How God Refines You in the Fire June 11, 2023

*James 1:1-18 Series: Show Me It’s Real*

Faith like Job's cannot be shaken because it is the result of having been shaken. – Abraham Heschel

Intro: What would you edit?

1. Consider trials blessings because they refine you
2. The church faced challenges from the beginning

v. 1 *To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.*

Acts 8:1 *there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria*

1. There’s only one way to maturity

v. 2 *Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds …*

vv. 3-4 *… the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

Romans 5:3–4 *we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope*

* How would Christianity have been different if God had spared the church from persecution for the first 300 years?
* What’s the difference between “counting” a trial joy and just “feeling” a trial as joy?
* What qualities can you develop through suffering and only through suffering?

1. Pursue wisdom as your greatest need
2. Seek wisdom not just suggestions or answers

v. 5 *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.*

v. 6 *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.*

Matthew 7:7 *Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.*

1. Wisdom helps us see reality when we would believe a lie

v. 9 *Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation …*

v. 10 *… and the rich in his humiliation because like a flower of the grass he will pass away.*

Jeremiah 9:23-24 *Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me …*

Matthew 23:12 *Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*

* How is biblical wisdom different than just answers or knowledge?
* Why is it necessary to have faith when we ask for wisdom?
* What is the “exaltation” that the needy person should boast about?
* What is the “humiliation” that the person who has it all should boast about?

1. Cling to the goodness of God
2. It’s a blessing to endure trials not just to avoid them

v. 12 *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.*

1. It’s your desires that you’re battling not God

v. 13 *Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” …*

v. 14 *But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.*

1. God hasn’t stopped giving you good gifts

v. 17 *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.*

v. 18 *Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*

* What does it mean to “remain steadfast under trial”? Why is a person who does that blessed?
* What are some of the temptations we face in trials?
* What are some ways that you can grow in wisdom?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study James 1:19-27

Notes