

“Listening and Doing vs. Not Listening and Not Doing” James 1:20-27

He (James) sees the control of one's tongue as decisive in the control of one's entire behavior, much like the decisive control of a horse's direction by means of the **rein and bit**. From James's repetition of emphasis throughout the letter, from his imagery of a horse's rein and bit, and finally from his conclusions of self-deception and worthlessness, the implications are inescapable.

<sup>19</sup> My dear brothers and sisters, **take note of this**: Everyone should

- be quick to listen,
- slow to speak and
- slow to become angry,

<sup>20</sup> **because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.**

<sup>21</sup> Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

<sup>22</sup> Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

<sup>23</sup> Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror

<sup>24</sup> and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

<sup>25</sup> But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

<sup>26</sup> Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.

**In their distress** refers literally to a pressing or a pressure, or figuratively to an affliction or oppression. In keeping with the Jeremiah passage, James has regard for the powerlessness of these people, their inability to protect or care for themselves.

<sup>27</sup> **Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this:**

- to look after orphans and widows in their distress and
- to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Altogether this is a biblical view, not just James's own thinking. Scripture says that God is committed to caring for the powerless and defenseless, including the poor, the alien, the fatherless and the widow. Since the needs of such people are on God's heart, he expects that same heart to be in us. Further, Jesus himself so identified himself with needy, oppressed people that when we care for one of his people in need, we do it unto him.

Any practice of Christianity that does not exhibit this concern in action is deceptive (it misrepresents the truth about God's own heart) and worthless (it is of no value before God).

We have to conclude, then, that this first example of pure and faultless religion is a matter of serious obedience required of the church.

Matthew 25:31-46 New International Version (NIV)

## The Sheep and the Goats

### A. When Jesus Returns

<sup>31</sup> “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

### B. What King Jesus Will Say to the Righteous

<sup>34</sup> “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, <sup>36</sup> I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

<sup>37</sup> “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?’ <sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

<sup>40</sup> “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

### C. What King Jesus Will Say to the Unrighteous

<sup>41</sup> “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. <sup>42</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

<sup>44</sup> “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’

<sup>45</sup> “He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’

### D. Judgement

<sup>46</sup> “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Thank you for coming to bible study...Remember...”Life is short...Time is precious...Enjoy your day”.  
Rev. Terry B. Land, Pastor Shelemiah Baptist Church