

"Faith and Wisdom III"

James 1:5-8 with Psalm 19

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5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. 8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways. (Jas 1:5-8)

This is the third message on the relationship between faith and wisdom. We began an examination of this text in James by looking at the text first, and considering the contrast between the double-minded, unstable man, and the single-minded man whose mind is fixed on the Lord Jesus Christ. After that, I preached two messages on the relationship between faith and wisdom, looking first at 2Tim. 3, that the scriptures are profitable to make us wise unto salvation, for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness. We compared that with Proverbs 16; it is wisdom to know that God directs our steps. Then, in a second message on faith and wisdom we looked last week at Isaiah 29, how that unbelief causes us to dig a hole for ourselves from which there is no escape, for we subvert our very relationship with God, trying to become the potter and molding Him into our own image, as Israel did.

Today, I would like to again see the relationship between faith and wisdom, looking this time at the middle section of Psalm 19. Psalm 19 is about knowledge and wisdom. The first section, verses 1-6, speaks of the revelation of God in creation, that every creature bears witness to the truth of God. The same message is repeated in Romans 1 by the Apostle Paul. This revelation is sufficient to leave men without excuse, but is not sufficient to deliver them from the bondage of sin, or deliver them from the blindness of their hearts.

In the second section, verses 7-10 we have the uses of God's word. God's word is superior to creation, for it brings salvation to those who hear. Paul's words in 2Timothy restate and give more specificity to the words of David: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2Ti 3:15-17) Paul restates the biblical truth that Jesus is the purpose and end for which the Scriptures are given to men. The Old Testament Scriptures reveal Him dimly, but the Gospel sets Him forth in plain view; this we will see next week, in the last message in this series on Faith and Wisdom.

I. The law is perfect (needs nothing else). Converts: Turns it around. Only God's word penetrates to the soul, exposes the sin and wickedness, and gives life.

A. "Law" means the whole Scripture, the revelation of God. The word is "Torah" in the broadest sense means instruction, direction, law. It means the Scripture, the writings. In a narrower sense it was used for the Mosaic law, the first five books of the Bible, if used to contrast with the prophets and the other writings of the Old Testament.

B. The Scripture has been sufficient at any times for keeping the soul from the danger of sin and showing the way to salvation in Christ. Even when it was just the revelation of God to Adam and Eve in the prohibition concerning the tree before the fall; or in the promise of the Redeemer after the fall, the special revelation of God has been sufficient to keep the

soul out of hell, as Abraham told the rich man in hell. "Your brothers have Moses and the prophets." The gospel was preached to Abraham when God promised him a son that would bless the world, according to Ga 3:8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

C. Believers in the OT were not as fully self-conscious of the grace of God in Christ, just as Israel was not as fully self-conscious as the church is, but that did not mean that the Gospel was not revealed to them.

D. Perfect: sufficient for the time and place; Convert: able to turn the sinner from unbelief to faith, as it did Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham Isaac and Jacob and all the faithful who followed them down to John the Baptist.

II. The law is sure (firm, trustworthy): the simple (foolish) see the truth. The fool who trusts the Bible is wiser than the genius who doesn't. This is because in the Gospel, the Lord Jesus is our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, and redemption. And so the words of Solomon are fulfilled in Christ's: Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. And again, the words of Isaiah: "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts."

III. The law is right (straight): Our hearts were made for God's law; It all fits and the heart rejoices. It is a straight measure, and leads to straight lives and not crooked lives. It means correct or pleasing. You have it "right" when it is straight and looks good.

IV. The law is pure (clean; purified; bright): There is no dirt to foul the vision. In the light we can see clearly. Our vision is clouded by our own ideas and by our own thoughts. Only the Scriptures give us clear vision, but then only if we are not double-minded. It is single mindedness that brings clarity to our thoughts, if we be single minded in our devotion to Christ and His truth.

V. The fear of the Lord is clean(cleansed): A godly, true response is as clean as the law. See Psalm 32:2

A. This speaks of our response to the Scriptures. The fear of the Lord is a clean response to a clean law. Or this word hear can men cleansed. "25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph 5:25-27)

B. The Scriptures purify our minds of double-mindedness; it reproves, rebukes, exhorts with longsuffering and doctrine, for this is how the faithful minister is to use the Scriptures.

VI. The judgments are true and righteous (who can complain about what God does?) Will He yield to our judgments?

A. If the heart desires gold: here is the best gold; the best treasure. If the heart desires pleasure: here is the highest and best pleasure.

B. The Word of God warns: and promises great reward.

C. The pattern was set from the very beginning with Adam and Eve: if you listen you will not die [warning], but live forever [promise].

D. After the fall, to Adam and Eve and their descendants. The seed of the woman will bruise the head of the serpent and would be wounded in the heel by the seed of the serpent. Promise and Warning.

E. In the Law: This do and live; Disobey and you will die.

F. In the Gospel: Believe on Christ and live; Refuse Christ and die.

VII. vs. 11: Only God, through His word, can penetrate the heart. How blind and foolish we are to think we can stand in our own opinions of ourselves. "God, turn thy light upon my soul, so I can truly understand what sort of being I am."

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer. Wisdom in the heart, and wisdom on the tongue. Because the Lord is our strength and our Redeemer.

Or as Paul put it in Romans 10:

6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise,

8 The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Wisdom in the heart, and wisdom on the tongue. Jesus is our strength and our Lord.

Amen and Amen.

God bless you.