

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON THE LETTER OF JAMES

JESUS' STORY BECOMES OUR STORY

James 1:4 "And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

Would you like to be perfect? As you think about this question you quickly analyze yourself and realize there is no way you will ever be perfect. You can easily relate with St. Paul's comment about his own life, "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me." (Romans 7:19)

How then can James write about you living a perfect life or Jesus exhort that you "be perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:48) Note in verse 4 the exhortation James gives, ". . .let steadfastness (perseverance) have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." (verse 4) As you carefully read these opening verses of James pay close attention to the fact He is describing first, the life of a person who is a believer in Jesus Christ and secondly, that your faith in Him translates into a life that is under Divine care (Jesus' care.)

Many, many times in the four Gospels Jesus promises a believer will never be on their own. (Matthew 28:20/John 10:11ff/ etc.) By virtue of the faith God has given you in His Son, Jesus now lives in you, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20) Curtis Giese, in his commentary on James states, "Perseverance has a 'perfect work' only because of the perfect work for us of Christ, who is the perfecter of our faith [Hebrews 12:2]. He persevered and endured the cross for us. In Him, our trials have meaning and the certainty of a blessed outcome."

Previous devotions have reminded you that you are "simul Justus et peccator." This is a Latin phrase that means you are simultaneously a sinner and a saint. On your own you sin. Jesus has overcome that sin for you and replaced it in you with His own righteousness. You will never attain a perfect life while on earth, but Jesus is personally leading you on your life's journey to an absolute, perfect life

He has won for you that is guaranteed and waiting for you in heaven. Thus, through your faith in Christ, His story is your story.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, as my Good Shepherd, redeemer and friend fill me with Your presence and giving me Your sinlessness. In Your name I pray this. Amen.

My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
No merit of my own I claim But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness veils His lovely face, I rest on His unchanging grace;
In ev'ry high and stormy gale My anchor holds within the veil.
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand.

His oath, His covenant and blood Support me in the raging flood;
When ev'ry earthly prop gives way, He then is all my hope and stay.
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand.

When He shall come with trumpet sound, Oh, may I then in Him be found,
Clothed in His righteousness alone, Redeemed to stand before His throne!
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand.
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