin - saving us from condemnation. Defeated death, saving from it
 - The Holy Spirit makes us spiritually alive, rescuing us from Satan's reign.
 - The word keeps working in us to rescue our souls from sin's influence & reign.
 - Convinced by sad experience that sin is bad - deceiving, blinding, enslaving - we want the Father to rescue us from sin's bad stuff and give us his good stuff.
 - ◆ This calls for putting aside, *I think..., I want...,* to humbly welcome God's wise will.
- ❖ *Remember this, my dear brothers:*
 - *Let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.*
 - We learn this in the presence of our Father.
 - ◆ The word of truth that changes us. We now know: *The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and overflowing with mercy and truth, maintaining mercy for thousands, forgiving guilt and rebellion and sin.* Ex. 34:6-7
 - ◆ Faith loves to listen to the wise Father. It's better to listen to God than to myself
 - ◆ When anger rises in response to God's word - I know my sin has been exposed.
 - No yes, but... No *I don't agree - I don't like that. I'm not going to listen!*
 - ◆ Slow to speak, eager to listen - for God's word to rescue my soul - change of heart
 - The Father's love changes our focus from obsessed with self to cares about others - respects them by being *quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.*
 - ◆ I can't love if I don't listen - get to know who they are and their struggles
 - ◆ *Slow to speak* - you can't listen to others if you dominate the relationship.
 - ◆ *Slow to become angry*, like our Father. Unstained by a world full of anger.

- ❖ Keep yourself unstained by an angry world.
 - Blinding anger in Israel's leaders led them to: hate the Messiah God sent, to kill Stephen, and try repeatedly to assassinate Paul - whom God liberated from anger
 - We stand in the shadow of 9 11 - blinding hatred in the name of religion
 - ◆ A response of anger, while understandable, has embittered too many living angry.
 - Anger in the name of religion has led many to hate religion. How sad!
 - ◆ They hate hatred and become hateful. Satan is so good at blinding people.
 - Civil discourse has given way to angry name calling and violence.
 - ◆ Often on both extremes: Left and right - conservative and liberal
 - ◆ Convince: *we are right and those who don't agree are wrong and dangerous.*
 - ◆ As if angry shouting - leaving no time to listen with respect - means I win.
 - Where's humility? It's loveless arrogance. Where anger reigns only Satan wins.
 - It's hard to **Remember** to *be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.*
 - ◆ What's your short fuse? Stupid drivers? Inconsiderate family members? Incompetent or uncooperative coworkers? Someone suggesting your ideas and convictions stupid?
 - ◆ Being quick to speak and quick to become angry - tells James that he is stupid.
 - James, how is this so harmful to my faith and relationship with God my Father?
- ❖ Anger is hostile to the word planted in you.
 - Responding to a threat of your life, your livelihood, or your values with anger:
 - ◆ *I need to defend myself. No one else will!* Not even God? Undermines trust in him.
 - ◆ *Do not take revenge, dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath. For it is written, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay," says the Lord.* Romans 12:19 Leave it to God.
 - Anger short-circuits the fruit of the Spirit: *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.* Galatians 5:22-23 Forfeited riches
 - Anything that takes control of me interferes with Jesus being Lord. Anger that lasts for more than a moment takes control and quickly becomes all-consuming.
 - ◆ Unchecked anger is like a bull breaking every command to *love your neighbor*:
 - contempt of authorities
 - hatred - contempt for human life - John calls murder 1 John 3:15
 - disdain for your neighbor's marriage and home
 - desire to make the object of your anger pay - damage or destroy property
 - anger is specially good at totally trashing reputation in the name of *truth*
 - the reputation of an individual or labeling all _____ as _____
 - An unbridled tongue turns on anyone calling it to account - even God
 - Anger poisons your soul, heart, and mind - destroys relationships with people and God
- ❖ What will you do with these words?
 - Look at yourself - your anger - then turn away and ignore this serious problem?
 - Or take it to heart - address it with God's word that frees and liberates?
 - ◆ Ask fellow believers to coach, correct, hold accountable - heal with God's word
 - ◆ Don't just listen to the word. Make a plan to do what God says, trusting it is good.
 - ◆ Get rid of overflowing wickedness (call anger what it is) and replace it with action - step out of your comfort zone and help the afflicted - those with little voice.
 - ◆ Don't do it just to be nice or a good citizen.

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