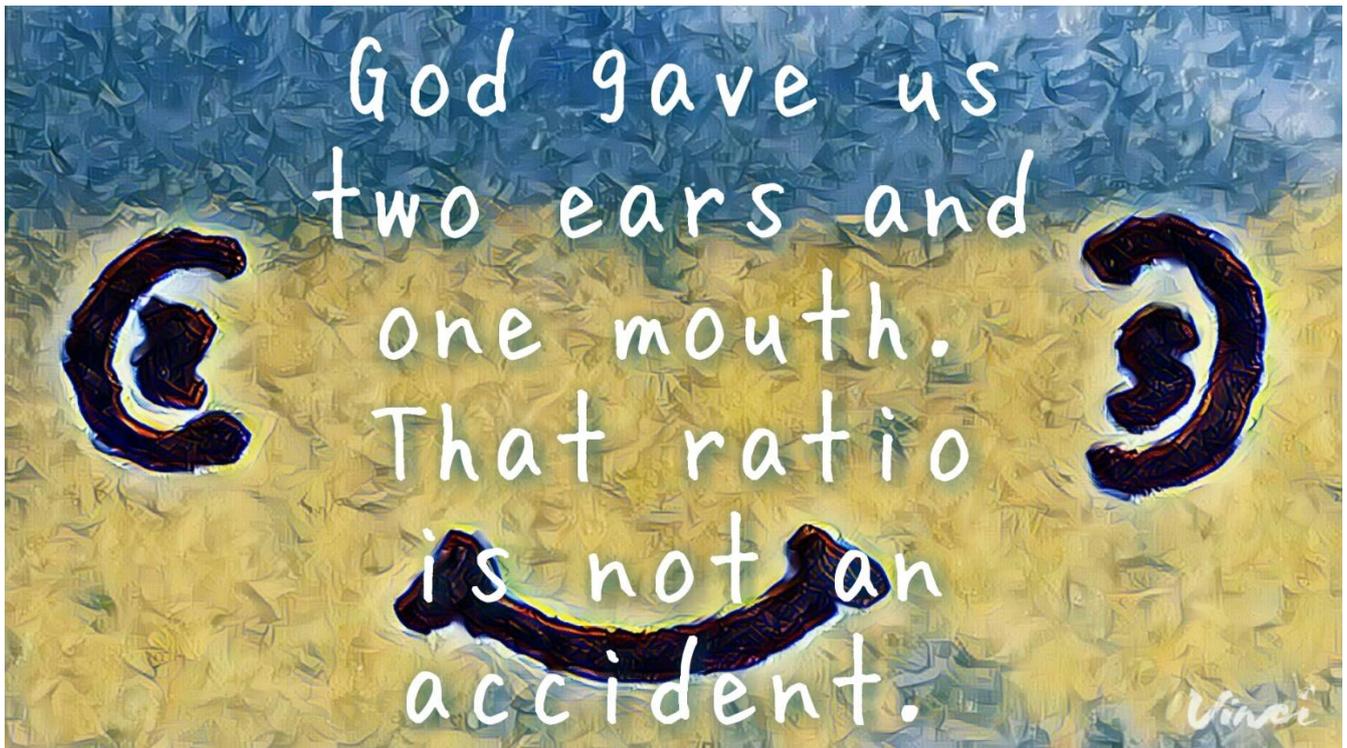




**Sunday Worship for 2nd August
Eighth Sunday after Trinity**

Confident Stand: What a Christian Has



Introduction

Though we cannot come together physically, we gather spiritually as the family of God in our Father's presence to offer him praise and thanksgiving, to hear and receive his holy word, to bring before him the needs of the world, to ask forgiveness for our sins and to seek his grace, that, through his son Jesus Christ we may give ourselves for his service.

Service leader's intro from Paul Clayton

Welcome to our service of worship this morning. We are now in August and the months are flying by. Today we begin a new sermon series on the Book of James. James is a book filled with practical Christianity, almost in line with our own lives in the 21st century. It has been a controversial book throughout the centuries for its emphasis on faith without deeds. Brian Settle is preaching this morning and I am looking forward to what he has to say.

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you
And also with you

**Lord, direct our thoughts
teach us to pray.
Lift up our hearts to worship you
in spirit and in truth
through Jesus Christ.
Amen**

The night has passed and the day lies open before us. Let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
So may the light of your presence, O God,
Set our hearts on fire with love for you;
Now and forever.
Amen

Song: Speak Lord in the stillness

**Speak, Lord, in the stillness
While I wait on Thee;
Hushed my heart to listen,
In expectancy.**

**Speak, O blessèd Master,
In this quiet hour,
Let me see Thy face, Lord,
Feel Thy touch of power.**

**For the words Thou speakest,
"They are life" indeed;
Living Bread from Heaven,
Now my spirit feed!**

**All to Thee is yielded,
I am not my own;
Blissful, glad surrender,
I am Thine alone.**

**Fill me with the knowledge
Of Thy glorious will;
All Thine own good pleasure
In my life fulfill.**

**Like a watered garden
Full of fragrance rare,
Ling'ring in Thy presence
Let my life appear.**

Confession

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, to be our advocate in heaven, and to bring us to eternal life.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you,
through our own fault,
in thought, and word, and deed,
and in what we have left undone.
We are heartily sorry,
and repent of all our sins
For your Son our Lord
Jesus Christ's sake,
forgive us all that is past;
and grant that we may serve you
in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen**

May the God of all healing and forgiveness draw us to himself,
and cleanse us from all our sins
that we may behold the glory of his Son, the Word made flesh,
Jesus Christ our Lord
Amen

Readings

James 1: 19-27

¹⁹ My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰ because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. ²¹ Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

²² Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. ²³ Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴ and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵ But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

²⁶ Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. ²⁷ Religion that God our Father accepts

as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Matthew 11: 1-15

11 After Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee.

² When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples ³ to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"

⁴ Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵ The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. ⁶ Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."

⁷ As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? ⁸ If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces. ⁹ Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written:

"I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you."

¹¹ Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. ¹² From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence, and violent people have been raiding it. ¹³ For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. ¹⁴ And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. ¹⁵ Whoever has ears, let them hear.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

[Talk \(by Brian Settle\)](#)

Confident Stand: What a Christian Has

We begin our study of James for the month of August by examining what a Christian has?

It's a "Godincidence" that Ann & I have been following a teacher on Christian TV who recently has been speaking on James, so we are both sharing today and it could be that some of the late David Pawson comes through in our message, which will not be a bad thing. James writes in a simple and direct way to us; he doesn't bother with doctrines or debates; he instructs his readers in what to do and the Do is a big part of his writing.

My introduction commentary says that the book of James is an easy book to read but a hard one to follow and it is hard to put in practice the things we are taught (I have forgotten most of my schooling but I try to remember the important things to me in life) It is when we realize that our new lives are in Jesus that we

can confidently stand and declare that what we have in Christ is far more than we ever had by ourselves.

The fruit of the spirit is

LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS AND SELF CONTROL. They are one fruit and without any one of them we have no fruit! Self-control is the key today; control over our tongues, our tempers and our minds. So, let's read what Ann has to say about our passage in James.

James says remember this; everyone should be quick to listen but slow to speak and slow to anger. God's saving justice is never served by human anger. Quick to listen: do we listen to the word, to the preacher or have we made up our minds already? 'It's not what we need to hear' 'it's not for me today' (I know this thought) 'it must be for so and so' (Yes, I have done that myself in the past)

Jesus says 'he that has ears let him hear, listen, heed the word of God' we need to receive the word with a right attitude, we need to learn to listen, take notes so that we can jog our memory. Do we want to learn, to be teachable? Do we revise our opinions from time to time? Are they God's opinions? Seed needs good ground to grow in; the truths of the Kingdom of God are seeds and our hearts are the ground. Is our heart right?

The psalmist wrote 'create in me a clean heart, O God' Jesus came to save us from our sins. We must desire to be clean; we have clean dirt and dirty dirt. what is the difference? Clean dirt washes off, it's on the outside, our hands and our clothes get dirty so we wash them. Dirty dirt is much harder to remove; it's on the inside of us, it's our thoughts and our attitudes. The bible, the living word of God, gives us an inner wash. The Word is active; it cuts right through to the heart of the matter the marrow. We need to be quick to listen, checking on our attitudes and listening to God speaking to us. How slow are we to anger though? If we did the listening, checking and hearing then anger wouldn't get a chance.

Anger is often for the wrong reason; it comes out in the wrong way and usually at the wrong person. How often do we take out our anger on someone we love, if we are quick to argue then we get irritated and that then leads to full blown anger? Best to get rid of anger when we first feel that irritation rising up in us. Repent, don't give frustration any room to move, just whisper 'Jesus – help' Stay at peace with all men! We live in a contaminated world, an unclean world; there is evil all around us and we can so easily get stained by it. We must beware of what we are watching, seeing and hearing, be judged by the Word in meekness and submission, to stay pure and clean, the Word of God saves us from error.

Two of the main conditions of receiving God's word can be said to be

1. Our mental attitude.
2. Our moral attitude.

With our mental attitude we can desire to know the truth; Jesus said 'I am the truth, the way' so let's be a teachable people.

With our moral attitude we desire to be holy; God said 'be holy for I am holy' we should desire to be clean on the inside. Christianity is all about God cleansing our hearts by his grace through faith Eph:2v8. It's about God saving us from our sins, full stop! So, let's do away with all impurities and remnants of evil in our lives, humbly welcome the Word which has been planted in us and that saves our souls.

In James 1v23 "Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. Do we respond to the word or do we forget it in a few days' time? Let us not put off practicing what the word is saying to us. What changes do we need to make, why do we need to?

Verse 25 "Anyone who looks steadily/intently at the perfect laws of freedom and keeps to it"

Not listening then forgetting but putting it into practice, will be blessed in every undertaking. That's a wonderful promise for us from God, to be blessed in all we do. Do we glance or gaze at the word? To glance is to hardly take anytime at all, then we will be more likely to forget. But to gaze- to fix our eyes upon, to meditate on it, then we are more likely to remember and to do something about it.

To take action and to desire to be changed by his Holy Spirit working in us.

When we forget, we deceive ourselves, we might think we don't need to be corrected or have anything to put right. On the other hand; if we read, listen, hear and remember to do it, we will be blessed in all we do. God wants us to have a true religion; one where we keep a tight rein on our tongues (v26) which, without

the help of the Holy Spirit, is impossible; we can't control our tongues, it's the most dangerous part of our bodies.

Self-control is what God has for us; it is a part of the fruit of the spirit and an ongoing process. God wants us to keep ourselves free from the contamination of the world. He also wants us to help the orphans and widows. The fatherless, which we do here in St Mary's through the various charities we support.

To be compassionate, to bless others. So many fatherless people in our society today, so many single mums who have a loving heavenly father, just waiting to Bless and heal them.

Who is going to tell them the good news? As I said earlier; God wants us to be Holy people, we must not think as the rest of the world does. We shouldn't desire what they want from life, it is not a safe place for us, we are just passing through.

Born again, delivered from the Kingdom of darkness into the light of God's kingdom. We are on the way of salvation; its ongoing as we walk towards the goal set before us and with the help of the Holy Spirit, our comforter, the one who teaches us everything we need to know. The one who reminds us of everything Jesus said. He is the one to show the world how wrong it was about sin and judgement and we have to do our part in expressing 'our religion' in the way that we live out our lives.

The first word of James in chapter 1 v 2 is 'Consider' - an important word.

Considering is related to our thought processes. To consider, to think about (especially in order to make a decision), to weigh the merits of, to make allowances for, to consider ours and others feelings and to take all events or possibilities into account God's word is like a huge medicine cabinet. It contains everything we need to solve any problem we might have, everything to live a godly life.

So, let's listen to speakers, hear His word, remember scripture, meditate on his word, obey his commands to do whatever he asks us to do and we will be blessed.

Amen.

Affirmation of Faith

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named...**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts
through faith,
and fills us with his love...**

**We believe in God
the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high....**

**We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Song: Seek ye first the Kingdom of God

**Seek ye first the kingdom of God,
and His righteousness,
and all these things shall be added unto you.**

Allelu, alleluia.

***Seek ye first the kingdom of God,
and His righteousness,
and all these things shall be added
unto you.***

Allelu, alleluia.

**Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word
that proceeds from the mouth of God.**

Allelu, alleluia.

***Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word
that proceeds from the mouth of God.***

Allelu, alleluia.

**Ask and it shall be given unto you,
seek and ye shall find;
knock and the door shall be opened up to you.**

Allelu, alleluia.

***Ask and it shall be given unto you,
seek and ye shall find;
knock and the door shall be opened up to you.***

Allelu, alleluia.

Prayers (written by Mark Nile)

“Slow to chide and swift to bless”, please Lord Jesus breathe your spirit on us that others might think and say this of us at this current time. The imposition of new rules and regulations designed to combat the Covid pandemic has given ripe pickings of low hanging fruit to those who have tapped into a Phariseeal type zeal to point out the speck in their brother and sisters eye while ignoring the log in their own! Please forgive us for when we have given in to this temptation to correct others while perched on the moral high ground. We pray for our country as something else (fanned by the news and social media) is serving to divide us when we all really need to come together. We pray for healing of our nation and for wisdom from our elected leaders locally and nationally as they take us through this testing of times. We give thanks that so many people have adapted to massive change so quickly in order to progress against this virus and we are doubly thankful to our NHS, Police and emergency and utility services as well as all whose significant contribution will never be known.

Lord in your mercy - **Hear our Prayer**

We pray for those who mourn, naming Audrey and family as we all think of the loss of Tom to our church and community. In recent days too many people could not say good bye to loved ones in the way they wanted, many could not get married as planned, many could not leave school and say goodbye to friends as they take the next step on life's journey.

Be with them father God as they plan and rebuild their hopes and dreams in what is becoming called the new normal. May they invite you into this and know what plans to prosper them you have. Many people are losing jobs, losing homes, losing wives/husbands/partners as relationships break down under the stress and awfulness of lockdown and its aftermath. Many people are seeing their small business dreams die before their very eyes. Many people are hungry physically, mentally and spiritually. Many are finding it increasingly stressful to be working from home while trying to juggle childcare, cooking, schooling alongside a job in a place that was previously their haven and sanctum from the workplace. We ask Jesus for your healing in our land for all these your precious people and ask that we may play our part in that process.

Lord in your mercy - **Hear our Prayer**

We lift those in our church, in our families and friends who are sick and ill before you Jesus, thinking of those who have had surgical, dental and other medical treatment stopped or postponed due to the Health planning for the current Covid pandemic. We pray for normality to return to our NHS and those waiting for treatment or surgery will be able to receive it sooner than later. We pray again for logic and evidence to override media pressure and half-truths in decision making and that all decisions made will be for the greater population against real risks not imaginable ones, please father drive out fear.

We are also very aware that Corona virus is affecting millions of people around your world adding to the many problems caused by the already existing endemic diseases and food shortages much of the world has to contend with year in year out, we pray for all Govts involved and relief and charity agencies trying to make a difference to this, that you will take their fishes and loaves and make them many. Jesus, also remembering our brothers and sisters in India who as members of a minority religion will be the last to be helped (if at all) in the distribution of food and medical aid, please bless the work of Open Doors as they try to a plug this gap.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers, for the sake of Your Son our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen**

[Collect for the day](#)

**Lord God,
your Son left the riches of heaven
and became poor for our sake:
when we prosper save us from pride,
when we are needy save us from despair,
that we may trust in you alone;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen**

The Peace

At this point, we would normally share God's peace with each other. We cannot do that physically but please spend a few minutes now praying for specific people at St. Mary's...

Song: My Jesus my Saviour

**My Jesus, my Saviour,
Lord, there is none like You.
All of my days I want to praise
the wonders of Your mighty love.
My comfort, my shelter,
tower of refuge and strength,
let every breath, all that I am,
never cease to worship You.**

***Shout to the Lord all the earth, let us sing,
power and majesty, praise to the King.
Mountains bow down and the seas will roar
at the sound of Your name.
I sing for joy at the work of Your hands,
for ever I'll love You, for ever I'll stand.
Nothing compares to the promise I have in You.***

The Blessing

**The Lord bless us and watch over us,
the Lord make his face shine upon us
and be gracious to us,
the Lord look kindly on us
and give us peace**

Go in peace to love
and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ,
Amen.