



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

A MESSAGE OF REPENTANCE...*HUMILITY* and FORGIVENESS...*FAVOR!*- JAMES 4:10

COLORADO

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When a great leader or Monarch was coming to visit your village in Biblical times, the people would prepare the road for his coming as a sign of respect and appreciation. Now, as you can imagine, the roads were extremely rough and crude so there was a lot of work to be done. They would do their best to remove the rocks, fill in the holes and uneven parts and make it as straight as possible and a fitting highway for the Monarch. Of course Isaiah wasn't referring to a physical highway in Isaiah 40:3-5, but rather calling for all mankind to make ready, prepare the highway of our heart for the coming King, the Messiah Who is Jesus Christ. The way to prepare the highway of your heart is through repentance. Open up to God, confess and agree with Him about your sin, all your sin. Deal with your sin on every level and every kind. Turn from your sin and turn to God. Remove the debris, straighten the crooked places, raise the low and bring low the high. This makes ready the highway of your heart for salvation and forgiveness. Remember, salvation will never happen without repentance. For, salvation, forgiveness comes only to a prepared heart. Repent and you will be saved. And the glory of the Lord will be incredibly evident in your life, transformed by His redeeming work.

MESSAGE OF REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS: JAMES 4:10

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."

James 4:10 looks at the final imperative in this series of ten commands that call for a decisive, complete and immediate return to God. We must take sin seriously for only the pure in hand and heart can enter into communion with God. And the incredible thing is that the sinner's sincere approach to God is assured of God's favor!

I. A MESSAGE OF REPENTANCE...*HUMILITY* – JAMES 4:10A

James 4:10a - "Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord..."

James brings his radical call for complete repentance to a conclusion with this final imperative of, "*Humble yourselves.*" Humility is not only the ending point, but the beginning as well. Remember in James 4:6 that God gives grace to the humble. Let's remember what that means.

%humble+Greek **%apeinoo,** "to literally make low, make oneself low in a genuine realization of complete unworthiness and lostness because of sin."¹

If we truly see God as holy, the more evident our own sinfulness will become. We cannot come to Christ unbowed with a proud heart for

remember; Scripture is clear on God's view of pride. It is one of the seven detestable sins which the Lord hates and God is opposed to the proud as James 4:6 made clear. God stands in full battle array against such an individual and is the active antagonist of the proud and self-sufficient.²

In contrast, the Lord sets a downward path for believers because there is no other way up.³ The gravity of grace will always channel the rivers of divine favor to the lowly...to those who submit to God, whose soul's momentum is away from the devil and toward God, who purify their inner and outer lives, who mourn over their sins and who humble themselves in the presence of God.⁴ When James demands that we humble ourselves "*in the presence of the Lord,*" we are reminded of the very fact that standing in the presence of God will clearly unveil our own unworthiness and thus bring humility. The picture here is of one humble before God, prostrate if you will, as before an oriental monarch, begging for mercy.⁵ That is the attitude we are to have before God. Do we see ourselves in that light?

Why would God call His followers to humble themselves? Couldn't He have chosen a more gallant path or used a more noble word to characterize obedient discipleship? Why is humility the life He honors? Because only in this place of humility will we acknowledge our sin, our need for forgiveness and our need for a Savior! Only in the place of humility will we realize our desperate need for Him! That is why in Matthew 5:3, Jesus says, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" The blessed one is the one whom God has made fully satisfied. And Jesus said we are blessed as we humble ourselves in the presence of God. Only there do we begin to recognize our own spiritual poverty and need for Him. That's the first step in repentance.

In a very real sense, our Lord not only honors humility but it is the life He exemplified. Although Jesus is the King of all kings, Lord of all lords and He had the right to be exalted above all, He came and humbled Himself. Philippians 2:5-8 reminds us that Jesus Christ did not cling to His position as God or privileges, but gave them up for us. He humbled Himself by enduring persecution and suffering because He came to save mankind. Jesus humbled Himself, obedient to the point of dying on a cross as a criminal so that we might live. In humility He died, not just any death to pay for the penalty of our sin, but death on a cross; the cruelest and most degrading form of death. (Galatians 3:13, 1 Peter 2:24) While the world exalts self and pride, the humble life is what God honors and a life that He exemplified.

Humility is a place of total dependence on God. This is foreign to our world. Sadly, humility maybe foreign to many believers as well. But as Christians, this is what must characterize our lives.

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS, GOVERNOR & SPOUSES: TUESDAY AT 7:15AM, CAPITOL BASEMENT, ROOM 0109

STAFF, LOBBYISTS, JOURNALISTS & SERGEANTS: TUESDAYS AT NOON, CAPITOL BASEMENT, ROOM 0107

Colorado

A MESSAGE OF REPENTANCE...*HUMILITY* and FORGIVENESS...*FAVOR!*- JAMES 4:10

Is your life marked by unselfish humility? We are to live and love with humility. And our Lord elevates the lowly, the humble in heart to a place of great significance! Read the rest of the verse!

II. A MESSAGE OF FORGIVENESS...*FAVOR* - JAMES 4:10B

James 4:10-“Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.”

We can be assured that if we humble ourselves before God, God will hear the heart of the humble. Psalm 10:17 confirms that the humble has God’s ear, “*You have heard the desire of the humble. You will strengthen their heart. You will incline Your ear.*” Remember the prodigal son from Luke 15:22-24 who came to his senses and returned to the presence of his father in humility and repentance? The father then celebrated his repentant return with a feast. Just so, this is the picture of our heavenly Father and His joy over the one who returns in repentant humility and Heaven celebrates with undeserved favor! This is what James is referring to here in these verses. As we are humble, acknowledging our sin and desperate need for forgiveness, then God will lift us up with His pardoning grace; restoring such a sinner to a position of favor with Him!

As we saw earlier, to be humble is the picture of one prostrate before a monarch begging for mercy to spare his life. Here, the picture is of that monarch leaning down from the throne and lifting up the petitioner’s face from the dust. The person rises with grateful joy, knowing that he or she is forgiven.⁶ There are enduring results for those who submit to God, for those who humble themselves before the Lord. Just read the first 3 chapters of Ephesians and see what all is bestowed on us as believers! It’s incredible. Ephesians 2:6 reminds us how God has raised us up and seated us in the heavenly places. That is being exalted and it’s certainly not because we have earned it or deserved it.

Remember, humility is a place of genuine understanding that we are completely unworthy before God. We are destitute and lost without any hope because of our depravity which separates us from God. Only in this place can we truly acknowledge our sin and desperate need for forgiveness. And as we do, “*He will exalt you.*” That’s the good news of the gospel. That is God’s incredible grace and favor! Jesus reaches down and raises our faces from the dust with undeserved forgiveness purchased through His costly death on the cross. And we rise with indescribable joy, knowing that we have been forgiven. We rise in obedience to follow our Lord from that point forward, understanding our indebtedness to Him and thereby live in constant dependence on Him. Jesus said in Matthew 23:12, “*whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*” He elevates the humble in heart to a place of great significance for they are treasured by God Himself! Wow!

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. We must take sin seriously. 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!

Never forget that the sinner’s sincere approach to God is assured of God’s favorable and immediate response, *He will draw near to you!* If we sincerely draw near to God with all that means, then we can be confident of His promised response, “*and He will draw near to you.*” Just as in Luke 15:20, the prodigal son received his father’s favorable response when he repented and returned in humility to his father, so believers find God watching; waiting to welcome and restore His children into His waiting arms of fellowship. God wants us to know Him, to seek Him and we will find Him; in rich fellowship and communion when we search for Him with all our heart. (Jeremiah 29:12-14) How do we come to God? With a sincere, repentant, clean and pure heart! How do we draw near to God? Daily, regularly, individually and corporately; devoted to communion with Jesus Christ and cultivating constant fellowship with God. And what comes from drawing near to God- *a sweet fellowship with our living Lord and eternal God!*

¹MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on James*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.213.

²Hiebert, D. Edmond, *James*. Moody Bible Institute: Chicago, Illinois, 1992. Pg. 235.

³Motyer, J.A., *The Message of James*. InterVarsity: Downers Grove, Illinois, 1985. Pg.153.

⁴Hughes, R. Kent., *James, Faith That Works*. Good News Publishers: Wheaton, Illinois, 1991. Pg. 190.

⁵Hiebert, D. Edmond, *James*. Moody Bible Institute: Chicago, Illinois, 1992. Pg. 240.

⁶Daivids, Peter H., *The Epistle of James; The New International Greek Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982. Pg.104.