

Series: James

Title: Organically Grown Believers

Text: James 5: 7, 8

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The title of the message is: Organically Grown Believers. I do not mean to be trite with that title. We are in a day when society, at least partly, recognizes that man is the cause of contamination. I say partly, because by nature our admission to guilt will only go as far as what we think we can fix by straightening up our act.

One of the most widely recognized means of man's contaminating effects is in farming. We see a whole section in the grocery store called "organically grown." It means the fruit was produced by the most pure standards possible.

- Nothing man-made to accelerate growth was added.
- Nothing man-made was used to kill the pests which would kill the fruit.
- The only thing used was pure seed, pure water, and patient waiting on God to give the increase.

That is the jist of organically grown fruits and vegetables.

Proposition: Believers are born and grown with nothing man-made to make them grow faster. Believers are born and grown by nothing of man's making to kill the pests which would harm the believer. Believers are born and grown with the pure Word of the gospel, the pure Water of the Word, by asking God to give the increase and by patiently waiting on God to do so.

James 3: 17: But the wisdom that is from above is first pure,...

God designed farming in the earth after the pattern by which he saves sinners. Let's learn from this lesson.

James 5: 7: Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. 8: Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

I. BEHOLD, THE HUSBANDMAN

God is the true Husbandman.

If anyone had reason to brag it was the apostle Paul. The Lord used him to plant churches throughout the Gentile world. He wrote 3/4 of the new testament. But we would do well in our day to here what Paul said:

1 Corinthians 3:6: I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7: So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. 8: Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. 9: For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry,

So when we behold the husbandman we need to first behold God, THE Husbandman.

Now, James says, here "consider the farmer."

I. First, the farmer does that which God has given him to do.

The farmer plants the seed.

Illustration: You don't plant purple hull peas and expect to harvest black-eyed peas. (There is a difference.) You don't plant potatoes and expect to harvest onions. You can tell what a man has a taste for by looking at the garden he grows. You generally plant what you enjoy eating.

The false prophets in Israel drew in a great following and made a big fuss in their gardens of idolatry.

Hosea 8: 7: For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.

Matthew 7: 15: Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16: Ye shall know them by their fruits.

If I liked the fruit grown in most church-gardens then I would sow the kind of seed which produces that kind of fruit. But I love the fruit produced by the gospel of Christ. So Christ is the choice Seed I sow.

James: 1:18: Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

I like the seed of "his own will"--God ordering all things, making all things sure in the salvation of his people: electing grace, predestinating grace, God who works all things after the counsel of his own will. I like the seed of "begat he us"--the Spirit blowing where it will; regenerating dead, impotent sinners; irresistibly drawing his people unto himself in everlasting love. I like the seed of "the Word of Truth"--Christ Jesus the Way, the Truth and the Life; he in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; Heb 1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. I like the seed that declares that his people are "firstfruits of his creatures", of his making, who is able to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Eph 1:6: To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

There is way to plant this seed.

Once farmers used horses to break up the ground. Back home, some of the farmers still do. If the farmer unbridles his beast to run wild instead of keeping him tamed for a good use, then he should not expect the harvest. (James 3: 7-10)

Let's be not as Job's friends--bless God--say some true things about him; but say those things with the motive of condemning our brethren.

- James 3: 18: And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.
- James 4: 11-12 (we make what we will come to pass, how shall we make others do our will?--all such rejoicing is evil. V16.)
- James 5: 9

James 5: 12: But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

Have you noticed how much these works of faith have to do with the tongue and the words we speak? The core offense in swearing is not telling the truth. Swearing is excess. If the truth is yes, say yes. If the truth is no, say no. We usually think of taking the Lord's name in vain as using his name flippantly or in connection with a curse word. But it has a great deal to do with speaking of the Lord in "maybe's" rather than when the truth is yes, saying yes and when the truth is no, saying no.

II. THE FARMER WAITS WITH LONG PATIENCE.

James 5: 7:...until he receives the early and the latter rain.

God must give the increase.

The farmer can not make it rain. The farmer can not make the seed germinate. He can only look to the Lord. Ask God to bless the seed sown.

Last week we saw that Ezekiel was commanded to preach and to pray. Notice here that James says "Above all" do not turn from declaring that which is yes and that which is no. And he follows it with this instruction:

James 5: 13: Is any among you afflicted let him pray? Is any merry? Let him sing psalms

What do both those have in common: these take in every time, every hour, every instance of our lives. We are either afflicted or we are merry. The tender plants in the garden sometimes bloom out then a cool snap drops the blooms. Some times the heat withers the plants and they look like they'll die. Other times, the dew falls and the tender plants just seem to drink it all in and thrive and look beautiful. Sometimes we are like those plants, a little wilted and other times merry. In both cases where does James point us: pray unto the Father; sing unto the Lord. Whatever you do, do it unto the Lord.

James 5: 14: Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil [how so, what is this we anoint him with?] in the name of the Lord: 15: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

What kind of affliction, what kind of sickness is this where sins are apt to be committed? (James 4: 9-11.) This may be the kind of sickness and affliction James has been speaking of from the beginning, whereby we are apt to: unbridle the tongue, speak wrongly, lose our patience, grieve one another, break out into swearing. It seems to have something to do with that--look back to:

James 5: 16: Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.

Nothing adds to affliction, adds to real sin-sickness, than a haughty spirit from our fellow brethren. When you feel the weight of your sin you a brother or sister to comfort not to pretend as if they never encounter such faults? We do not need others to come to us with a condemning spirit but with the oil of gladness. Man-made pesticides make us the pests when it comes to God's husbandry. We are dealing with organically grown believers--only the pure word, the pure water will do.

But to have a brother or sister who knows the same sin, who can anoint you with a word of grace, who can shed a sympathizing tear with you because they share the same faults as you, oh, to be able to speak tenderly and honestly with one another, to confess when we have said or done what we wished we could take back, and to pray for one another. It heals all involved. This is that "fruit of righteousness sown in peace of them that make peace."

Illustration: Think of how God designed farming. He gives you seed from the last crop. But in order to feed you and your family, you don't take that seed and soak it and boil it for yourself--you sow it. With a believer the seed you get from the last crop may be: the last trial you were in, wherein in the end, God was pitiful and of tender mercy to you. It may be a word of your complete acceptance in Christ that rejoices your heart. You don't hold back that seed do you? You sow it in peace to your brother or sister, asking God to bless it.

Hebrews 7:25: Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

James 5: 16: The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much!

The Righteous Man is Christ Jesus our Advocate with the Father. The prayer wrought in the hearts of those who are justified by his righteousness is effectual. James has been writing about these passions that get the best of us.

James 5: 17: Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. 18: And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

III. THE FARMER HAS A GOOD HOPE

He has done that which was given him to do. He planted the choice seed. He has asked God to give the increase "Lord if thou wilt." He has patiently waited. He expects the "precious fruit of the earth."

Proverbs 11:18: The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.

Here is that precious fruit James is exhorting us to wait patiently for:

James 5: 19: Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20: Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

Brethren, draw a straight line from the first verse of concerning patience in trail to these last verses and stay on this heading all the way through the epistle and you will find what is to continue in the perfect law of liberty, to be a doer of the work and not a hearer only, the fruits of the Spirit without which faith is a vain thing.

Believers are not desirous of brethren being dragged before the judgment seat to condemn and kill in the heart with the tongue, but to help one another in our faults and errors, to be helpers of one another's joy, to restore from the jaws of death, not to expose sin but to hide a multitude of sin, not to our glory our by our power but by waiting on God who is able to send forth the early and latter rain, who is able to bring forth fruit unto righteousness. Our Lord is able brethren.

Application for you true farmers:

James 5: 8: Be ye also patient

Plant the word, ask God to make it germinate in the heart, and wait on the Lord to give the increase. No artificial fertilizer (no miracle grow); no man-made pesticides to try to kill off the bugs--pure word, the pure water of life, firstfruits of God's creation.

Stablish your hearts--

Illustration--we used to grow tired of working in the garden. My grandfather would call me down to his house to eat some of the peas from the year before just to make the work worth while as we waited for this year's crop. God uses this seed--the very word of grace we speak to each other, the very assurance we give each other of God's sure, effectual, all-sufficient grace--he uses that same seed to feed our own souls as we endeavor to establish the hearts of our brethren.

The coming of the Lord draweth nigh

Here is our patience, our heart's establishment--expect God to again be faithful to perform his word--the Lord draweth nigh, not only to lift up in this trial but to bring in the harvest for good. Expect a bumper crop!

Galatians 6:8: For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

Our Lord went forth to the cross bearing precious seed--all those given him of the Father. How he mourned as he sowed his own body, sacrificing himself, to bring forth fruit unto God. But he cried it is finished--Thy God reigneth! So when the rows get too long, when the ground gets too hard to hoe, oh, be patient, stablish your hearts, and think of your Lord drawing nigh, when you read these words:

Psalm 126: 6: He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Revelation 22:20: He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Amen!