

Giver of Life

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 04 December 2022

Preacher: Mike Scrivani

[0 : 00] James chapter 1.

If you would stand with me as we honor the reading of God's word together.! And I'm going to begin in verse 2. Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord.

He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away.

[1 : 09] For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass. Its flower falls and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits. Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial.

For when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. Let no one say when he is tempted, I am being tempted by God. For God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.

But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin. And sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death.

Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of his own will, he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures. May God add a blessing to the reading of his word.

[2 : 10] Would you please be seated? Amen. As a kid, I remember the two days that I remember looking most forward to every year was Christmas and my birthday.

As an adult, I just celebrated my 39th birthday for the second time. Some of you have been celebrating the anniversary of your 39th birthday for a lot longer than me.

But still, your birthday, no matter how old you are, is a time of celebration. It's a time to rejoice with friends and with family, to open gifts, to blow out candles, and a reason to eat a lot of cake.

At Christmas, despite what the world might make Christmas out to be or to mean, Christians know that it is a time to celebrate and it's a time for us to rejoice in the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Because we understand that it was his birth, his incarnation, his sinless life, his sacrificial death, his resurrection that has made the new birth a reality for us who have been born again, who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit when we were saved.

[3 : 35] And the new birth in Christ is always cause for the one who has received it to rejoice. That, I believe, is part of the point that James seeks to make here as he closes out this portion of his book on trials.

If you recall, the original recipients of this letter were Christians who would continue to endure persecution for their faith, for their allegiance to Jesus Christ.

In verse 2, as we read, James exhorts them, And count it all joy when you meet trials of various kinds. Because trials provide tests that produce a steadfast faith within us.

God uses trials to mature our faith, to deepen our faith. He uses them to produce spiritual growth in the lives of those who have been born again.

Just like how an infant is born and continues to grow and to change with time and does not remain a baby for long. So a believer who has been born again continues to grow as they are being shaped and molded into the image of Jesus Christ, their Savior.

[4 : 52] The Bible calls that process sanctification. And the Bible says that God equips believers with what they need to endure trials so that they will grow up in becoming more like Christ.

And so for that reason, we can rejoice in trials. But as we've seen, and as James has said, trials come with temptations.

James takes time in verses 13 through 15, warning us about the one thing we cannot do when our faith is tested by trials, and that is to blame God when we fail to rejoice in them and are instead deceived by our own desires to think that we can sin our way out of whatever that trial or test might be.

But that choice only leads down a path to worse things for those who choose to take it. So now in verses 16 through 18, James lifts our eyes, he lifts our focus, our minds, our attention to the one who has given us new life, Jesus Christ.

He tells us that the key to keep from being deceived is to remember and rejoice in the perfect gifts that come from our heavenly Father who caused us to be born again through faith in his only Son, Jesus Christ.

[6 : 24] In verse 15, James says that sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death. But he explains in verse 18 that God brought us forth by the word of truth.

In both of those verses, brought forth in the Greek language is used to describe a birth. So the main idea that James brings forth today is this.

Sin gives birth to death, but God gives new life to those born again. Sin gives birth to death, but God gives new life to those who are born again.

And so our text today provides a great segue for us as we postpone our study on James to focus on Christmas in the weeks to come.

Because if it weren't for the birth of God's only Son, we'd have no hope. We'd have no hope for salvation and no hope for the new birth.

[7 : 27] And he brings forth that new birth by faith in him as we see in our passage today. And so this text answers three questions about the new birth, salvation.

And they add further proof that God is not responsible for our temptations or for our sins that result from succumbing to them under trials. And so to find these answers, we are going to ask three questions of this passage.

James has been talking about trials and tests. And so we're going to take a test today. But this is going to be an open book test.

Don't you love open book tests? Amen. Praise God for open book tests. And to keep from being deceived, as James warns against when trials come, you must believe the answers that are contained within this book, which is God's word.

It's inspired and inerrant. And so the first question we ask of this test regarding the new birth, regarding salvation, is who does it? Who does it?

[8 : 40] So in verses 16 through 17, James reminds us that the key to keep from being deceived in trials and blaming God for our sin is not to forget who God is.

To remember that God is a giver of good things and only ever gives good things. As he says again in verses 16 through 17, Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. And so James calls God here the Father of lights.

That was an ancient Jewish expression for God who said, in the beginning, let there be light, thus creating the sun and the moon and the stars and the immeasurable number of galaxies that exist throughout the vast universe that he has created.

However, unlike those lesser lights, there is no shadow, there is no variation with God. He does not change. A theological term for that is immutability.

[9 : 47] Immutability. The phrase that James uses, shadow due to change, refers to our perspective of the sun. The sun eclipses.

The sun moves. It rises. It sets. It appears and it disappears every day. But with God, what he is saying, there is no darkness at all. There is no change within him.

God is unchangeable in his nature. He's unchangeable in his perfections, his purposes, his promises, and his gifts. He being holy cannot turn to evil, nor can he be the source of anything but life and truth.

And we ought to pause right here and praise God that he doesn't change. Because we change, don't we?

Our opinions change often. And we don't always keep our promises. And we're moody. We can be grouchy, depending on the day.

[10:53] But we don't have to fear God having a bad day. We don't have to fear God being moody. We don't have to fear God changing his mind about us, about having saved us.

God is always good and he gives good things to his children. For salvation is one of those gifts from God.

He is the one who does it. He, the unchangeable one, changes us. He transfers us from the kingdom of darkness and sin and death that result from it to light and life in him.

As the Bible says in Colossians 1, 13 through 14. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

And then James continues in verse 18 saying, Of his own will, he, God, has brought us forth. Again, brought us forth, talking about birth. That salvation and regeneration is wholly the act of God, is a truth that is repeatedly expressed throughout the pages of Scripture.

[12:06] Let me highlight just a few. In the beginning of John's gospel, John 1, 12 through 13, he says, But to all who did receive him, being Jesus, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Salvation does not pass on through the bloodstream. You can't take a Christian father and a Christian mother and assume that their offspring are going to be Christians as well, that salvation somehow genetically passes through the bloodstream to them.

That's not how it works. Salvation is not something that we will for ourselves. It's not something that we can earn or gain based upon our own efforts and our own good works.

It is of God. As Paul Washer said, I think very clearly and profoundly, God saved you for himself.

God saved you by himself.

God saved you from himself. And that's what we read in Ephesians 2, 1 through 10. There, the Apostle Paul, speaking to Christians, describes who they were prior to their new birth in Christ.

[13:21] And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just like the rest of mankind.

But God, being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ. By grace, you have been saved and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages, he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

For by grace, you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing. It is a gift of God, not a result of work so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

See, the Bible says that we are all born with a sin nature. It says that sin has corrupted every aspect of our being. We aren't sinners because we sin.

We sin because we are sinners. We are born physically alive. But the Bible says we are also born spiritually dead.

[14:54] If it were otherwise, then the Bible would use different language to describe our spiritual condition prior to salvation. It doesn't say that we were born spiritually asleep.

It doesn't say that we were born spiritually sick. It doesn't say that we were spiritually born comatose. It says we were born spiritually dead. It isn't like spiritually speaking, we're drowning and God throws us a life preserver ring and it's up to us to reach out and grab it.

No, this text pictures us as already being drowned, already at the bottom of the ocean floor. For us to be saved, God has to dive down through the depths of our own depravity, bring up our corpse to

the surface and resurrect us by giving us new life, which is something that God and only God can do.

Think about it. A dead person can do nothing but decompose. There is no brain function, no blood circulation, no ability to speak, no ability to think or to act.

Salvation is a miracle that God and only God is able to do and is responsible for. None of us can take credit for our salvation that we've received by grace.

[16:15] If you could earn it, it would no longer qualify as grace. By definition, grace is unmerited favor. It's given to those undeserving of receiving it.

And so therefore God gets all the credit and salvation because he alone is the one who can save us. If it weren't for him, we would be dead at the bottom of the ocean of our sins eternally.

And if you've been saved by him, you don't take credit for that, do you? I hope you don't. I hope none of us says, well, you know, God did 99% of the work, but I did 1%.

I'm a one percenter. That's not what the Bible says. God does it all. 100% of it, he gets all the credit.

And the Bible talks about salvation as a new birth, as being born again.

Now think about that. Think about birth. No child has ever been born into the world by his own will or plan. You guys ever watch that House Hunters show?

[17:21] Maybe you don't. It's on HG Network. It's pretty good, I think. You're watching. Maybe some of you watch the dating shows. No, I don't watch those. But you could think about it in that way.

You know, are they gonna pick house number one, house number two, house number three? Are they gonna pick this guy or girl, this guy or girl, or that guy or girl? And the option is up to the one to make it, right?

And we wanna know, who's it gonna be? What's he gonna, or is she gonna do? It's not like that when you were born. It's not as if God said, okay, here's a mommy and daddy, here's another mommy and daddy, and here's another mommy and daddy.

Which one do you want to choose to live with? Who are you going to pick? Doesn't work that way. From conception to gestation to birth, babies are passive recipients of the will and actions of their parents.

And so in John three, there he records Jesus's meeting with Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a prominent, devoted, and highly respected Pharisee.

[18:30] Nicodemus was an expert on the Old Testament. He was considered the teacher of Israel. But Jesus discerned in that meeting with Nicodemus that teacher, the teacher of Israel, was very confused.

And so in John three, two through eight, we will read some of their conversation. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.

And Jesus answered him, truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus said to him, how can a man be born when he is old?

Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, you must be born again. The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes.

[19:39] So it is with everyone who is born of the spirit. The new birth results from God's sovereignly coming to a sinner by grace, cleansing them, regenerating them, and planting within them his spirit and giving them a completely new spiritual nature in life.

And salvation brings with it a transformation. Augustine of Hippo was one of the early church fathers.

He lived in the 300 and 400s, and prior to his salvation, he was a teacher, a philosopher, and he still was afterwards. But before that, he was an unsaved man trying to find the answers to life and a purpose for living.

And he often would seek to find that purpose through acquaintances with women and through partying and through trying to live it up. But eventually he got to the point where as he pursued those things, he felt increasingly empty inside.

And so he shares about his conversion and how it came on a day when his despair had reached its apex. Through sobs, he said he called out to God, how long, O Lord.

[20 : 58] And then he testifies. He says, I was saying these things and weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart. When suddenly I hear the voice of a boy or a girl, I know not which, coming from the neighboring house, chanting over and over again, pick it up, read it, pick it up, read it.

Augustine said that he instantly departed back to that place where he was weeping and sobbing with his friend there, and he opened up a Bible and he turned to Romans 13, verses 13 through 14, a passage that spoke directly to the sin that he could not seem to escape.

That passage says, let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires.

Augustine says, I wanted to read no further, nor did I need to, for instantly as the sentence ended, there was infused in my heart something like the light of full certainty and all the gloom of doubt vanished away.

Sometime after his salvation, he shared a story about a woman whom he formerly lived with who saw him walking down the street one day and she cried out to him from her window, Augustine, it is I, Augustine, it is I.

[22 : 22] And Augustine just kept on walking. And so she chased him down the street and she tapped him on the shoulder, grabbed him, turned around, Augustine, it is I. And he responded to her, I know, but it is no longer I.

He was a new person. He had been born again by God's grace. And so it is with everyone whom the Lord saves.

It is a gift of his grace. It's the greatest gift that you could ever receive. Sin brings death. God gives life.

He is the one who saves us. He is the giver of good things. You know, when you were a kid, again, talking about Christmas, when you would get gifts, wouldn't you consider the source of the gifts sometimes?

We all had that aunt or that uncle or that grandparent who, let's just say, weren't the best gift givers. And you weren't real excited to open it because you knew that inside was probably some new socks, some new underwear, some kind of scratchy garment that you knew your parents were going to force you to wear when they came into town.

[23 : 44] You weren't really excited to open those gifts because it was coming from a source. You questioned their knowledge of what you really wanted or really needed. But God gives his children good things.

And salvation through his son is a gift that gives eternal life. It's a gift that truly keeps on giving. It's a gift that he never takes back. It's a gift that you'll never want to return.

So you can endure trials and you can resist temptation because you know that God has given you new life by being born again through faith in Jesus Christ.

And that gift is proof of the other gifts that come along with salvation that you will one day get to unwrap when Jesus returns. So who does it?

God. Next question. How does it happen? And James says in the rest of verse 18, by the word of truth. Believers are born again by the power of God's word.

[24 : 48] In Colossians 1.5, the apostle Paul reminded the Christians of that church of the hope that they have in Christ and he further defined there what the word of truth is. He says, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing as it also does among you since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth.

And so in its broadest sense, the word of truth is all of God's word contained within the Bible. The word of truth can also refer to Jesus Christ, the word of God who became flesh.

But in its strictest sense, it speaks of the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, who he is, what he's done. It's the good news that sinners have a savior and his name is Jesus.

It's the message that we preach, promote and proclaim. We don't know whom God will save, but we know that God does save. And it's my conviction that the Bible is God's word.

God uses his word to give life to the spiritually dead. And God uses his word to cleanse, purify, nourish and strengthen those who have already been born again.

[26 : 15] God's word is always right, always true and will always produce his results. And what our world needs most is to hear this word of truth.

They need to hear the gospel and it is your privilege. It is my privilege as those who have been born again to share it with them. As Romans 10, 14 through 15 says, how then will they call on him whom they have not believed?

And how are they to believe in him in whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news.

Our world needs to hear the good news and guess what? Our churches need to hear the good news repeatedly preached to them. The gospel, the word of truth, which has saved them.

Many churches today in our country are in a state of plateau, decline and death. And I believe and have seen that what those churches need to do to reverse that course is to pay attention to God's word.

[27 : 29] They don't need a new sign. They don't need bright lights and fog machines. They don't need creative ways to have more fun. They don't need celebrity pastors who are good at entertaining.

What they need is this book. What they need is the gospel that is contained within the pages of our Bibles. When we are facing trials, when we are tempted by our desires and when we succumb to them and when we get tripped up in our sin, what we need is this truth.

We need it continually proclaimed to us. We need it continually preached to us and you need to continually preach it to yourself. I am a sinner.

I fail. I don't measure up. I'm prone to wonder, but I have a good shepherd. I have a sinless savior. I have been clothed with his perfect righteousness.

I have a hope that can never be taken away from me. I have a new life that cannot be undone. I have a truth that will never let me down. I have an inheritance that will not spoil and will not be lost.

[28 : 37] I have a father who loves me, a savior who died for me, and an indwelling spirit that will never disinherit me, but make sure that the good work done will get done. I have a past that is redeemed.

I have a present that makes sense. I have a future that is secure because I have received the word of truth. And I know that Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior.

I am an imperfect sinner, but I have a perfect Savior. No trial, no test, even if I fail it, can separate me from the love and the salvation that I have in Jesus Christ.

Praise God for the gospel truth that he uses to save us and sustain us. The gospel is not man's invention. It's life-giving.

It's life-transforming. It's life-sustaining truth. Trust it. Believe it. Preach it. Proclaim it to others and to yourself and see what God will do.

[29 : 36] And you know what? Christmas provides an awesome opportunity for you to do that, doesn't it? So let's not let the world outdo us in how we celebrate Christmas because we have something much greater to celebrate than just getting some gifts and whatever, eating some fruitcake if that's what you like.

We have a Savior who is Jesus Christ, the Lord, and we know that he is the one who saves us. We know how he does it.

And the third question is this. Why is it done? Why is it done? James concludes in verse 18 that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

James explains here why God regenerates those who place their trust in Jesus Christ. They are the first installment of God's new creation that is to come.

You know, one thing I do when I eat is I save the best for last on my plate. That's the last thing that I eat. And typically, it's green bean casserole.

[30 : 52] If green bean casserole is being served, it's going to be the last thing on my plate unless it's being served with steak. Then it will be second to last. Amen? I like to save the best for last because I want it to be the last thing that I taste.

Makes me rub my tummy and say, mmm, mmm, good, right? But in the Old Testament, God prescribed that the Israelites offer to him in sacrifice the first and the best of their harvest of their flocks.

And not to save what was best for themselves for last, but to give it to him. Those first fruits offered, served, as the people's confession and profession that God could be trusted to supply them with more and with better in the future.

James says that God's people are his first fruits. We are the first of his produce and he will prove faithful to care for you year after year through trials and through tests, through failures and stumbling.

It is often through those failures that we're reminded continually or afresh of his goodness, of his grace, of his mercy, of his love.

[32 : 17] But the first fruits of our salvation prove that as good as knowing God is now in this life, in this world, better things are yet to come for those who will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him as James said in chapter 1, verse 12.

The best for you, brother, the best for you, sister in Christ, is yet to come and it will come.

This new life that you have in Christ right now is just the appetizer and it tastes good but just you wait until you feast on the main course.

Revelations 21, 1 through 4 describes it for us. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and the sea was no more.

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

[33 : 28] He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more.

Neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away. And so the main point of application for us to take away from this passage is this, rejoice in the God of your salvation.

Rejoice in the God of your salvation. Do this in trials. Do this always.

Do this when you are being tested. I read a quote by J.I. Packer that I think is a great one for us all to ask when we're facing trials, when we're facing tests.

He said, If you ask of this trial or test, why is this happening to me, no light may come, but if you ask, how can I glorify God now, there will always be an answer.

[34 : 37] You know, if you've been following Blaine and Natalie on Facebook as they're updating us about Gus's condition, you see an example of one or two who are enduring well under trial.

people are reading, people want those updates and they keep pointing to Christ and the hope that we have in him, the hope that does not fade, the hope that we know is sure, but it's a hope that you can only have if you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

Let's understand this. if you haven't undergone the new birth, you haven't been saved and that is essential for you to know Jesus now and to have this hope which goes on forever.

R.C. Sproul, my favorite theologian, said this about salvation. He says, there's an absolute requirement to enter into God's kingdom and that is that you be changed by God.

That God the Holy Spirit lets you out of prison. That God the Holy Spirit changes the disposition of your soul because by nature you do not want God in your thinking. It's your normal fleshy makeup to flee from the presence of God and to have no affection for the biblical Christ.

[36 : 06] That the affection that you have in your heart today for Christ, if you have any at all, is because God the Holy Spirit in his sweetness, in his power, and in his mercy and in his grace has been to your funeral, has been to the cemetery of your soul, and has raised you from the dead so that now you are alive to the things of God and rejoice in the kingdom that he has brought to bear.

Who does it? God. How does he do it? Through the new birth. Through faith in Jesus Christ, his son. Who lived the sinless life that you and I could never live.

Who died sacrificially on the cross. Who gave his life. Who shed his blood to atone for God's wrath. For the sins that we've committed against him.

Who died and who was risen again on the third day as proof that he is the son of God. As proof that God has accepted his sacrifice and there is life and there is hope through faith in him.

Why does he do it? You're the first fruits. You have a mission. You have a duty. An obligation. An privilege. Go tell people about Jesus in the hopes that they too will be saved and they will rejoice with us in this new heavenly kingdom that God has prepared for those who trust in him.

[37 : 39] So I have three questions of application for you to consider today in this week. Question number one. Have you been born again? Have you been born again?

You know one thing that we've done in the church for a long time is we've told people that well if you just recite these words in a prayer if you walk down the front if you get baptized then you're saved.

I'm not saying that people haven't been saved and then went through all of those things first but we have people who think that well I prayed that prayer I walked down that aisle I got wet in a baptistry that must mean that I'm saved.

Those are actions but it's not proof that you've truly been saved. Is there a time in your life where you knew I heard the gospel and I believed it.

I knew that I was a sinner and I knew that my only hope for salvation was through Jesus Christ to be my savior. And since that day have you noticed in your life that you have been progressively becoming more like Jesus.

[38 : 56] See at salvation you are fully sanctified as far as God sees you as he sees Jesus Christ. You've been clothed in his righteousness and you've been forgiven completely. There's nothing else for you to do but the Christian life is also a progress in sanctification where you are becoming more like Jesus.

Yeah there are setbacks. We still sin. We still mess up. Thank God that we continue to see his grace and his mercy and forgiveness but you ought to be able to look back on that time when you professed I've been born again and see a change.

The things that I used to love I don't love anymore. The things that I used to do I don't do anymore. I don't want to do those things anymore. Yeah I mess up. Yeah I make mistakes but the goal the hope of my life is to be with Jesus.

Do you know that? And if that's your goal if that's your hope you've been born again. But if not then God is saying to you today through his text be born again.

See your need. You are a sinner. You are on the depths of the ocean. Call out. Cry out. He's the one who dives down. He's the one who saves you.

[40 : 06] He's the one who regenerates you. He's the one who gets all the credit. You need him. He's the only way. It's not about you being good and cleaning myself up. Well I want to be saved but I got to get rid of all this sin first.

No. You come to him with all of it and he takes it away and he saves you and he begins to work in you that he will one day complete on that day when you stand before him in his kingdom and he says to you well done good and faithful servant.

My hope today is that if you are not saved that today would be the day of salvation for you that you would know the hope that you would know the grace of our God who saves sinners and gives them new life.

Question number two. How does reflecting on God's perfect gifts help you endure trials and prevent you from falling into temptation? Look when when when I decided to to start preaching through James I had no idea some of the things that our church would experience but God did.

And so in his grace and his sovereignty and his mercy he's had us in these verses to remind us that he can be trusted. Remind us of what we need to do so that we don't succumb to temptation and to our own desires whenever we're tempted to take our own way out of them which always leads to bad and worse things.

[41 : 34] How does reflecting on God's perfect gifts help you endure trials and prevent you from falling into temptation? God is using them to make you more like Jesus preparing you for what is to come.

And then finally what does this text reveal about God's character? What promises does it contain that you that give you reason to rejoice in him?

And there are many promises many reasons to rejoice in him for who he is for what he's done. If today's the day you realize that you know what either just your heart is heavy you're in a time of trial testing it's tough.

We want to be here to pray for you we want to be here to encourage you and to comfort you if you want to come forward during our time of invitation I'll be here for that. If today is the day you realize that I am a sinner who's been saved by God's grace we want to know that too so we can celebrate that truth with you.

Coming forward won't do anything for you it's what God has already done in your heart that cannot be undone but we want to know so that we can celebrate that new life in Christ with you.

[42 : 41] Let's pray. God you get all the credit. Lord you get all the glory. Father if it weren't for you we would be without hope.

And Lord I couldn't imagine living in this world without the hope that we have in you. And Lord as we look out into the world we see the lack of hope that there is and the different ways that people pursue different things thinking that that's going to give their life purpose and meaning and it won't because it can't.

God we know what what our world needs is for your people to declare the good news of Jesus Christ. Lord we pray that you would embolden us to do that to make greater efforts to do that.

And God we know that what our church needs is we need your word we need to be cleansed by it we need to be renewed by it we need to be reminded of it so that Lord we don't lose sight of the great hope the great treasure that we have in Jesus Christ your son.

And so God I pray for us during this time where we celebrate Christmas there are so many people who celebrate it for all the wrong reasons they don't know you they don't know that hope and Lord may we take every opportunity that you afford us during this time of year and always to point people to Jesus to point people to the hope that is to be found in him the need to be born again.

[44 : 11] Thank you for the miracle of being born again for the miracle of salvation. Lord may we always always give you the credit for it. In Jesus name we pray.

Amen.