

Doers of the Word; James 1:22-25

I. Deception or Freedom

- A. We are held captive by many things — they constrain us and form our behavioral patterns
- B. Our emotions hold us captive — we react to the things we see and hear
 - 1. Our society is filled with “keyboard warriors”
 - 2. They sit behind their computer screens and boldly claim that they have the moral high ground on every situation — and attack those who disagree with them
 - 3. The attack on A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving
 - 4. The attack on the animated movie Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer
 - 5. The attack on J.R.R. Tolkien’s Lord of the Rings
- C. James 1:19–21 (ESV); ¹⁹ Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰ for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. ²¹ Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.
- D. A quick review of these recent attacks would reveal —
 - 1. Charles Schultz was fighting prejudice — Eleven days after Martin Luther King died a teacher, Harriet Glickman wrote to Mr. Schultz and asked him to introduce a black character in his comic strip
 - 2. Rudolph is about being inclusive regardless of your differences
 - 3. Lord of the Rings is a classic good against evil story
- E. But, a lot of times we are quick to anger — and react

II. Hearers

- A. Be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, but be doers
 - 1. Matthew 23:1–3 (ESV); ¹ Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, ² “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat, ³ so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice.
 - 2. The problem with the Pharisees is that they were hearers and not doers!
- B. “For they preach, but do not practice”
 - 1. Matthew 23:23–26 (ESV); ²³ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. ²⁴ You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel! ²⁵ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.
- C. The word of God is supposed to change our behavior — from sinful to righteous
 - 1. We were held captive by sin, slaves to it, but Christ changed that — now we are held captive by righteous behavior instead of sinful behavior
 - 2. Romans 6:16–18 (ESV); ¹⁶ Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷ But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸ and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.
 - 3. Matthew 12:43–45 (ESV); ⁴³ “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. ⁴⁴ Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. ⁴⁵ Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation.”

- a) "This parable of a wandering demon applies to the Jewish nation, which is "the man."
 - b) The "going out" represents the spiritual rebirth of Israel under the preaching of John the Baptist.
 - c) The "swept and garnished" period (in next verse) referred to the lack of any meaningful change in the character of the people, and the relatively innocuous neglect of Christ during the early part of his ministry.
 - d) The restlessness of the demon showed the anxious and unrelenting hostility of the forces of evil and their determination against Christ."¹
- D. James 2:14–17 (ESV); ¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? ¹⁷ So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

III. Doers

- A. We must be doers and not just hearers!
- B. James uses a mirror to illustrate his point
- C. James 1:22–24 (ESV); ²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. ²⁴ For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.
- D. When my young boys are done eating they get up from the table and want to go play
 - 1. Almost every time they are admonished, "go wash your face and hands"
 - 2. When they come back, inevitably, their face is still dirty — do they care? No, of course not, they just want to play
 - 3. This is the illustration
 - a) When we look in the mirror and see the stain that sin has left on us we want to wash it off
 - b) When we turn away from the mirror we forget that stain and don't do anything about it
 - c) We need to take to heart the face we see in the mirror every day
 - d) If that face is one of a Christian then we should remember that all day long and our behavior should reflect it
 - 4. Romans 2:13 (ESV); For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.
- E. The perfect law, the law of liberty is Christianity
 - 1. We can turn to Hebrews 11 and talk about those who acted on their faith and how they were commended by their faith
 - 2. I'd much rather ask, "What are we doing with our faith?"
 - 3. How do our actions reflect being doers of the word?
 - a) Service to others
 - (1) Annual Christmas dinners — service to the congregation and to those in need
 - (2) Food Pantry — collecting food for those who are hungry
 - (3) Wednesday Dinner — providing food and fellowship for those who need it
 - (4) Benevolence and our annual Free "Garage Sale"
 - b) Evangelism
 - (1) Door knocking — sharing our faith with the lost
 - (2) Bible studies — teaching others the way to Jesus

¹ Coffman, James Burton. "Commentary on Matthew 12:43". "Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament". <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/matthew-12.html>. Abilene Christian University Press, Abilene, Texas, USA. 1983-1999.

(3) NTLTC — teaching our youth how to model Christianity

- c) This congregation is involved in so many things designed to help our community come to know Jesus
- F. James 1:25 (ESV); But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

IV. Sand or Rock?

- A. Matthew 7:24–27 (ESV); ²⁴ “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”