

## Journey to be more like Him (Mark 1:15)

Last time, we studied that salvation is about restoring relationships. The relationship with God, the relationship with others, and the relationship with you, yourself. And actually the relationship with creation, universe as well.

After we are saved, we still have two kinds of "me"s. Godly side of me, as well as dark and broken side of me. Both are me. And sin still lives in us. Good news is God forgives our sin, is in the process of cleaning us up. Until the day Jesus comes to me, I'm still going to deal with my humanity. We are all works in progress.

Today we will study how God deals with our sinful side.

### 1. The letter of James

#### (1) Two kinds of "me"s

Now, we will look at the letter of James. We will go through all 5 chapters very quickly. We will try to catch the flow of the argument.

1:2 says: Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials (or suffering) of many kinds. (cf. 5:10)

It sounds like a contradiction, doesn't it? Why facing trials or sufferings can be considered joy, pure joy?

1:3-4 says: Because the testing of our faith develops perseverance, and we may be mature and complete.

Trials and suffering are never fun. Hardships are hard things. Pain is painful. In difficulty we cry. But we understand those experiences can be the process of making us mature and complete. We know we are going to be mature and complete in Christ. We can rejoice in that part.

How can we persevere under trial?

1:21-22, to get rid of all moral filth and the evil, and humbly accept the word planted in you, and do what it says.

Through trials and sufferings God will clean up bad stuff inside us. And we will be more humble, softened and gentle, and attentive to his word, and the

word will become our nature and we will live it out. That's how we will be made mature and complete.

Why will we do what the word says? 2:1, because we are believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ.

Now let's think about how our faith is shown in our life. And, how our bad stuff appears in our life.

Usually, when things go well and we are happy, we are all nice and gentle. Whether you are extraverts or introverts, talkative or quiet, whatever personality you may have, you are all nice. However, when something unexpected happens, we will be shaken, we will be pressured. Then something will come out from us. Something comes out through our actions, words, attitudes, emotions and so on. Sometimes it shows our faith, and sometimes it shows our bad stuff, like this chart.

Faith	Bad stuff
Love your neighbor as yourself (2:8)	Favoritism (2:1)
Humility (3:13)	Self promoting (3:5)
Mercy (2:13)	Bitterness, Envy (3:14, 3:16)
Making peace (3:18)	Selfish ambition, Hostility (3:14, 4:1)

Why does such detestable bad stuff come out? Is it because the surprising incident happened? Is it because we were disturbed and confused? Is it because such great pressure was put on us? Is it because the unpleasant incident happened?

Here is a cup. I want to ask someone to hold this. (Can anyone hold this please?) And when I shake your hand like this, what happens? Oops, the water spilled over. Why did it spill over? Is it because I shook you? Really?

Then, please hold this cup. Now, I'll shake you. Oh, the water doesn't spill over. I will shake you more. But the water still doesn't come out. Why? There is no water in this cup. That's why no matter how hard I shake you, water doesn't come out.

The reason why the water spilled over from the other cup is not because it was shaken, but because there was water inside it. When it was shaken, what was inside came out.

When we face trials or hardships, what is inside us will come out. Don't

be surprised when something unexpected comes out. Don't be disappointed saying, "Why do I react like this? I am a Christian!" We have both those on the left and those on the right. They are both us.

It is possible that we do seemingly good things with wrong motives. For example, Judas Iscariot. He led the crowd to arrest Jesus. Did he say, "The man I will hit is Jesus. When I approach him and spit on him, then catch him."? He didn't do that. He betrayed Jesus with a kiss. (cf. Luke 22:47-48) On the surface, he showed love, acceptance and fellowship. But it was to betray Jesus.

It is possible to show something on the left side. For example, "mercy". But it may be reversed expression of "bitterness", or it may be "favoritism", or "self promoting." Doing something on the left side the true motive can be something on the right side. That is possible. So, unless we search deeper within our heart with the light of truth, we cannot know the truth about ourselves.

## (2) Two kinds of things we may love

There are two things we may love. What are they?

We love God and love the world. (4:4)

First, we will look at the right side of the chart below.

What do we actually follow when we love the world?

The desires of the flesh. Wrong motivations. (4:1, 3)

What can be the desires of the flesh?

Money, materials, popularity, position, sexual pleasure and so on. There may be even more. It's about I-My-Me attitude.

What kind of self-awareness do we have when we follow the desires of the flesh? What is our attitude when we follow the wrong motivation? How do we look at or understand ourselves?

Proudly. (4:6) We are proud of ourselves. We think, "I deserve to have this. It should be mine."

When we are proud, how do we relate to others?

Judgmentally. (4:11)

Now, let's look at the left side.

If we love God, what do we seek?

To come near God. (4:8) If we love someone, we want to come near that person. That is very natural. If you don't feel that way, it is questionable if you truly love that person.

If we seek to come near God, what kind of attitude should we have?

We must be humble. (4:6) God opposes the proud. We cannot come near God with proud heart. We cannot come near God unless we are humble.

(3) The Lord's coming is near

5:8 says: We live in the time that the Lord's coming is near.

What will the Lord do when he returns?

The final judgment.

This is the encouragement as well as warning for us.

What kind of encouragement is this?

#### 5:4-5

Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter.

God will judge the people who do wrong things. So we don't have to envy those who are rich by doing evil. God knows what they are doing. God will judge their evil deeds by His righteousness. (Pro 23:17-18)

Ok. If we are humble before God, how will we deal with evil doers?

#### Rom 12:19

Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

We will hand all our anxiety over to Him. (1 Peter 5:7) We will not judge evil doers by ourselves. But we will leave room for God's wrath. God Himself will repay for them. When we love God and seek to come near Him, we can leave the judgment in God's hand.

Now, when we are judgmental, where do we actually place ourselves?

"There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you--who are you to judge your neighbor?" (4:12)

Who is the Lawgiver? It's God. When we are judgmental, we are actually in the place of God.

We live in the time that the Lord's coming is near. What kind of warning is this?

We will be judged too. (5:9) So, we must be careful about our attitude.

#### (4) Sowing and reaping

In 5:7, it talks about the farmer. The farmer patiently waits for the harvest.

What we reap depends on what we've sown. If we sow rice, rice will grow and we will harvest rice. If we sow mango seed, mango tree will grow and it will bear mango fruit. If we sow water melon seed, water melon will grow and it will bear its fruit. We will reap what we've sown.

What kind of word can we sow?

Grumbling and complaint, or Prayer and praise, confession and repentance (5:9, 13, 16)

What is prayer, what is praise, what is confession, what is repentance?

- Prayer is the process of making His will my will.
- Praise is the action to give glory and honor to God.
- Confession is to be totally honest and to admit my sin and to agree with God that it was wrong.
- Repentance is to change my mind.

This chart shows what we've been studying.

Love	God	The world
Seek	Come near God	desires of the flesh
Attitude	Humble	Proud
Judgment	Hand it all to him	Judge others
Sow	Prayer and praise Confession and repentance	Grumbling and complaint

We will reap what we've sown. The Lord's coming is near. We are heading toward the last judgment. What will we reap then? That will depend on what we are sowing now.

When we face trials or hardships, what is inside us will come out. When we face trials or hardships, what do we seek, love and sow? What about our attitude? We may not have recognized it before. We may be surprised when we see it. But now we recognize it.

Before too late, we must ask God to change our hearts, and clean our thoughts. And ask God to heal and fix the broken part in us.

God can use trials, challenges, sufferings, hardships, difficulties, hopeless situations to get rid of bad stuff from us. He is doing it one by one, step by step. Then, we will be able to humbly accept the word planted in us, and to do truly what it says.

We are on the journey to be more like him. Then, we will be mature and complete. (1:3-4) That is the process of bearing the fruit of righteousness. (3:18) As a result the kingdom of God will be revealed through us. (cf. 2 Thess 1:5)

God's *main* concern for us is not that we would have comfortable and convenient life. Rather, he wants us to be more like him. He wants to restore us, the image of Him in us, so then our relationship with Him, with others, with ourselves will grow, become deeper, closer, and mature. He wants to make it because he loves us so much. He uses all things, including trials, challenges, sufferings, hardships, difficulties, hopeless situations, for that purpose. We are on the journey to be more like him.

If we don't understand this or forget about this, we will have a great frustration with God. We will be so disappointed with him. And we will feel as if he wouldn't care about us at all.

## 2. Repentance

Foundations Class, lesson 2 is Repentance.

### Mark 1:15

The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Repentance is not regret. And confession of sin itself is not repentance. Repentance is a radical and complete change of direction and a change of my mind.

Paul says "it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." (Gal 2:20) Paul accepted Jesus to be the foundation of his life. It is like he installed a new operation system for his life. There is a start key for installation. We must click "enter" to make it happen in our life. That is repentance. So repentance is the beginning of new life. We started the journey to be more like him. I changed my mind. I turned back to God.

We can either turn back to God or continue our old way of life. There is no other choice. If you say "I'm gradually turning back to God", after all, you are continuing your old way of life. If you think "I don't want to sin. But how close can I stay near sin? How long can I remain in temptation?" In other words, you have no intention to come close to God. Actually you like to keep your old way of life.

For example, there is a couple who are about to get married. The man says to his fiancée, "I love you with all my heart. Before we get married, I have one request to you."

She answers, "Yes, darling I love you with all my heart, too. Tell me. What is your request? I would love to make your wish come true."

"Well, could you let me meet my ex-girl friend just one day a year? No actually just one hour a year may be enough?"

"Thank you very much for telling me the truth. I understand how you feel."

"So, do you understand me?"

"Yes, I understand you very well. I wouldn't say just an hour or a day. You can be with her forever."

Repentance is a heart issue, which must be a 100% issue. It's a decision you make, which must be 100% decision. Jesus is either Lord of all or He is not Lord at all.

Here, we must remember what we just studied through the letter of James. We still have two kinds of "me"s. We repented, we made a decision to turn back to God 100%. God forgave all of our sins because of Jesus. He accepts us and looks at us as righteous in Jesus. But we still have two kinds of "me"s. God loves both of me, godly me and broken me. He knows very clearly that I still have broken part, and sin still lives in me. He'll never be surprised or disappointed when he sees my I-My-Me attitude. He does understand that we are works in progress. Although we really want to love God, sometimes we fail. And we are upset about ourselves. He knows it.

When we notice that we did something bad, what will we do? We seek to come closer to him because we had made a decision to turn back to God 100%, because we love him. We come to him with humble attitude and true confession, being totally honest and to admit my sin and to agree with God that it was wrong. And ask God to deal with that sinful part, broken part in me.

Repentance is not just one-time event in life, rather it's a character of Jesus' believer, who is on the journey to be more like Him.

By the cross of Jesus, the salvation has been completed. We don't need to do or add anything to be saved. We just receive it by faith. However, we don't instantly reach maturity of holiness the moment we are saved, the moment we are born again. It takes time to be mature and complete.

### 2 Cor 3:18

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

We have turned to God through repentance. And day by day we are being transformed into the image of Jesus from glory to glory by the power of the Holy Spirit.

When we repented, we turned to God; we began to have close relationship with Him. It should make changes in our lives. It's just like when we start dating with a new boy friend or girl friend, many things will be changed: the place you go, how you spend your day off, the kind of books you read, the kind of music you listen to, the clothes you wear, and even the way you talk may be changed. It's not following the instruction. You do it because you love her.

Although we don't become perfect the instant we repent, but there should be some changes in our life. It should appear in our way of life that now Jesus has become our life, because what is inside us should come out naturally. Just as a banana tree bears bananas, so we will naturally bear the fruits of Jesus because He lives in us, you and me.

Repentance is a radical and complete change of direction and a change of my mind. Before, I thought I could manage my life. But I understood I needed a savior. Through repentance I come to Jesus and accept Him as my Savior. Before, I was the lord of my life. When I repent, I turn back to God and make Him Lord. I changed my mind.

Some of you might feel uncomfortable with this lesson, "repentance and the lordship of Jesus." You might think it's too hard, it costs you too much. If you have that kind of feelings or thoughts, actually you must have missed the meaning of the gospel.

You must remember that we were all sinners before God. We can't do anything for our sin. We were just going to receive the anger of God, the eternal punishment, the eternal death. But Jesus took all God's anger in our place. Although we had been God's enemies, who opposed God, ignored God, and just troubled God, yet He still loved us and died on the cross for us, and reconciled us with Himself. He paid all the cost for you, sought after you, called you, and invited you to come back to Him. It's not to punish you, but He wants to have the closest relationship with you for eternity. You must understand that it doesn't cost you anything to repent or come back to God, but it costs Him the life of Jesus. Why did he do it? Because he love us so much.

We are invited to the journey to be more like him. He is calling, "Come and follow me. It is done and I will finish the work I started in you. Repent and believe the good news!"