

BRINGING BACK THE WANDERER

James 5:19-20

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INTRODUCTION:

Today, we close out with two small verses – 40 words total – but they contain a powerful message with tremendous theological implications.

James 5:19-20

1. “MY BROTHERS...”

This is a phrase that James uses 8X in his letter. Add to that his use of “Brothers” – used 7x. James is speaking to fellow Christians, and this amount of repetition emphasizes that fact.

Compare to ALL 13 of Paul’s epistles...in all of his letters, Paul used this phrase a total of 8 times. James did that in one letter.

2. If anyone among you wanders from the truth....

First of all, this person that is wandering is a believer. How do we know he is a believer:

1. First, James identifies that he was one that was “among you.”
2. Second...the phrase “brings him back” – shows he was once here...but has wandered and left the flock.

James is charging BELIEVERS – not just pastors, not conference speakers. We ALL share this call.

And we are to this...

1. Lovingly – carefully – remembering that he is a **brother**
2. Our aim is to do this with a heart for **restoration!** That is what church discipline is all about – the motive behind this is LOVE, and Paul instructed the Galatians about that very thing...

Galatians 6:1

The heart of God is love – and he came to save the lost...and to gather in His own.

Their wandering from truth can be expressed in two ways:

1. They could be wandering DOCTRINALLY
Right doctrine produces right thinking...right thinking produces right behavior.
2. They could be wandering in BEHAVIOR, obviously, the end stage of wrong doctrine and wrong thinking.

Galatians 6:2...Paul identified that their conduct was **OUT OF STEP** with the truth of Gospel.

3. GOD USES HUMANS – US – AS PART OF THE WANDERER’S SALVATION

“God uses His people...to keep His people.”

~ John Piper

When SOMEONE brings back the wanderer, Let him know that “whoever” brings back a Sinner...

The “someone” and the “whoever” – the same person! And...The one “wandering” – “the sinner being brought back – is the one and the same with the “anyone” in verse 19.

We are saints that have the capacity to be sinners. We are sinners saved by GRACE alone...by FAITH alone.

Could God speak and act alone, and convict a believer who is behaving like a sinner? Oh yes. He could. And without a doubt, He does.

But more often than not – He uses HIS PEOPLE – as His agents.

“For God can illumine the mind which is untaught by man, and influence the will which is unmoved by man. But the rule is, employment by human means. ‘Go ye, and make disciples...’ Our high honor, but solemn responsibility... How are we using it?”

H.D.M. Spence

GOD USES US AS AGENTS...

NO ONE WILL BE GLORFIED (FINALLY SAVED) THAT DOES NOT CONTINUE IN THE FAITH.

- A. First, Paul addresses this, saying that **we both stand and are being saved...IF** you hold fast the word I preached to you! (1 Cor. 15:1-2)
- B. We were ONCE alienated – but now reconciled – **IF** indeed we continue in the faith. (Col. 1-21-23a)
- C. Jesus said simply and plainly – “He that **ENDURES** to the end will be saved.” (Matt. 10:22b)

APPLICATION:

1. **We are called to live out our lives in a community!** Ask – “Am I conscious of others?”
2. **There is danger in living in isolation.** Ask – “Am I living my life with an open invitation to a brother (or sister) to speak to me?”

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.

(Eccl. 4:9-10)

3. **Our daily, loving and encouraging interaction** with fellow believers is critical! Consider Hebrews 3:13-14.