

**Week 37 Psalm 72, II Timothy 1-4, Titus 1-3, Philemon, Hebrews 1, Psalm 73**

**Psalm 72** — This is a prayer written for Solomon’s coronation which also looks forward to the righteous reign of the Messiah. **Consider verses 7, 11-14, and 17. Who do these refer to?**

**II Timothy**— This book to Timothy was Paul’s last letter (66-67 A.D.) and was written from prison in Rome while awaiting his execution by Nero. This epistle is full of instructions and encouragement to Timothy who has been in charge of the church in Ephesus. Many of Paul’s supporters had deserted him, leaving only Luke at his side in his final months. Paul declares to Timothy his priorities which are sound teaching, faithful endurance in the midst of suffering, a commitment to discipleship, and the diligent study and preaching of God’s Word.

**II Timothy 1**— As we read this personal letter to Timothy, Paul’s deep love and affection for his spiritual son is expressed with great confidence for his authentic faith. Knowing that his own death was imminent, Paul wanted to encourage Timothy not be fearful or be ashamed of Christ’s person and work but to be willing to share in suffering for the gospel (vv. 1-8). The results of the gospel are powerful since because of our Savior Christ Jesus, death has been abolished and eternal life and immortality are now available to all who trust Him. Paul was appointed by Jesus to herald this good news. He had no doubt that because of the merits of Christ alone, God would safely guard all that he had entrusted to Him for the day of His return (vv. 9-12). God’s Word and the apostle’s teaching gave a clear pattern and guide for Timothy to follow, and so he must not deviate from it (vv. 13-18). Paul told Timothy not to be fearful (v. 7) or ashamed (v. 8). How did Paul and the apostles **behave in the midst of great persecution? See Acts 4:13, 29, 31, and 14:3. Where and to whom do you need to more boldly share your witness for Christ?**

**II Timothy 2**— As Paul runs the last lap of his part of the relay race, he calls for Timothy to firmly grasp the baton he is passing off to him, and then in turn find faithful men who can continue the process of teaching others. Using metaphors of a soldier, an athlete, and a farmer to describe the fully surrendered life, Paul says that a soldier should not allow himself to be entangled in the concerns of civilian life, an athlete should only compete according to the rules, and a farmer must work diligently to merit the first fruits of the harvest (vv. 1-7). “Here is what is really important and what can’t be chained the way that I am chained! It is the message I preach which is the pure gospel of salvation that is paid for by the sacrifice of Christ and declared powerful and effective through His resurrection (vv. 8-11, adapted).” Paul tells Timothy that it is important to be a diligent student of God’s Word and to teach it correctly. Be careful with idle and irreverent talk since it can lead to the ruin of those who hear it. The Lord knows those who belong to Him, but our responsibility as His children is to turn away from evil (8-19). We should desire to be pure vessels, ready to be used by God for His purposes. God’s servants must flee evil passion, pursue righteousness, instruct opponents with patience and gentleness trusting that they will repent and come to the knowledge of the truth (vv. 12-26). **What is Paul telling Timothy to do in verse 2? Why is this so important? Give other verses in the New Testament that declares its importance.**

**II Timothy 3**— Paul describes a society with increasing moral deterioration which puts self-fulfillment at the center of their lives even though they might act like religious people in order to cover their inner bankruptcy. The traits of the culture in the last days will be materialism, pride, living for pleasure, the unraveling of the family, the disintegration of all morality and authority, and a love for evil. It is important that godly men and women be aware and avoid leaders who come into the church to teach that which is contrary to God’s Word (vv. 1-9). Timothy had carefully observed Paul’s godly life and

teaching including his purpose, faith, patience, love, and endurance. As a boy, Timothy saw in person the suffering Paul went through when he was stoned in Lystra which was Timothy's home town. Everyone who strives to live a godly life will face persecution. Paul then states that the scriptures played a decisive role in bringing Timothy to salvation. He firmly declared that the Holy Scriptures are God-breathed and fully able to correct and discipline us so that we will be fully equipped for the tasks God has given us to do (vv. 10-17). ***What do we mean when we say that the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are inerrant and fully authoritative? Does the Bible say that what Paul wrote was scriptures? See II Peter 3:15-16.***

**II Timothy 4**— Timothy was challenged by Paul to preach God's Word at all times in order to rebuke, correct, and encourage the brothers and sisters with all patience. A time will come when people won't tolerate the truth but will look for teachers who are like themselves. At the end of his life Paul had a confident expectation of receiving a crown of righteousness when Christ judges believers since he had fought a good fight and kept the faith (vv. 1-8). In the last fourteen verses Paul speaks of fellow workers including Demas who had deserted him. Only Luke was with him, but he wanted Timothy to come and bring Mark also. At his first defense before Caesar Paul was alone, but the Lord stood with him. Just before the final benediction Paul closes with these words, "The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen (v. 18, NIV)." Paul said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my race, I have kept the faith (v. 7, ESV). ***How should Christians live their lives so that they will have no regrets when they face Jesus at His judgment?***

**Titus**— Titus was counterpart of Timothy and was used by Paul as a troubleshooter in his church planting ministry. This book, written about 64 A.D. to Titus while he was on the island of Crete forming new churches, is very similar to I Timothy in that Paul gives the qualifications of the leaders so that Titus would choose the elders wisely. He is also given the task of confronting false teachers (1:10-16). Paul had just gone to Crete with Titus to start the house churches, but now it was the job of Titus to help these churches grow and mature. Major themes in this book are; (1) that all believers live lives of integrity, faithfulness, godliness, and righteousness, (2) that salvation is by grace through faith, not by works of righteousness, and (3) that we are not to allow false teachers and divisive people to be a part of the assemblies.

**Titus 1**— At the very beginning of the letter Paul clearly states his purpose which is for Titus to build up the believing Cretans in the faith so that their knowledge of the truth would lead them to living a godly life. Just like Timothy, Titus was Paul's true son in the faith and was a valuable colleague in ministry with gifts of leadership, organization, and teaching (vv. 1-4). As in the book of I Timothy (chapter 3), Paul lists the character qualities of the elders he is to appoint. The elders are to be blameless in life and testimony, in marriage and family, and have a clear understanding of biblical truth (vv. 6-8). They should have the ability to communicate this truth in order to encourage believers and refute false teachers (vv. 9-10). In the next six verses Paul gives a scorching assessment of the character and actions of these Cretan leaders and teachers, both Jews and Gentiles. Paul describes these men as rebellious, empty talkers, deceptive, dishonest, greedy, liars, lazy gluttons, detestable, disobedient, disqualified, and with corrupted consciences. Verse two says, "In hope of eternal life, which God who cannot lie, pronounced long ages ago (v.2, NASV)."***On what basis can we say that those who have truly put their faith in Christ have eternal life and will never be lost? See Num 23:19.***

**Titus 2**— Paul stresses the importance of sound teaching that will lead to godliness making Christians attractive to others who do not know Christ. Paul gave instructions to various groups including; (1) older men (v. 2), (2) older women (v. 3), (3) older women to teach younger women (vv. 4-5), (4) young men (v. 6), (5) Titus (vv. 7-8), and (6) slaves (vv. 9-10). Now the grace of God that brings salvation has been revealed to everyone instructing us to reject evil and worldly pleasures and to live God-honoring lives. He redeemed us for the very purpose of being His own special people full of good works. As a member of Christ’s kingdom right now, our eyes are fixed on Christ’s glorious coming. His return is the real hope for the believer (vv. 11-15). In verse one Paul exhorts Timothy, “You must say the things that are consistent with sound teaching (HCSB).” **How can we recognize sound teaching?**

**Titus 3**— Paul is extremely concerned about the testimony of believers to the outside world as it relates to government and non-Christians. He reminds them of the ungodly and evil way they used to live before they were saved. Now because of God’s kindness and mercy their lives have been transformed by the renewal of the Holy Spirit to be heirs of God with the hope of eternal life (vv. 1-7). Three times in this chapter (vv. 1, 8 and 14) Paul insists that brothers and sisters devote themselves to good works in order to be salt and light to the unbelieving world. Not only should their lives exhibit the love of Christ through their good deeds to those in need, but also they must reject anyone who shows himself to be quarrelsome or divisive (vv. 8-15). Three times Paul emphasizes the need for believers to show a transformed life to the non-believing world. ***What are actual things we can do as Christians to demonstrate Christ like qualities to nonbelievers?***

**Philemon**— This personal letter was written by the Apostle Paul to Philemon in about 60 A.D. while he was in house arrest awaiting a trial before Caesar in Rome. Philemon was a wealthy Christian businessman in Colossae who hosted a church in his home. His slave Onesimus ran away to Rome where he came into contact with the apostle Paul and was soundly converted to Christ. Paul then sent Onesimus back to Philemon in Colossae with this letter asking him to forgive Onesimus and also be willing to call him his brother in the Christ. Paul also personally guaranteed payment for anything he might have stolen or wrongs he committed. ***After reading this chapter, what are the steps that Paul took in order to appeal to Philemon and rebuild his trust in his runaway slave Onesimus?***

**Hebrews**— This book was written during Nero’s persecution sometime between 67 and 69 A.D. when the Jewish Christians were sorely tempted to leave Christianity and return to Judaism due to their spiritual immaturity and their lack of the knowledge of the scriptures. Both the Apostle Paul and Peter had been martyred by this time, but the city of Jerusalem had not yet been destroyed and the temple was still offering sacrifices. This book clearly states that Jesus Christ is vastly superior to the angels, Moses, Joshua, the Hebrew high priests, the sacrifices, and the covenant. Now that Christ, the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, is here, the Jewish sacrificial system established by God through Moses at Mount Sinai is obsolete. The author calls for the recipients “to be imitators of those who through faith and endurance inherit the promises (6:12).” The MacArthur Study Bible, the Life Application Bible, and others suggest that although the writer of Hebrews is unknown, it is possible that it was written by one of the following: Barnabas, Apollos, Luke, Silas, Clement of Rome, Philip, or Priscilla and Aquila.

**Hebrews 1**— Hearing of the great temptation for the Jews to return to Judaism, the author declares the superiority of Jesus over angels by quoting several verses from the Old Testament declaring Jesus to be God, the changeless creator, who is sitting at the right hand of the Father. The writer says about Jesus,

“He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power (v. 3a ESV).” **1. How is Jesus superior to angels? 2. What work has God given angels to do? See verse 14, Acts 10:3-5, Psalm 34:7, I Kings 19:5-7, Acts 12:23, and Revelation 5:11-12.**

**Psalm 73** — The psalmist envies the prosperity of the wicked until he realizes their ultimate end. **1. Are the comments about the wicked that are found in verses 4, 5, 12 and 13 true? 2. What remedy does the Psalmist find for his envy? See verse 17.**

**WEEK 38 Psalm 74, Hebrews 2-6, Psalm 75**

**Psalm 74** — Written shortly after the Babylonian captivity, this prayer describes the destruction of the temple and pleads for God to defend His honor. ***As you read this Psalm, what two things are absent in Asaph's request?***

**Hebrews 2**— Now the writer hits on a major theme of this book which is for Hebrew believers to persevere and to pay close attention to the word given about Christ and not to drift away from it. God's people are in great danger when they neglect their great salvation which was confirmed by Jesus with powerful signs, wonders, and miracles. The dominion of the world to come will be under the authority of man not angels because Christ became a man and tasted death for humankind. Jesus is the very center of everything since through His sufferings He saves us, frees us from the slavery of the fear of death, and gives us victory over the power of the Devil. Because of His suffering as a human being, he has become a merciful and faithful high priest and is able to help us. ***How can a Christian drag away from the great salvation he or she has in Christ?***

**Hebrews 3**— This chapter presents Christ as superior to Moses since the builder of the house is greater than the house itself. Just as Christ was faithful as the Son over God's house, and Moses was faithful as a servant in God's house, so we are to faithfully hold on with courage to the hope we have in Christ and not to test God as the children of Israel did for 40 years in the wilderness. We must never be hardened by sin's deceitfulness but hold firmly to our confidence in Christ so that through faith we will enter God's rest and receive the inheritance He has for us. ***What does it mean for a Christian to enter God's rest?***

**Hebrews 4**— Just like the children of Israel in the wilderness, the believing Jews were tempted to leave the rest that they had found in Christ and return to Judaism. The key to enter God's rest is complete faith in the salvation that is found only in the finished work of Christ on the cross and not in our own efforts. So the promise of entering God's rest was not just for Joshua's day but is also for us "today." Just as God rested the seventh day from His work of creation, so too we can rest in God in order to receive His eternal promise and not drop out because of disobedience (vv. 1-11). God's Word is powerful like a double-edged sword or a surgeon's scalpel which is able to cut through everything in order to expose our unbelief, our thoughts, and our motives (v. 12 The Message). Nothing and no one can hide from God, but everyone will be held accountable and fully exposed to His all-seeing eye (v. 13). Since we have a great and superior High Priest in heaven interceding for us, we must come boldly to Him to find mercy and grace when we need it (vv. 14-16). ***What important lessons are taught to us in verses 13 and 16? Amplify.***

**Hebrews 5**— The author continues to speak of the superiority of Christ over the descendents of Aaron. Just like Aaron, Jesus also was appointed and chosen by God. Being man He is able to sympathize with our weaknesses. Unlike Aaron, Christ never sinned so He never had to make an offering for Himself. During His earthly life, Christ became an effective high priest through learning obedience by what He had suffered. From all that He patiently endured through loving submission to the Father's will, He arrived at full maturity and perfect obedience and became a source of eternal salvation of those who obey Him. Being declared by God a high priest after the line of Melchizedek, His priestly order was superior to that of line of Aaron. The reason for the doubts about Christ's superiority to old Judaism is that these Jewish believers had not progressed in their spiritual journey but were still feeding on the milk of basic scriptural principles instead of eating the solid spiritual food of a maturing believer. ***Why do***

***you think these Jewish believers were still immature? How can this apply to the lives of Christians today?***

**Hebrews 6**— The writer urges the believers to stop going back to the basics over and over again, but to build upon these elementary foundational truths, and to grow in spiritual maturity through a deeper knowledge of God’s Word (vv. 1-3). Verses 4 to 9 have been interpreted in various ways, but the passage seems to be hypothetical showing that a true believing Jew cannot lose his or her salvation and will not return to Judaism. Verses 9-10 indicate that the recipients are true believers and that their lives reflect evidences that accompany salvation (vv. 4-10). These believers had come a long way but continued faith and perseverance, not laziness, was needed to realize their hope, and for them to inherit God’s promises (vv. 11-12). God not only promises us the hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ, but He confirms it with an oath. This hope we have is like an anchor of a boat and makes our lives safe and secure through the storms of life since Jesus is continually interceding for us before the Father (vv. 13-20). ***Write out five verses from the Bible which are anchors to your soul when the storms of life come upon you.***

**Psalm 75** — Our Righteous Judge and our proper response are seen in this psalm. ***What actions does God warn us against?***

**Week 39 Psalm 76 Hebrew 7-11, Psalm 77**

**Psalm 76** — Commonly, considered a psalm of gratitude for protection from Assyria, Psalm 76 praises God for His victory, magnificence, and sovereignty. **Consider 2 Kings 19:14-19 & 32-35. In their shoes, how would this victory make you feel?**

**Hebrews 7**— This chapter quotes the passage in Genesis where King Melchizedek appears to Abraham. It shows that Jesus is superior to Aaron the high priest because the priesthood of Jesus was after the order of Melchizedek. Aaron gave tithes to Melchizedek in that when tithes were given by Abraham, Aaron was in Abraham's body. The one who receives tithes is greater than the one who gives them (vv. 1-10). Since the priesthood of Aaron was not able to make people perfect, another priesthood was needed. David prophesied that the Messiah would come in the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4). The rest of the chapter gives various reasons why the priesthood of Christ is superior to that of Aaron. **List the ways that the priesthood of Christ is superior to the priesthood of Aaron. See verses 16-17, 23-25, and 26-28.**

**Hebrews 8**— Now the author speaks of a superior covenant that is administered in a superior place by a superior high priest with superior promises. The earthly sanctuary and tabernacle were just copies and shadows, but their reality is found in the heavenly sanctuary in the very presence of God. Since the first covenant was not faultless because of an inadequate priesthood and sacrifices, and since it produced only temporary results, the Lord promised in Jeremiah 31:31-34 a New Covenant which gives us completeness and permanency. **Give three advantages that the New Covenant has over the Old Covenant. See verses 10-12**

**Hebrews 9**— This chapter begins with a description of the contents of the tabernacle that were located in the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. The high priest would enter the Most Holy Place just once a year to sprinkle the blood on the Mercy Seat, first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people of Israel, with the result being a temporary cleansing. Christ, however, entered the Most Holy Place in Heaven once for all with His own blood in order to obtain eternal redemption. The old sacrificial system offered temporary ceremonial purity, but the blood of the Messiah cleanses our consciences from guilt and frees us to serve the living God (vv. 1-15). Just as a will only takes effect upon the death of the one who made it, the death of Christ caused the New Covenant to become operative and in consequence makes us heirs of a heavenly kingdom which shall never pass away. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness, and without the shedding of Christ's blood there is no complete removal of sin. Now that the sins of those who trust Christ are forever put away through His one sacrifice, the purpose of His second coming is not to deal with the sin problem but to bring us eternal salvation. **What two false teachings does verse 27 refute?**

**Hebrews 10**— The annual sacrifices by the High Priest in the old covenant were a constant reminder of our sin and guilt showing that the worshipers could never become perfect or lose their consciousness of sin. God's delight was not in animal sacrifices but in the voluntary sacrifice of His Son Jesus who came to do the Father's will and give His body as an offering to take away all sin once and for all (vv. 1-10). The high priests never finished their work since sins were never fully atoned for, but Jesus offered one sacrifice and then sat down at the right hand of the Father showing that full the payment of all sin was made. By His one offering we are perfected forever so that God no longer remembers our sins (11-18). Now we don't have to rely on a high priest to bring us into fellowship with God since we can enter with great boldness through the blood of Jesus. So that we can hold on to our confession of hope without

wavering, we need to encourage one another do good works and to regularly be a part of the local assembly of believers (vv. 19-25). To return to Judaism is unthinkable since it would mean to trample on the Son of God, count His precious blood as worthless, and insult the Holy Spirit who drew them to Himself. The result would be that there would be no payment for their sins, and they would have to suffer the wrath of the living God. Now they need to endure suffering, live by faith, and patiently wait to receive the promised reward (vv. 26-39). **Considering verses 24-25, why is it important to be an active member of a local church? What are its benefits?**

**Hebrews 11**— We now enter God's Old Testament Hall of Fame as we see men and women who lived by faith without ever receiving the complete fulfillment of the promises God had given them. The recipients of this letter were asked to follow the examples of these great heroes of the faith. Abel, Enoch, and Noah were the pre-flood saints who gave us an example of faith and obedience during a time when the world mocked and ridiculed them. By faith Abraham and Sarah left Ur and Haran to a land that God would show them and had Isaac when their bodies were as good as dead. By faith Moses led all the sinful enticements of Egypt and chose to suffer with God's people because he saw Him who is invisible. The author continues giving a long list of faith's warriors with many of them triumphing in this life in miraculous ways while others were persecuted and even martyred. This great gallery of men and women of faith had not yet received the promise of the better covenant which is found in the salvation that the Messiah offers. **Describe from this chapter what faith is and what it does.**

**Psalms 77** — In the midst of national tragedy, Asaph remembers God's omnipotence. Asaph describes his struggles to maintain his faith in God. **How does he resolve this?**

**WEEK 40 Psalm 78, Hebrews 12-13, James 1-5, 1 Peter 1-3, Psalm 79**

**Psalm 78** — This is a psalm about God’s glorious deeds, both great in His deliverance from bondage, and terrifying in His discipline of sin. ***In what ways does God provide for the needs of His people?***

**Psalm 78:37-72**— This is a psalm about God’s glorious deeds, both great in His deliverance from bondage, and terrifying in His discipline of sin. ***What is one of the reasons why David was such a good king? See verses 70-72.***

**Hebrews 12**— After receiving encouragement from the cloud of witnesses of chapter 11, the Hebrew believers are inspired to run the race with perseverance by looking to the example of the Lord Jesus Christ who endured the cross and suffered hostility from sinners (vv. 1-3). Now the writer shares the purpose of suffering in the life of the Christian. Because of God’s love for us as His children, He disciplines us in order that we might share in His holiness, righteousness, and peace (vv. 4-13). When trials and temptations come, instead of receiving God’s grace during these trying times, we can allow a root of bitterness spring up in us, and many will be defiled. Esau’s immoral and irreverent lifestyle caused him to sell his spiritual inheritance for a single meal (vv. 14-17). Now the choice is clear for the Jewish Christians. Do they want to return to the Law, Moses, and the fearful presence of God at Mount Sinai and be eternally separated from God for their sin, or be lifted through Christ’s merits to the heavenly realm, Mount Zion, a kingdom that can never be shaken? We must worship God “with holy fear and awe. For our God is a devouring fire (vv. 28b-29 NLT).” ***What should be our response to God’s discipline in our lives? See verses 5 to 13.***

**Hebrews 13**— In this last chapter of the book of Hebrews, the author gives instructions on how to live out their faith in very practical ways. The epistle gives tender appeals to let brotherly love continue, to show hospitality, to give empathy for those in prison, to honor the marriage vows, to be content with the material things we possess, and to trust in God’s protection (vv. 1-6). The lives and the faith of the elders of the churches should be followed, respected, and imitated. Just like Jesus suffered outside the gate of Jerusalem, these Jewish believers need also to bear the disgrace that they have experienced from being excluded from the Jewish community. There is no longer a need of animal sacrifices because of the cross, but we are to continually offer sacrifices of praise by acknowledging allegiance to His name. After asking for prayer, the writer gives a glorious benediction and closes with the desire to be with these fellow believers soon. ***What does the author say about: prisoners (v. 3), marriage (v. 4), Jesus Christ (vv. 8, 12, 20-21), strange teachings (v. 9), and what our response should be to the leaders of the church (vv. 17).***

**James**— The Book of James, was written by the half-brother of Jesus (Matthew 13:55) between 45 AD. to 48 AD. to the Jewish Christians who were dispersed throughout the Roman Empire. James was the leader of the church in Jerusalem until his death in 62 A.D. His book expresses concern for those Jewish Christians who were suffering persecution both from the non-Christian Jews and Gentiles. “James is classified as wisdom literature. This short, pithy exhortation on a variety of subjects more resembles pearls strung on a common thread than closely reasoned argument.” Source #6 p.765 James exposes hypocritical practices of believers and thus questions whether they have genuine faith since true faith should produce a godly lifestyle (2:18)

**James 1**— After the opening greeting, James encourages us to focus on the spiritual results of trials and testings and to ask for wisdom to know how to respond to them. When we have endured the trials

successfully, God promises us a crown of life at Christ's appearing (vv. 1-12). The opposite of testing by God is temptation sent by Satan. God's purpose for allowing temptation in our lives is to refine our faith and to draw us to depend on Him. James says that temptation is a process whereby we are enticed by our desires which ultimately leads to sin and death (vv. 13-18). The central idea of this last section is that the "implanted Word" will transform the believer in the way he speaks and reacts as well as the way he puts into practice what he hears. The result of the doers of the Word is the caring for the destitute and keeping oneself from being contaminated from the world's values (vv. 19- 27). ***Give five practical commands that we need to put into practice that are given by James in this chapter. Which one convicts you the most?***

**James 2**— James confronts the sinful inclinations of some believers who show partiality toward the rich and the shameful treatment of the poor. In Heaven, people will not be judged by economic or social status, race, gender, or any other measuring stick. Each local church should showcase the values of heaven to the world, and each person must know that he will be judged by God in the way he treats the least of these (vv. 1-13). James continues to take the believers a step further by not only examining their attitudes toward the poor, but also their actions toward them. James gives the lives of Abraham and Rahab as examples that real, biblical faith involves inner dynamic transformation. Clearly in the scriptures, salvation is a free gift of grace, but good works are the necessary result of genuine faith (Ephesians 2:8-10). ***1. In verses 3-13, what are the reasons James opposes favoritism? Can you add any other reasons? 2. Paul said, "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith" (II Corinthians 13:5). As you look at your own life as a Christian, what evidences can you show that you are "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works" (Ephesians 2:10)?***

**James 3**— James tackles the greatest challenge a person can face which is learning how to control the tongue. Although the tongue is a small organ, it has the great possibility of either building up or destroying people (vv. 1- 12). The author now reveals the controlling influence behind the tongue, the wisdom of the world or the wisdom from above. The wisdom that comes from world produces disorder and all kinds of evil. The wisdom from God expresses itself in moral purity and peace which results in a harvest of righteousness. Give the various illustrations James uses to explain the power and influence of the tongue (vv. 1-12). ***Extra Question: Give biblical principles on how we can control our tongue.***

**James 4**— James talks of the earthly and demonic forces that try to dominate our lives including quarrels, passions, greed, and friendship with the world. God, however, intervenes and gives us grace to have victory over sin and selfishness as we humble ourselves, cleanse and purify our hearts, submit ourselves to God's will, and resist the attacks of the Devil. We must not judge or speak evil of our brother or neighbor. We must not live our daily lives forgetting God's providential control or the brevity of life. ***What are six or seven nuggets of wisdom we can mine from this chapter that could be used by the Holy Spirit to transform our lives? Extra Question: How can we resist the Devil?***

**James 5**— From 4:13 to 5:6, James addresses the business community and wealthy landowners who defraud their workers in order to make themselves rich. In the end, like cattle, the wicked rich landowners are only fattening themselves for the final day of the slaughter of God's judgment (vv.1-6). Now the author turns his attention to the poor and oppressed, calling them to patient endurance in the midst of trials, remembering Job's suffering, and the blessed outcome of his life (vv. 7-12). James writes a powerful paragraph on the importance and efficacy of prayer in the local church and in the believer's life (vv. 13-18). ***The author ends his book with a plea for believers to be God's agents to reclaim***

sinners (vv. 19-20)? **1. What lessons about physical healing are taught in verses 14-16 as well as the rest of the New Testament? 2. James 5:16b says, “The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective” (NIV). Share a story how you found this verse to be true in your life or in the life of someone else.**

**I Peter**— “But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed (4:13 ESV).” About 64 A.D. Peter wrote a letter of encouragement and hope to the churches and Christians scattered throughout Asia Minor who were beginning to suffer persecution at the hands of Caesar. The themes of the book are; (1) Living a life of hope and holiness (1:1-2:3), (2) Christ the cornerstone and we His chosen people (2:4-10), (3) The Church a witness in the world through submission to authorities and suffering like Jesus (2:11-3:7), (4) Responding to suffering in a way that honors Christ who set an example for us (3:8-4:19), and (5) Rewards for faithful servants, and the call to be alert, resist the enemy, and stand firm in the faith (5:1-11).

**I Peter 1**— Peter speaks of the living hope (gk: elpis “future certainty”) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Knowing that we have an imperishable inheritance stored up in heaven, we can undergo sufferings here in this life. Peter said that patient endurance under persecution proved the genuineness of our faith with the final result being the salvation of our souls. We are called to live a holy life in all our conduct since we were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ and realize that someday we will be judged impartially by Him. Since you have been born again by trusting in Christ, now you must live a life of purity and a sincere love for all the brothers and sisters. ***What were the reasons Christians were going through suffering and persecution at this time?***

**I Peter 2**— A new believer must thirst for the pure milk of the Word of God so that his or her life can grow and be transformed. Christ is the chief cornerstone who has called us to be a royal priesthood with Him. Our lives are to be lived by abstaining from fleshly desires and living in such a godly way among unbelievers that it will be a testimony to them. Christians are to do good and be subject to human authority in order to silence foolish people who say evil things about them. It honors God when one suffers unjustly and endures it patiently. The calling of a Christian is to bear up under suffering since our Lord first set the example by suffering unjustly and patiently entrusting “Himself to the One who judges justly (v. 23b HCSB).” ***From this chapter, make two columns with the first column listing that which we are to do as Christians and the other column detailing the things we are not to do.***

**I Peter 3**— This chapter continues with Peter’s theme of submission and now includes the marriage relationship and the local church. In verses 1 to 6, the words are directed more for a Christian wife who has an unbelieving husband although the principles given apply to all marriages. When a wife lives her life with a heart of submission and gentleness, her husband can be drawn to Christ through her testimony. Husbands must be understanding and sensitive to their wives so that their prayers will be answered (vv. 1-7). In our relationships with each other in the church, Peter touches on five qualities we need to exercise: unity, sensitivity to the needs of others, brotherly love, compassion, and humility (vv. 8-12). As a Christian there are times we suffer undeservedly, and so we need give an answer of the hope we have in Christ to those who ask us. Christ suffered for our sins to bring us into a relationship with God (vv. 13-18). Verses 19 to 20 seem to say that between the time of the death of Jesus and His resurrection, Jesus visited the imprisoned spirit beings (probably fallen angels) in the realm of the dead who were condemned eternally, and He proclaimed to them His victory over Satan and his evil forces. This chapter emphasizes the fact that Christians are to radiate a Christ-like life. ***List from this chapter at***

***least 10 godly virtues or actions that a Christian should have in his life in order to be a witness to the world. Which one of these do you need most to grow in?***

**Psalm 79** — This psalm describes a plea for vengeance, deliverance, and atonement that finds its ultimate fulfillment in Christ. ***Give three requests made of God in this psalm?***