

Here Comes Trouble

Pastor Jeff Bucknam | James 1:1–4

ICE BREAKER:

What thoughts or emotions come to mind when you hear the word religion? What are some various responses people in our culture have to 'religion'?

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT IN CONTEXT:

Read Mark 3:21 and 1 Corinthians 15:3-7. Who is James? What was his role in the early church? Describe who he started out as and how he was transformed by Christ's resurrection.

Read James 1:1-4. How do people normally perceive trials, including religious people? How is the Christian call to dealing with trials counterintuitive? Describe the links in the text that connect 'trials' to 'lacking nothing.'

CONNECTING TO JESUS AND HIS GOSPEL:

Think of the various trials that Jesus endured for the sake of the gospel. What does Jesus do differently? How does Jesus think differently? What can we learn from how Jesus endures trials?

LIVING OUT THE TRUTH:

As James writes about trials, why is our thinking ('consider') so important to James? How does that help us?

Why is it so difficult to consider trials as joy? What examples have you seen of Christians who were derailed by trials or, positively, were strengthened by trials?

Share what steadfastness through a previous 'trial' produced in you. Encourage one another with such evidences of God's faithfulness.

Describe a current 'trial.' Pray for one another: that these specific tests of faith will produce Christ-like character in us.

PARENTING MOMENT & FAMILY FOCUS:

Take a moment to read the passage together. Discuss with your children and/or spouse what trials you have gone through or might be going through right now. Ask them what they have learned or are learning through it. Encourage each other at the end that there is a purpose to every trial, and the result of each one is to produce perseverance to keep running the race that is set before us. Pray with each other that God will give strength to keep going in the midst of the trial.

FURTHER STUDY:

In Thomas Boston's book about trials, *A Crook in the Lot*, he wrote: "Wait patiently till the Hand that made it mend it. Do not give up the matter as hopeless, because you are not so soon relieved as you would wish; 'But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing' (James 1:4). Leave the timing of the deliverance to the Lord. His time will at length appear the best, and it will not go beyond it. Waiting on Him you will not be disappointed."



True Religion

THE BOOK OF JAMES

This page gets us into the text for the next sermon. The more familiarity we have with God's Word, the better we can see God and all that He has for us.

In the days leading up to next week, set aside a few minutes to read the text and reflect on these questions. A prayer to start: 'Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things out of your law' - Psalm 119:18

- 1. From what you know about James' background and from the 'various trials' mentioned earlier in the letter, why would wisdom be especially needed?**
- 2. Why is wisdom such a premium in life for James' audience and for us?**
- 3. What characteristic of God does James include? How does that underscore James' point? How could that also help motivate us?**
- 4. How does James characterize 'the one who doubts?'**
- 5. The sea imagery is vivid. How does that help us understand James' analogy?**
- 6. What in this text confuses you?**
- 7. What in this text compels you?**
- 8. Spend some time in prayer to God, thanking Him for His Word, asking Him to give you wisdom.**