

Home Group notes for the week following Sunday 13th September 2015

USING MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS TO GOD'S GLORY

As We Gather

In his letter to Christian Jews living outside Palestine James was concerned because one of the major problems in the Church was that many failed to live what they professed to believe.

Reading Scripture JAMES 3:1-12 (see also PSALM 19 MARK 8:27-38)

Thinking together

Just as Jesus was concerned that His disciples should understand what it meant to follow Him (Mark 8:27-38), James was concerned that Christians should understand the characteristics of spiritual maturity – patient in trouble (James 1), practice the truth (James 2), and have power over the tongue [James 3:1-12].

Why did Jesus warn the disciples not to tell anyone about Him (Mark 8:30)? Discuss

When Peter tried to stop Jesus from completing His mission, he and the disciples saw only part of the picture, and that from their perspective of love and admiration for Jesus (Mark 8:32-33). They spoke out of their spiritual immaturity.

What are your attitude to and expectations of your Christian life?

For James, teaching (or occupying a leadership role) was a dangerous occupation. What you say and what you do not say are equally important [James 3:2-3]

The power of speech is one of God's greatest gifts to us. We can

- Say the right thing at the right time (**for example?**)
- Praise God, pray, preach the Word, and lead the lost to Christ
- Control the desire to say something we should not say (**for example?**)
But we can also
- Ruin a reputation, break a heart or destroy relationships [James 3:6]

If you are in a teaching / leadership role, how are you affecting those you lead?

Discuss (see Psalm 141:3-4 Proverbs 10:11 + 20 Acts 15:24 Romans 2:17-29)

What are the results for the church in which there are members or leaders who cannot control their tongues? Discuss (see Proverbs 26:21-26 +28)

Just as our words can destroy, so our words can give life [James 3:9-12].

If the tongue is inconsistent there is something wrong with the heart (Matthew 15:18 also compare Matthew 26:3 with 26:69-75).

Rooted in Christ our words will be the fruit of our fellowship with Him as the Holy Spirit gives us increasing strength and power to monitor and control what we say

How can our words bring life to others / the church? Discuss

(see Isaiah 50:4 John 6:63 Mark 1:35)

In Closing

It is very easy for teachers / leaders to suffer from spiritual and intellectual pride. James is pleading for wise speech, not silence.

There are 12 words that can transform your life if said sincerely and from the heart

Please and thank you

I am sorry

I love you

I am praying for you