

Doers of the Word

James 1:21-25

Introduction

1. As Christians it is critical that we not only understand the importance of obedience to God but also grasp its scriptural concept; what does it scripturally mean or entail?
 - a. We may well recognise how important it is to obey God and even claim that we are, as so many people do, including those in the denominational world.
 - b. However, not everyone understands what constitutes obedience to God; as James points out, it means to comply with the teachings of God's word.
2. James primarily is dealing with the situation of brethren hearing God's word but not actually putting what they hear into practice, a recurring theme of the epistle (2:17; 3:13; 4:17).
 - a. The same problem exists today where many are happy to attend Bible study, hear sermons, talk about religion, without putting it into practice. Why is that?

I. Faith in God's Word

- A. James gives two descriptions of God's word that speaks of its value and excellence and puts our faith to the test:
 1. The value and benefit of the word of God lies in its power to save our souls (James 1:21 cf. Romans 1:16).
 2. The law of God is perfect and all sufficient (James 1:25 cf. 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3).
- B. This understanding of God's word is important and necessary in order for us to put into practice what it teaches and to develop trust in its power (cp. 1 Thessalonians 2:13-14).
 1. Just like the Thessalonians facing opposition and persecution because of their faith, those to whom James writes were having to deal with trials, character issues and worldliness (James 1:2-3, 19-20; 3:10; 4:4).
 2. In these adverse and trying times it is not just our faith in God that is being tested, but our trust in the saving power of His word (James 1:21-22 cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:12-13).
- C. The test for us today is whether we truly have a love for God, His values and His truth, or if we are influenced by ideas and norms of today's society (1 John 2:15-16 cp. Matthew 22:36; James 1:12).
 1. The truth is that many people, within and without the Lord's church, think that they can love God and be guided by the principles of the world at the same time. But such an attitude inextricably leads to error (Matthew 28:19-20; Deuteronomy 4:2, Colossians 3:17).
 2. While we will encounter difficulties in this world as a result of our faith in God, many of the problems we face in our lives, and in the denominational world, come as a consequence of a adding or taking away from what God teaches in His word (cf. Luke 6:46-49).

II. The Blessing and Assurance Obedience Brings

- A. First, true obedience to God is to comply with what He teaches us in His word. Second, true obedience to God brings spiritual fulfilment of blessing and assurance (James 1:25 cp. Psalm 19:11; Luke 11:28).
 1. The blessing we receive as we demonstrate true obedience to God not only releases us from sin, it also improves our inner man creating in us the image of Christ (Romans 6:17-18; Ephesians 4:20-24; Galatians 2:20).
 2. Only as doers of God's word are we assured of salvation and the approval of God in the things we practice (Hebrews 5:9; 1 John 2:3-5 cp. Leviticus 10:1-2; 1 Samuel 15:22-23).
- B. The Bible is replete with examples of not just what constitutes obedience to God but also what does not; written for our admonition and instruction (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11).
 1. As a local church, we can only claim truthfully to be obedient to God when we are acting in accordance with revelation, but only within the law of Christ and not by silence of Scripture (Colossians 3:17 cp. Hebrews 7:14).
2. Infant baptism, the use of mechanical instruments in worship, and supporting non-Christians with church funds are examples of practices not amounting to obedience to God (cp. Matthew 21:25).

Conclusion

Let us strive to be doers of God's word by faith in what it teaches and for the blessing and assurance it brings to life now and to that to come.