

Introduction to James

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[0:00] I've kind of entitled, well, really the title of the book of James.

It helps, hopefully helps, to kind of right here on the front end to capture what the book of James is about. What it desires to do in our lives.

Really not James per se, but the Holy Spirit. As the Holy Spirit inspired James to write this letter. And I've been titled it The Living Faith.

Because, you know, James is about the faith and the emphasis is on the proof of genuine faith. And the proof of it is how you live it out. Your faith cannot just simply be in word only. It has to be in deed, how you live.

[1:02] And if those two things aren't present, then it's really very difficult, if not impossible, to make any kind of claim that you are of the true faith.

If there's no evidence of that in your life. If it's not working itself out practically and spiritually in your life. So, that will be the title of the study as we walk our way through this epistle, the epistle to James.

And tonight, we'll just spend some time with some introductory matters concerning the book. We'll look at a few verses.

In fact, really we can use verse 1 primarily as a kind of a foundation for an introduction to the book of James, or the letter of James.

And it begins with the name James. That's how we know that it is the epistle of James. And yet, the question always is, and actually it's much debated, about just who is this James?

[2:08] You know, he doesn't identify himself other than his name. He identifies the fact that he is a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, which I think is more than just simply some standard greeting.

I think it's evidence of humility for sure. And we'll get more into that as we go along. But it begins with James. So, who is this James? Well, there are four possible choices.

Some would say five, but the fifth one is so obscure. In fact, I guess some would say there's a sixth possibility that I'm not going to even cover. And I'll just go ahead and tell it to you. It's not in your notes.

The sixth possibility is that it was written by someone much later, and probably by someone who was not even named James. Just simply used the name James to give some kind of authority to the letter.

Now, that obviously would be the liberal view. Those are always trying to, you know, take books of the Bible and say that they were written much later and certainly not ascribed to any kind of inspiration or authority of Scripture.

[3:20] So, I'm going to just forget about that sixth possibility. The fifth one is some obscure person in the first century who was named James, not even mentioned in the Bible.

But the four possibilities that are, you know, even remotely viable. The first one would be James, the son of Alphaeus, or Alphaeus.

Some pronounce it that way. I think it's Alphaeus. That's one of the apostles, of course. There are two apostles by the name of James. And so, one possibility is James, the son of Alphaeus.

Now, the only problem, really, with this particular James is we just don't know anything about him. There wasn't anything, really, isn't anything in Scripture that attaches any significant, any tangible significant thing to James, the son of Alphaeus, other than he's one of the apostles.

And certainly, at the end of all things, he will be one of the leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel.

[4:27] And so, very important in the sense that he's an apostle. But nothing in Scripture that would say that this James was a significant person than could have possibly written the letter to

James.

The second one would be James, the father of Judas. And that would be even more obscure. Now, this is not Judas Iscariot. It's the other Judas.

In Luke 6.16, it mentions him. And this James is his father. Alright, so there's an obscure person that's mentioned, I think, just one time in the New Testament.

And so, the same argument against James, the son of Alphaeus, could be applied to James, the father of Judas. There just really wasn't anything about him that would lead us to believe that he wrote the letter.

The third one is one that's chosen by a number. In fact, several in the early church, even some of the Puritan writers, believed that James, the son of Zebedee, was the author of the letter or the epistle to James.

[5:43] This James is the brother of John. This is the other apostle named James. And so, the problem with this particular James is that by the 12th chapter of Acts, this guy's dead.

He's the first one of the apostles to be martyred. And it's difficult, if not even impossible, due to some other things to consider concerning when the letter was written.

And, you know, it's quite a complicated thing to look at the letter and some things that are mentioned there and some other literary things that suggest that the book was written later.

Maybe it's somewhere near 50 A.D. And that could not have been James, the son of Zebedee, because he was martyred quite early.

So, I think we can take him out. The fourth one is, of course, James, the half-brother of Jesus.

Alright, I put that one fourth in the list, primarily because that's the one I think wrote the letter.

[7:04] And so, I want to just talk a little bit about how we could come to that conclusion. Not that, by the way, not that if you decide that it's James, the brother of John, James, the son of Zebedee, if you choose him, then it's not going to change what God intends for you to get out of the book of James.

It's not going to change it one iota. In fact, really, the authorship of James is not all that critical.

Now, if James had identified himself in the book, and we were then to scrutinize that and say, well, you know, that's incorrect, then we'd have a problem there because then we would be saying that the Bible has some error in it.

But James does not identify himself, this particular James. And so, whoever he was, you're not going to change the purpose and the meaning and the significance and value of the book or the epistle of James.

But let's just make a case for James, the brother of Jesus. First of all, Jesus made a special appearance to James, his half-brother, after his resurrection.

You see that in 1 Corinthians 15.8. After that, he was seen by James. He was seen by 500 at one time. And then the Bible says, after that, he was seen by James.

[8:33] Now, this is not James, one of the apostles. This is James, his brother. Because then he says, then by all the apostles. So, we know that this James is not one of the apostles.

This is James, his half-brother. Now, I present that as part of the case for James, the half-brother of Jesus being the author of this letter.

Because this is very significant. And kind of begins the foundation for James to become a very significant leader in the early church.

And we'll get to that here in just a minute. Second, the apostle Paul knew James to be a significant leader in the early church. And we know that from what he said in Galatians 1.18-19.

And also in 2.2.9. That after three years I went to Jerusalem to see Peter. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

[9:37] And when James, Cephas, and John, who seem to be pillars. Now, I'm just going to stop the sentence there. It's not my purpose to talk about what Paul's talking about here.

You know, any of that or the context of it. Simply that Paul, number one, noted that he saw James. And that he was a pillar. Pillar of the church.

Now, that's not a pillar you lay your head on. That's a pillar that holds things up. And so he was a pillar of the church. Now, by the way, and this is just kind of a side note here.

He seems to be calling James an apostle. And James was not an apostle in the strict sense, in the official sense, in the sense of an office within the church, the apostle.

He was not one of those. But I think he used it in the non-technical sense that he was one sent by the Lord.

[10 : 47] All right. So, there's the second thing. We're just kind of building a foundation or building a case for the significance of this particular James in regard to the early church.

Third, James was with the apostles in the upper room awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit. So, he was there with them. Acts 1.14 That would have included James.

So, interesting, isn't it, if you recall from Scripture, that early on in Jesus' ministry, his brothers, he had four brothers and at least one sister, that they were not even believers and, in a sense, put no credence in Jesus as the Messiah.

But at some point, they were all saved, whether it was somewhere near the end of his ministry or after he was resurrected. But clearly, by this time, in Acts 1.14, they were true believers.

And they're in the upper room. And very soon, we will have the Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit. And James was there to be a part of that. When Peter was delivered from prison in Acts 12, he instructed the brethren to tell James.

[12 : 19] Now, why would he do that? Because James was a significant leader in the church. That's Acts 12.17 He declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of prison and he said, go tell these things to James.

So, James is an important person. And so, if you want to make a case for James, the half-brother of Jesus. Why do I call him half-brother of Jesus, by the way?

Huh? Yeah, because Joseph was not Jesus' father. Alright, so, why would he do that?

Because James was becoming, at this point, a person of authority, a person in great leadership.

And so, we'll go on with that line of thought. James presided over the Jerusalem council. In Acts 15, 12-13, then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul.

[13 : 27] Remember what happened? Barnabas and Paul. Of course, God was saving Gentile believers and there was a lot of schism in the church, in the Gentile regions of the world.

A lot of problems there. And so, there was some question even in the Jerusalem church. I guess we could call it the first Baptist church in Christendom.

Well, I believe they were a Baptist church, by the way. Alright? Anyway. And so, they had a council.

And so, Barnabas and Paul came to report, make their case, and after they had become silent, all the people were silent, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, listen to me.

Now, that's a pretty clear indication that James was a pretty important person. Listen, here's this assembly, multitude, leadership, elders of the Jerusalem church, and James answers Paul and Barnabas' presentation, their case, and he says, listen to me.

Everybody, listen to me. So, important person. Number six, Jude, author of the New Testament epistle by that name, identified himself as the brother of James.

[14 : 48] That's interesting that James didn't identify himself as the brother of Jude, nor did he identify himself as the brother, half-brother of Jesus.

Which, by the way, is one reason why some scholars reject James, the brother of Jesus, as the author of the epistle, because he just didn't say so. I think it's because James was a very humble man.

And what he wanted you to know was the most important thing, that he was a servant, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. But Jude does identify himself, not as the brother of Jesus, though he was, but as the brother of James.

Now, why would he do that? Because James was an important person. He was adding credence to Jude's letter by referring to James, his brother.

And, of course, by then, James was the pastor of the church of Jerusalem. That's in Jude 1, by the way. Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ and brother of James.

[15 : 55] Number seven, the similarities between the epistles of James and the letter in Acts 15. Now, Acts 15, again, is the Jerusalem council.

And I've already mentioned that Paul and Barnabas gave their report about the working of God, the grace of God among the Gentiles, and some of the problems between Gentiles and those Jews who wanted the Gentiles to become Jews.

And we have James answering. And then there was a letter crafted to be taken from the Jerusalem church, the mother church, and taken to these Gentile believers.

And though the Bible doesn't say that James wrote the letter, it's clear that he probably had more to do with the letter than anybody else.

And so it's interesting that there are some similarities between the epistle of James and the letter that was crafted there in Acts 15.

[17:00] For example, greetings. The very word greetings is unusual. It only happens... It happens in James 1.1. That's what James says.

He says, greetings. Greetings. And you don't have that in any of the other letters. But when you go to Acts 15, verse 23, and the letter from the Jerusalem elders, James, I think, being the chief elder, you have the very same thing.

Greetings. And so the similarity there, I think, is interesting. The word beloved is used in both James the epistle and in Acts 15, the letter.

To turn in reference to salvation. That being a reference to salvation, the turning or to turn. You find that in both things, James, and also in Acts 15 and the words of James.

Name by which you are called is another phrase that you'll find in both places. And keep yourselves... Now, you might be thinking, well, so what?

[18:09] These are just common words. And so what if the phrases are the same or similar? When you have this many similarities in the Greek language, James was written in the Greek and not Aramaic, when you have those similarities, then it points to at least the exact same author in both places, or it points to someone who is a very key person in deciding how a particular letter would be crafted.

So this is just another bit of evidence that I think points to James, the brother of Jesus, as the author of the epistle. Number eight, the authoritative tone of the letter.

The authoritative tone of the letter, and it certainly is authoritative. Compare James to Paul. They're two New Testament writers.

Paul, of course, wrote so many books of our New Testament. James just wrote the one. But compare their styles. Paul, I think you would agree, man, when he begins to write, he explores every important facet of an issue.

I mean, he was kind of more like a scholar. He doesn't just state a thing. It's kind of like a diamond, and he turns it all around so you can see every aspect of a certain doctrine or a certain issue.

[19:41] And so he plumbs its depths, and quite often he responds to possible objections. You know, you say, and you've heard it said, that kind of thing.

And that's Paul's style of writing because he was not in a place of authority in the sense that he was the pastor of a church and looked to as the authority.

He had authority as an apostle. But James, on the other hand, presents every issue in a very short, very forceful, very authoritative word. I mean, this is just the way it is.

It's black and white. And it's very authoritative, yet pastoral. In the five chapters of this very small epistle, there are actually, I went back and counted, there are actually 54 imperative verbs.

That means 54 commands in that short little book. Now, of course, obviously Paul includes a number of imperatives in his writing, but not like James.

[20:44] Now, what's the point of that? I mean, what are we to conclude about that? Well, James was the senior pastor of the mother church, the church of Jerusalem.

They may have had a membership of upwards of 20,000, maybe more. And so he... And it's interesting when you think about it. Jesus, of course, our Lord and Savior.

And then Jesus is dead and resurrected, and He's seated at the right hand of God. And then the church begins. And who becomes the leader of the church?

James, his half-brother. A man who was not even a believer, possibly, throughout Jesus' lifetime.

And now he is the senior elder of the church of Jerusalem, and he has all authority.

And so the tone of the letter is from a person in that position of authority, and yet also pastoral, because the book is very practical. Number nine, the deeply spiritual substance of the letter fits with what is known about James.

[21:57] And, for example, according to tradition, James... Of course, this doesn't come from Scripture. It comes from a number of sources, like Josephus the one, who was the historian, famous historian of the day, and Eusebius was another one, and a few others.

And so there's James the just, James the righteous. He's known for that. Camel's knees. Because of the amount of time he spent on his knees praying, the tradition was that his knees were so

distorted and swollen and large because he spent hours upon hours and upon hours on his knees praying.

They looked like camel's knees. So that, I think, also is significant because it seems to be consistent with the kind of person, what this person wrote in the epistle to James.

Now, to whom did James write? And these are all just introductory things, and these things don't necessarily help us understand the book itself and the teachings of the book.

Though some of that, I think, helps build a foundation. But who wrote it? To whom did he write? And verse 1 says, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad.

[23 : 25] Now, the twelve tribes is the common title designation for Israel. I think we could all figure that out.

There are a number of places in the New Testament where you have it stated just that way. Twelve tribes are a reference to the Jews, to Israel as a whole. The word scattered abroad, that's how it's translated in the New King James, comes from one Greek word, actually.

Diaspora. We get our word disperse or dispersion. And so it's pretty clear what that means. It's a reference to the Jews that have dispersed.

That is, the Jews that are not in Palestine, but they're outside of Palestine. It doesn't pinpoint exactly where he's talking about.

It could be just in general all those that have been dispersed. For one reason or another. For centuries, by the way, the Jews have been scattered.

[24 : 30] In fact, the Bible even speaks of it in Deuteronomy 29-28. And so there have been a number of dispersions.

And the first major dispersion or expulsion was in 722 B.C. when the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom.

Again, remember that Israel, after Solomon, became a divided kingdom. And Israel was the northern kingdom, consisted of ten tribes.

And Judah was the name for the southern kingdom. And so, but in 722, the northern kingdom was conquered by the Assyrians.

And many of them led away captive. And by the way, Israel, the northern kingdom, ceased to exist altogether. Now, not the ten tribes.

[25 : 31] They didn't cease to exist. But Israel as a nation, in the sense of the northern kingdom, ceased to exist and never was restored. But the second expulsion occurred in 586, or thereabouts, when the Babylonians conquered the southern kingdom.

That would be Judah. Alright, and they were led. Many of them led away captive. And some returned, of course. But many were dispersed throughout the known world of the day.

Okay. The third expulsion took place in probably around 63 B.C., not very long before Christ was born, when Pompey, the Roman general Pompey, conquered the Jews, the Jews that were still living in the land, and took them as slaves to Rome, many of them.

And many of them have stayed there. Now, it's interesting that the dispersion, for whatever the reason, whether it was by force, or whether it was voluntarily, and both were true, and no matter where they were, the dispersion was, you could say, the conduit for the church reaching the Gentile world.

The avenue, the way, the conduit used by Paul in his missionary church planning efforts in the Gentile world. Now, think about it. If you know anything about Paul's methodology, as he began his missionary journeys, several of his journeys, he would go to a place, and the first thing he would do would be what?

[27 : 14] Do you know? He would go to the synagogue. He would go to where the Jews were meeting. And he would seek to preach and convert some of those Jews so that they could then be a help to him and be the foundation for a church that would reach the Gentiles.

And that was his methodology. And so, the dispersion was a pretty valuable thing. And the dispersion was widespread. In fact, in every city of the known world, there were Jews in many of those cities, significant cities.

There were synagogues. And so, Paul could go, always go and be among his countrymen initially and then move toward preaching the gospel to the Gentiles.

James wrote to a specific group. Now, we want to get this a little bit more fine-tuned. The diaspora involved a lot of people, millions of Jews, in every part of the known world, civilized world.

But I think that James wrote to a specific group within the diaspora, the dispersion, and that would be Christian Jews. He was writing to believers, not non-believers.

[28 : 37] The converted, not the unconverted. He was writing to Christian Jews, and that's pretty clear from the letter itself. He was not writing to unbelievers. And that's why I believe that you don't really have much said about the doctrine of salvation in the book of James, which, by the way, is the reason why a number of people have rejected James as part of Scripture.

Even Luther, of course, he's the famous one. He said it was the epistle full of straw. And it wasn't necessarily a slam against James.

It just meant that there wasn't any doctrine in it. Of course, there is doctrine in the book of James, as we're going to see. But its tone, its force, its objective is not doctrine like the Pauline epistles and Peter and John.

And so, James has been rejected by some scholars over the years. Even some of the early church fathers did not include James in the canon primarily because it was just ethical teachings.

And one thing that seems to be absent is any doctrine or any emphasis on salvation through faith in Christ.

[29 : 59] In fact, Jesus is not even mentioned. Christ is not mentioned, but just a small handful of times in the book of James. Now, that doesn't mean we throw it out.

It means that James' purpose was something different other than the purpose of Paul, for example, whose purpose was doctrinal, theological, and some practical.

But James was all pretty much practical teachings. Alright, so he's writing to Christian Jews. He says in a number of places, my brethren, my beloved brethren, brother and sister, and that's just a few examples.

And so, it seems clear that not only because of the substance of the letter and maybe even the absence of certain things in the letter, it's clear that he's writing to believers.

To go maybe a step further to find to this just a little bit more, many of these Christian Jews were dispersed by a persecution, the persecution in Acts 8.1 after Stephen's death.

[31 : 13] Alright, so, there are many Christians, Jews who were converted to Christianity that fled Jerusalem, and why? Because of persecution. At that time, a great persecution arose and they were all scattered, dispersed.

And so many went to other regions outside of Palestine. In fact, most scholars say, because some of the internal evidence in the book itself, that the primary target were Christian Jews living in the eastern part of the world, in Syria, what would have been ancient Babylon, that area of the world, and it would be Iraq today, Iraq and Iran.

And so, he was focusing on Christian believers in that part of the world. Now, what was James' purpose? Better hurry through this.

And I say that the purpose is introduced to us by this word, greetings. And let me explain. The word, greetings, comes from Cairo.

That's a very common word in Scripture. And it means rejoice. Be glad. And so, here's what James is saying.

[32 : 40] He's introduced himself. He says, I'm James, and I'm a slave of God, of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he says, I'm writing to the twelve tribes who are of the dispersion.

They're out there. Christian believers out there outside of Palestine. And he says, rejoice. Rejoice. Now, why would he say that? That's an introduction to the substance of his letter.

And the reason I say that is because in this letter, James is going to present several proofs of genuine faith, genuine salvation. Proofs that should serve to produce gladness in the hearts of his readers.

And so, his intent is not to browbeat them or make them feel bad or to convince them that the salvation they thought they had is not true, it's not real. It's quite the opposite.

It is to offer some of the proofs that would result in great assurance in their own hearts as they're enduring persecution and that they would rejoice, that they would be glad.

[33 : 49] And so, what are these proofs? Proof one. And this kind of gives us a kind of a basic, not really an outline of the letter, but maybe a listing of the consecutive themes throughout the letter that James introduces.

Proof one is perseverance in suffering. Perseverance in suffering. And verse 2 of chapter 1, count it all joy when you fall into various trials.

Now, this is not all he has to say about that. This is just kind of the key verse in this section, initial section, here in chapter 1 of the letter.

And the theme there is perseverance in suffering. Now, you think about it, these Christian Jews, they were saved, most likely in Jerusalem, right after Pentecost, thousands were saved.

And then very shortly, persecution began and they fled to safer places and yet persecution followed them there. As it always does the church.

[35 : 01] The devil is always working to destroy the church and he works through pagans and ungodly people. And so they found persecution. Eventually, persecution followed them where they were.

And so they're under intense persecution and suffering. And they're persevering. And if they're not, or they're wavering, then the letter is intended to bolster their perseverance.

And so that's the first theme that we have in the book of James. Proof number two. Again, these are proofs of genuine faith. Of genuine salvation.

And proof number two is personal responsibility for sin. And we find that in verse 13, let no one say when he is tempted, I'm tempted by God.

That is, a true believer, a person who is of the true faith, will never try to blame their sin, their shortcomings, their failures.

[36 : 04] He's not going to blame them on anyone else and certainly not blame God for these things. And so this is a proof of genuine faith. It's a living faith, a practical faith, see.

Proof number three. Obedient response to God's Word. See, these are just themes that just kind of come in a string. A lot of scholars say that James is probably the hardest book to outline because it just seems like James is just all over the place.

He touches this and he goes there and he goes somewhere else. And so some have concluded there's no real clear logical process of thought in the book of James.

And yet it's very logical. When you consider all the themes that he covers under this overarching idea of what true faith is and the evidence of that true faith in the person's life as it is working itself out in very visible, obvious, very practical ways.

So under that overarching theme then you have the third proof, obedient response to God's Word. Verse 19 of chapter 1, Let every man be swift to hear. I'm just talking about people being good listeners.

[37 : 26] I've heard people take that text and preach a sermon on how to be good listeners. You know, listen to your wife, listen to your friends, listen to your authority. Well, I mean, there's some principles in Scripture about that certainly and that's very practical.

But the theme here is the Word of God. It's listening to God. And we'll get to that when we get to that passage. Proof number four, loving God's people without partiality.

That's an evidence of true faith. I mean, if you don't love all of your brothers and sisters and you're partial to some over others and you love some and don't love others, then you cannot say that you are of the true faith.

I mean, James is not the only one who touches on that. John does in his epistles. Chapter 2, verse 1 is kind of the key verse for that section. My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality.

Proof number five, doing works of righteousness. Doing works of righteousness. And here is where we get into those passages that are troublesome, seemingly, to some scholars.

[38 : 46] And one of the reasons, primary reason, why Luther and others rejected James as part of the canon because he felt like James was at odds with Paul.

And you can imagine that Luther would come to that conclusion. I mean, justification by faith. That's his life message.

And so here, James, it seems, is saying something different, at least from his perspective and others. And yet, we're going to find out that they're in perfect harmony, Paul and James.

And we'll get to that when we get to those passages. Proof number six, self-control is the theme as demonstrated by the tongue.

In fact, James, well, in chapter 3, verse 2, if anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.

[39 : 52] So you see what James is doing? He's saying that the tongue is the key, the outward evidence of whether or not you have self-control.

Because the tongue reveals whether you do or whether you don't. And so that's the theme there, proof number six. Proof seven, wisdom is the theme as demonstrated by a humble life. So just like James takes the tongue, how we use the tongue, and relates that to whether or not you have self-control, he takes the humble life as evidence of whether or not you have true wisdom. Of course, wisdom in the biblical sense. Not that you're a brainiac. That's not what wisdom is. It's God's truth.

God's truth that you know and you apply to your life. And the humble life is the evidence of that. Who is wise, he said in verse 13 of chapter 3, let him show by good conduct that his works are done in meekness or humility of wisdom.

[41 : 03] Proof number eight, allegiance to God not to this world. Verse 4 of chapter 4, whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

So there's the theme there. That's an evidence, a proof of true biblical faith. Proof number nine, dependence upon God for all things.

Verse 15 of chapter 4, if the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that. We're depending upon Him for all things and every day. Even our decision-making process.

All of this is to evidence our dependence upon God. And that's what true faith is and does. Proof number ten, patient endurance until the coming of the Lord.

chapter 5, verse 7 and 8, Be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Establish your hearts for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

[42 : 11] This is an evidence of true faith. Not that you've got your head up in the clouds and all you think about is the coming of the Lord and you're not paying any attention to your life.

There's a correlation between endurance amidst all of the troubles of life and problems that come. There's a correlation between that patient endurance in relation to the coming of the Lord. And he says His coming is at hand. That was a long time ago when he wrote that and it's still at hand today. It's closer today than it was then. Proof number eleven, pure truthfulness.

That seems a little redundant, but maybe overkill, pure, I mean real truthfulness is exemplified this way.

Chapter 5, verse 12, Let your yes be yes and your no be no lest you fall into judgment. That's just the key verse in that section. Proof number twelve, sanctified prayerfulness.

[43 : 14] Verse 16 of chapter 5, The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man and woman avails much. Avails much. So those are the proofs.

I included this poem, The Author's Unknown. I found it in, oh, what's the name of it? Something, Harold.

It's out of a ministry, actually out of a missionary, missionary Baptist church, I think, up in Illinois. It's really old. And I want to read it.

I know you've got it there, gave it to you. It's, you know, a little awkward sometimes to read. It's an old, old poem by, we don't know the author. But listen to these words.

What if I say, the Bible is God's holy word, complete, inspired, without a flaw, but let its pages stay unread from day to day and fail to learn there from God's law?

[44 : 12] What if I go not there to seek the truth of which I glibly speak for guidance on this earthly way? Does it matter what I say? I think about this in relation to what I say is true of me and what I actually do.

Let me go on. What if I say that Jesus is the Christ, yet fellow pilgrims can behold not of the Master's life in me, no grace of kind humility?

If I am of the shepherd's fold, then shall I know the shepherd's voice and gladly make his way my choice? We are saved by faith, yet faith is one with life like daylight and the sun, unless they flower in our deeds, dead, empty husks are all the creeds.

To call Christ Lord, but strive not to obey. Belize the homage that with words I pray.