

A FAITH THAT WORKS

(A Study of the Book of James)

God: Always Doing Good

TEXT: James 1:17

INTRODUCTION: James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

I. EVERYTHING GOOD COMES FROM GOD.

God created a good universe.

- Don't let people intimidate you into thinking you're not smart enough to understand the arguments about the ultimate origin of the universe.
- You don't have to be a Ph.D. in Coleopterology or Paleophytology. (study of beetles and ancient fossils, respectively)
- You have the ability to reason and make an accurate judgment. There are just a lot of people who do not want you to do so.
- Look, if you took all the materials to build this Worship Center
 - Rebar and concrete
 - Steel girders and Metal studs
 - Plywood, lumber, and Sheetrock
 - Paint and other finishes
 - Carpet, tile, and wood flooring
 - You stacked everything up on top of a few sticks of dynamite and set it off.
- You would not believe for a second that the result would be this beautiful building. If I said do it over, and over again, a billion times a minute for 4.5 billion years, you still don't believe it would happen. It does not make sense.
- The reason it does not make sense is because you know that order comes from intelligence. The fact that something evidences design means there is a designer.
- This is most especially true when we consider that the ultimate creation of the universe also includes the creation of intelligent life, because, apart from Washington D.C, intelligent life does exist on this planet.
- And all life, intelligent and the most rudimentary form of life known to man has within it a molecule called DNA. And **DNA**, according to that reservoir of all conservative philosophy and knowledge called Wikipedia, **is a molecule that carries the genetic instructions used in the growth, development,**

functioning and reproduction of all known living organisms and many viruses.

- The instructions in DNA would fill the 23 volume Encyclopedia Britanica, 40 times. The information in this tiny molecule, much smaller than just the nucleus of a cell in which it resides would fill one million pages of an encyclopedia.
- You may be asking, “Then why do all scientists believe in evolution?” And the answer is “They don’t!” You just do not hear of them on CNN or ABC News or read about them in Time Magazine.
- Go to a website. You can go right now on your phone if you like. Go to **dissentfromdarwin.org**. Click on download the list. Here is the first page. The scientists who are listed here have voluntarily subscribed to the following statement: *“We are skeptical of claims for the ability of random mutation and natural selection to account for the complexity of life. Careful examination of the evidence for Darwinian theory should be encouraged.”*
- Just look at page one. See where these scientists are from. Harvard Johns Hopkins Texas A&M Duke Georgia
And scientists from all over the world: Russia, England, Brazil, Ukrain, Czech Republic, Hungary – just on the first page.
There are 23 pages like this!

I tell you all of this to say that you can believe what your mind is telling you, that when you look at your phone and say, “This didn’t happen by chance, somebody made it.” That you can look at this world and at life and stare into the heavens to see a tiny part of this universe, and your mind says, “Somebody made this.”

And you will be right.

God made the universe, and what we are reading in His Word this morning tells us that when He made it, it was good.

In fact, when God looked at all that He had made, He Himself said, “It is very good.”

Some may understandably ask, “**Why is this world no longer good?**” Why is it filled with **war, murder, rape, sickness, and death?**

That is a reasonable question, and the Bible gives us a reasonable answer. **SIN**

As I mentioned last week,

- **GOD DID NOT CREATE EVIL. GOD CREATED CHOICE.**

- **Evil first began when Lucifer chose to sin, to disobey God.**
- **Evil entered the world when Eve chose to sin, to disobey God.**
- **Evil entered the human race when Adam sinned, disobeyed God.**

Choice is good.

Choice is a good gift.

It keeps us from being merely robots or slaves. God loves us. He wants us to love Him, but He will not force us to love Him.

Although this world is rocked with all kinds of sin and rebellion against God who Himself is altogether holy and good, yet God continues to pour out good blessings on both the righteous and the unrighteous, but pours out good gifts in even greater measure on those who trust and follow Him.

Friend, I want you to think with me a moment about the good gifts of God in your life.

Start with waking up this morning. God gave each of us **life**.

Air to breathe

Water to drink, or for most of us **coffee** or **juice**.

Food

Family

Friends

Church

For those who have trusted Jesus **Eternal Life**, the **Indwelling Holy Spirit**, **Answers to Prayer** (not necessarily every one yet, but some, many)

Peace, provision, for many abundance.

Folks, could we not just go on and on and on? Those are things God has given each of us individually.

Then we could talk about gifts God has given to this church family corporately. Some of you could take us back to recite the gifts of God fifty or more years ago in our church. I have just been here ten years, but I have seen the Lord pour out good gift after good gift upon this Family of Faith.

I remember back in 2008. Our preschoolers and our youth were both in portable buildings that had gone past their prime to be nice. In fact, we had promised the

city we would get rid of those buildings a couple of years earlier. In addition, our space for our children for small groups and other activities was wholly inadequate. The church had commissioned a Ministry Team to recommend what the church should do.

On a Sunday morning in October, I was scheduled to bring the bring to the church our recommendation that we enter into a building program,

- Ridding ourselves of the portables,
- Building a Student Center with a Gymnasium
- Building a Kidz Zone Building for Preschool and Children

And that we do it through giving over and above our regular giving, and not increasing our long term debt which was at the time \$385,000.

We were calling the campaign **NOW IS THE TIME**.

But, if you remember, September and October, 2008 were filled with headlines like this. From man's point of view, it certainly did not look like the time.

But it was God's time. And it was a time that God poured out great gifts to and through His Family of Faith called St. Andrew Baptist Church.

We cleared out the portables and built those two new buildings for His glory, spending **\$2,998,000** and did not increase our debt one little bit.

When we finished that campaign, God led us quickly to another, this time for our Jerusalem Mission Ministries. As we were praying for a way to move these ministries from tiny houses angels were holding up into facilities that were better and larger, God, through some of His generous servants, gave us the complex of three buildings across the street from our parking lot, fronting on Hwy. 98.

We called that campaign **A TIME FOR HOPE** and named the new complex **THE CENTER OF HOPE**. Again through His people, God gave us over **\$700,000** The Lord let us more than double the space for each ministry: benevolence, medical, and pregnancy help. He gave us a warehouse we badly needed and walk in freezers and refrigerators. A few weeks ago, God gave us a truck to pick up food from suppliers right here in Bay County, with a driver, with maintenance on the truck so that we can have more food delivered more promptly to our location where God is feeding and ministering to people.

God's good gifts do not stop. Since we completed the buildings, God has been sending gifts to reduce the indebtedness we started with before the building programs, a little here and a little there. Our last Quarterly Financial Report listed our debt at around \$100,000 (a fourth of what it was before we began to build). Last Sunday, through one of his servants, God sent the pay off. Folks,

By the mercy of our great gift giving God,
St. Andrew Baptist Church
is now
DEBT FREE!

And, God has greatly increased the number of people we minister to through these Jerusalem Mission Ministries. Last Monday, one of our counselors was talking with a lady whose sister was dying in the hospital, her organs shutting down one by one, including her kidneys. Her sister needed dialysis, but was in such bad shape she could not have it. The lady was so troubled, frustrated, even angry with God. She told the counselor, "I used to believe in God, but not anymore."

Then the counselor told this lady how God had miraculously healed his wife who had been a similar state. God had healed her because of the steadfast prayer of God's people for her. He asked the lady if she would just agree in prayer with him to ask God for this precious gift of healing for her sister.

She did, and they prayed. He asked her to call him and keep him informed of her sister's condition. That night she called. Her sister had made a remarkable recovery. She was off all life support. She did not even need dialysis. The counselor asked when her sister began to get well. The lady told him the time. It was the very moment they had prayed together. Like the servant of the Roman Centurion described in Mt. 8, the sick woman was cured at the very moment she was prayed for.

Folks, **God still gives good gifts today.**

People listen. You know and I know that God does not promise He will give us everything we want at any particular moment. He does not heal everybody who gets sick or even everyone for whom someone prays. He does not promise that He will do so.

Nevertheless, God does answer prayer.

God does heal people, some who are beyond the healing ability of doctors. God does still give good gifts, and He gives them in great abundance, with overflowing generosity.

He gives good gifts in response to our prayers, and He gives good gifts we did not even think to ask for.

What James declares is still absolutely true.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

And consider that final statement just a minute: with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

II. GOD NEVER CHANGES; HE IS ALWAYS GOOD.

- **God will never cease to answer your prayers.**

He may not always answer them when you think the time is right or exactly the way you want. But at the right time and in the right way, God will answer your prayers.

- **God will never cease to do good to His children.**

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

- **God will never cease to give good things to those who ask.**

Matthew 7:11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

And these wonderful truths should cause us who are the recipients of this never changing goodness of God to do some things also.

- **We should never cease to praise Him and give thanks to Him.**
- **We should never cease to trust Him and pray, believing He will answer.**

CONCLUSION:

What is the take away from this powerful verse of Scripture?

What should we do because “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. “

We should

- **Pray more.**
- **Pray with more fervent faith.**
- **Begin every prayer praising God for Who He is.**
- **In every prayer, thank God for what He has done recently.**