



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

A MESSAGE OF REPENTANCE- PART 2: JAMES 4:9

COLORADO

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Dan File, PO Box 1088, Lake City, CO 82135-1088/303-345-8830 / filefamily@centurytel.net

Have you ever confessed that you are a sinner in need of a Savior and repented of your sin? Do you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? Have you completely submitted to His authority in your life, demonstrated by your obedience? Maybe you are in need of a serious wakeup call for you have departed from your godly attitude and behavior, led astray from your purity and devotion to God. (2 Cor. 11:3) You are trying to be friends with the world and God, but that can't be. Because God is holy, only the pure in heart and hand can enter into fellowship with Him. James calls for a radical repentance; one that penetrates to the depth of our heart and outward, sinful behavior. You cannot dabble with sin and claim that you love God. Friendship with the world is hostility towards God. To be friends with the world is to oppose God and His ways. The call of God to draw near to Him is bound up with the demand for cleansing and repentance for this is your first step toward God. James calls us to repent and turn from our sin. God's grace has more sufficient power to save, redeem, purify and sanctify. Draw near to Him; completely, obediently and humbly with a repentant and contrite heart and He will draw near to you!

A MESSAGE OF REPENTANCE- PART 2: JAMES 4:9

James 4:7-10: "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded. 9. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. 10. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you."

I. HOW DO WE DEAL WITH SIN? - JAMES 4:9

The heart of this letter is a plea to wholehearted commitment to Jesus Christ with an urgent call to repentance. James exhorts us to an uncompromising Christian life, not a half-hearted faith. Here in verses 4:7-10, he conveys a sense of urgency with a need for immediate compliance as he calls each of us to deal with our sin. Each of the 10 directives are aorist, imperative verbs not to be taken lightly for they reveal the path to true repentance and salvation. They are like military commands, demanding incisive action and radical repentance from each of us.

A. "BE MISERABLE" - JAMES 4:9A

James 4:9a: "Be miserable..."

James calls us to be "miserable" and this verb is used only here in the New Testament.

%miserable+Greek **%alaiporia**," to grieve, suffering, distress, hardship.

James calls on each of us to grieve over our sin. It is a godly sorrow over sin that leads to a true repentance. It means that we are broken over our sin and the grieving results from a true understanding that because of our sin, we are separated from God. James insists that the more we draw near to God in intimate fellowship with Him, the more deeply our sinfulness is exposed and the more sorrowful we are about our sin. Too often we have a causal attitude towards sin but the charge James has made in 4:8 "*Cleanse your hands...and purify your hearts*" demands sober reflection and examination followed by an earnest and genuine repentance. As we truly recognize our sin and the seriousness of it, grief and sorrow over our sin will follow. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 7:10, "*For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death.*" There is a godly sorrow that leads to repentance and salvation. That's the kind of sorrow James bids us to. James demands that we deal with our sin and turn from it. That is what repentance means; to turn from our sin.

Have you ever really been devastated at your sin? Remember, you cannot have a casual attitude towards it. Be that miserable over your sin. And God promises in 1 John 1:9, "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*"

B. "AND MOURN" - JAMES 4:9B

James 4:9b: "Be miserable and mourn..."

The imperative to "mourn" again expresses the deep sorrow for our sin.

%mourn+Greek **%pentheo**," an intense sorrow, mourn as in death of a loved one, intense grief.

James literally means to sob and agonize over sin as in the death of a loved one. Along with being miserable over our sin, we are to mourn for our sin and this represents a deep grief and remorse. It is a complete despair that laments over sin the way one mourns over the death of a family member.¹ It refers to an inner grief that is to the depth of your soul. This is the way we are to reflect on our sin...to the point of penetrating our soul with such lament.

How long has it been since you have sincerely agonized, mourned, over your sin? Remember, it was for our sin that Christ went to the cross so that He could pay the incriminatory debt that comes as a result of sin. God took our sin that seriously and so must we. Be that grieved over your sin.

C. "AND WEEP" - JAMES 4:9C

James 4:9c: "Be miserable and mourn and weep..."

The outward expression of grief, sorrow and misery is weeping. It refers to a loud mourning and wailing. The same word is used in James 5:1 and refers to "bowling". In John 11:33 we find Mary so sorrowful at the death of her

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brother Lazarus with almost uncontrollable grief.

%weep+Greek %*klaiō*, loud expressions of grief, loud weeping or howling.

We are called to be that mournful over our sin. It is an overflow of tears because of the profound sorrow revealing our true brokenness over sin. I will never forget one evening when we were called as EMT's (Emergency Medical Technicians) to respond to a serious car accident outside of Lake City. It cost one young man his life that night and as his father stood outside, hearing the news that no one wants to hear, he wept loudly with such intense grief that it overcame us all. That is how grieved and afflicted we are to be at our own sin.

When was the last time you even shed a tear over your sin? Christ shed His blood for our sins. Don't treat your sin lightly. We can be grateful that God didn't or we would be eternally condemned without hope. Be that mournful over your sin.

D. "LAUGHTER TURN TO MOURNING" - JAMES 4:9D

James 4:9d: "Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning..."

The word James uses for "laughter" is only used here in the entire New Testament. It points toward a loud, gaiety towards sinful, pleasure loving actions. But James calls for an immediate reversal in their expression from "laughter" to "mourning". Hiebert says that their laughter becomes mourning when they realize their sin.²

%turned+Greek %*metatrapeto*, turn back, turn around.

The word for "turned into" occurs only here in the New Testament with the imperative command to reverse, turn around and let your laughter at sin become mourning when you realize the seriousness of it. The world ignores the reality of God's judgment and casually goes along its merry way. But Jesus said in Luke 6:25, "Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep." We cannot have a careless attitude toward sin for that only presumes upon God's grace and mercy. We have to see sin for what it is; a separation in our relationship with God that can only be dealt with through a humble and repentant heart! We must take sin seriously. This is a scathing reproof of any believer who can be so superficial that they are laughing when they ought to be weeping! Some laughter indicates a sin, sick soul which only tears will cure. Instead of reckless laughter over sin, they should mourn. Do you laugh at any sin or tolerate what is wrong? Do you have a careless attitude toward sin? You cannot dabble with sin and claim that you love God because friendship with the world is hostility towards God.

E. "AND YOUR JOY TO GLOOM" - JAMES 4:9E

James 4:9 "Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom."

There is a joy that comes only when our sins are forgiven by Jesus Christ and that is the joy Paul talks about in the book of Philippians. But this joy in James 4:9 refers to one which is fleeting and superficial, that comes when we indulge in sin. True joy will never be experienced when we ignore, tolerate or indulge in sin. Real joy only comes when we have squarely faced the reality of our sin, brought it before the Lord in repentance and humility and experienced the cleansing work of the Spirit.³

%gloom+Greek %*katepheim*, dejection, denotes downcast expression caused by a heavy heart.

James says that our joy should turn to gloom. Once again, the word for "gloom" is used only here in James. The thought James is communicating can be demonstrated by the parable told by Jesus of the Pharisee and the tax gatherer in Luke 18:13-14. The tax gatherer saw himself as a sinner and thus would not even lift his eyes to heaven. "But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God be merciful to me, the sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted." This should be our attitude before God; one with a heavy heart towards sin, acknowledging our sin before God in sincere repentance. You see, real grief will come before true joy.

James calls us to repent and turn from our sin and this is our first step toward God. We cannot have communion with God when our sin separates us from Him. James demands that we deal with our sin. We must take it seriously. The amazing thing is that we are not left in misery, mourning, sorrow or gloom when we come before our gracious and merciful God with a humble and repentant heart. No, for David himself understood God's amazing grace after his own confession of sin as he wrote in Psalm 51:17, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." God never despises a repentant sinner but rather His grace to forgive is total, complete and abundant. Just as the father of the prodigal son in Luke 15, God our heavenly Father stands ready to forgive and welcome back His children when they turn from their sinful ways!

¹MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on James*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.211-212.

²Hiebert, D. Edmond, *James*. Moody Bible Institute: Chicago, Illinois, 1992. Pg. 239.

³Moo, Douglas J., *The Letter of James*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2000. Pg.196.