

SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE: Superficial or Supernatural?

SERMON REFERENCE: James 1:26-27

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #0513

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) James 1:26-27
 - i) James shows us in this passage that there are two kinds of religion:
 - (1) Superficial
 - (2) Supernatural
- b) Is your religion superficial or supernatural?
- c) We are living in serious times.
 - i) As born-again believers in Christ, we need to be living with urgency in these times.
 - ii) We need in our lives, in our churches and in our faith a real religion.
- d) We need a religion that is supernatural and not superficial.

2) THE DANGERS OF SUPERFICIAL RELIGION (JAMES 1:26)

- a) The first danger in superficial religion is that it lacks reality.
 - i) James 1:26 states, "If any man among you seem to be religious."
 - ii) There are many people who only have a form of godliness.
 - (1) Their religion is only an illusion; there is no reality to it.
 - (2) There is nothing worse than religion without reality.
 - (3) We ought to have a know-so, not a hope-so or maybe-so, salvation.
 - iii) Too many people are doubting Christians when they ought to be shouting Christians; they are only seeming Christians when they ought to be sincere Christians.
 - (1) Our faith is a faith of calm assurance.
 - (2) Our salvation should have a reality to it; we should know that we're saved.
 - (a) 1 John 5:13
 - (b) There is to be an assurance of our salvation.
 - (3) Many people don't know if they are saved.
 - (a) If we have been born again, it ought to be just as real to us as our first birth.
 - iv) Superficial religion is only an illusion.
- b) Superficial religion is also lacking in restraint.
 - i) James 1:26
 - ii) If we cannot restrain our own tongues, then our religion is in vain.
 - (1) If we have been saved and our religion is real, then it is going to show in the way that we talk.
 - iii) One of the prime marks that a person has been born again is his speech pattern.
 - (1) Someone who has been saved will be praising God and witnessing.
 - (2) Someone who has not been born again will be criticizing, complaining, cursing, lying and exaggerating.
 - iv) There isn't much that does more damage to the cause of Christ than people who seem to be religious and yet they do not bridle their tongues.
 - v) Matthew 12:34

- vi) This is not the only area in which we need restraint, but James uses the tongue as an illustration of the fact that when a person is saved, it changes his life.
 - (1) If your religion has not changed your life, then you better change your religion because you don't have the kind that saves.
 - (2) Superficial religion has no power to change a life.
- c) Superficial religion lacks in results.
 - i) James 1:26
 - (1) The word "vain" means fruitless, non-productive and an exercise in futility.
 - (a) This type of religion does you no good; it lacks in results.
 - ii) Many people think there is value in religion and that we need more religion in America.
 - (1) This is not necessarily so.
 - (a) Most of the people in America are religious but lost.
 - (b) They need to turn from religion to Jesus Christ.
 - (2) Religion can be vain, empty and of no good whatsoever.
 - iii) Christianity is not just one more religion.
 - (1) It is a vital relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (2) When we receive the Lord Jesus into our lives, His Spirit comes to live inside of us.
 - (a) He changes us from the inside.
 - (3) Religion is simply the outward expression of what's on the inside.
 - (a) If you do not have Christ on the inside, then your religion is superficial.
 - (b) If you have Christ on the inside, then your religion is supernatural.
 - (4) When someone gets married, they don't get the marriage religion; they get their spouse.
 - (a) Similarly, when we get saved, we don't merely get the Christian religion, we get Jesus Christ.
- d) The worst thing about superficial religion is that many people who have it don't even know they have it.
 - i) They deceive their own hearts.
 - ii) They are religious but lost.
- e) The devil doesn't mind us being religious as long as we don't have Jesus Christ.
 - i) It was a religious crowd that nailed Jesus to the cross.
- f) Religion does not save; Jesus saves.
 - i) It is a vital relationship; a new birth.
- g) Have you been born again?
 - i) Does God's Spirit bear witness with your spirit?
- h) There are many who are going to spend eternity in Hell surrounded by receipts from church offerings, Sunday School attendance records and baptismal certificates because they never met Jesus Christ in reality.

- i) They've never been born again.
- 3) THE DELIGHTS OF SUPERNATURAL RELIGION (JAMES 1:27)
- a) Supernatural religion reaches upward.
 - i) Pure and undefiled religion reaches upward to God; it recognizes God.
 - ii) There is only one way to have God as our Father and that is to have Christ as our Savior.
 - (1) John 14:6
 - (2) Contrary to popular opinion, God is not the Father of everyone.
 - (a) God is only the Father of those who have been born again.
 - (i) John 8:44
 - (ii) John 1:11-12
 - iii) James 1:18
 - (1) James speaks of the new birth; begotten of God through the Word of God.
 - (a) Through the preaching of the Word of God, a person hears the Word, believes the Word, receives the Word, is transformed by the Word and is born again.
 - (i) 1 Peter 1:23
 - iv) Real religion reaches upward, which is the only way we can reach.
 - (1) We cannot pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps.
 - (2) We cannot work our way out of the mire and mess.
 - (a) Psalm 40:2
 - (3) We must place our hands in the hand of God.
 - (a) Ephesians 2:8
 - v) Grace is God reaching down to us; faith is us reaching up to God.
 - (1) Salvation is when our hand of faith meets God's hand of grace.
 - vi) Jesus told Nicodemus, an outwardly moral and religious and highly educated man, that he must be born again.
 - (1) John 3:3
 - vii) Have you been born again?
 - (1) If you're born twice, then you can die but once.
 - (2) If you're born once, then you must die twice.
 - (a) The first death is the physical death.
 - (b) The second death is the spiritual death, which is the lake of fire.
 - b) Supernatural religion reaches outward.
 - i) James 1:27
 - ii) When we are saved and transformed, we will have a heart of compassion.
 - (1) We will reach out to those in distress.
 - iii) James is not saying that the only people we will minister to are widows and orphans.
 - (1) James is using this to illustrate the fact that when we are saved, we will minister to those in need.

- (a) This is not simply the work of a pastor, but is another mark of anyone who has been born again.
- iv) Jesus Christ wants to minister to others through us.
 - (1) Someone needs our love, and the Lord Jesus Christ has no hands but our hands.
- v) If our religion is real, then it will not merely show up on Sunday when we sit in a church pew, but it will also show up on Monday when we do something in a very practical way.
 - (1) Our faith will be translated into daily living.
- vi) Luke 10:30-35
 - (1) In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus tells of three philosophies of life:
 - (a) The beater uppers
 - (i) These are represented by the thieves.
 - (b) The passer uppers
 - (i) These are represented by the priest and the Levites who passed by on the other side.
 - (ii) Perhaps they were on their way to a church meeting or to a Bible study.
 - (iii) They were religious, but they passed him by and left him there.
 - (c) The picker uppers
 - (i) The Samaritan came by and picked him up and ministered to him.
 - (2) The Bible teaches that if we are saved, we will not be beater uppers or passer uppers, but we will be picker uppers.
- c) Supernatural religion reaches inward.
 - i) James 1:27
 - ii) Supernatural religion gives us a pure heart.
 - iii) The word “world” in this passage does not refer to the physical planet Earth; James is referring to an ungodly value system that the Bible calls “the world.”
 - (1) 1 John 2:16
 - (2) 1 John 2:15
 - (3) James 4:4
 - (4) Some people have joined a church, but they still love the world.
 - (a) Christianity is just something they have tacked on.
 - (b) They’re living double lives; coming to church on Sunday and going through a form of religion, and then going out on Monday, being part of this ungodly world system with no transformation whatsoever in their lives.
 - iv) If our religion is real, then we will keep ourselves unspotted from this world by being born again and relying on the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (1) It’s not by struggling or trying, but by trusting.

- v) The Greek word for “gospel” is the same word from which we get the word “dynamite.”
 - (1) The Gospel of Christ is the dynamite of God.
 - (a) When it goes off in our hearts, it can blast sin and hatred out of our lives.
 - d) We need to stop living a superficial life and start living a supernatural life.
 - i) Stop enduring religion and start enjoying salvation.
 - e) Real, supernatural religion will do the following for you:
 - i) It will do in times of sorrow.
 - (1) There is no escape from sorrow, but we can experience the joy and glory of Jesus Christ even in sorrowful times.
 - (2) It will see us through sorrow.
 - ii) It will do in the time of death.
 - (1) Some people have religion that seems alright to live by, but it’s no good to die by.
 - (2) The real test of religion comes when it is time to pass from this life.
 - (3) Hebrews 13:5
 - iii) It will see us through the judgment.
 - (1) Romans 8:1
- 4) CONCLUSION
- a) Is your religion superficial or supernatural?
 - b) Have you been born again?
 - c) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
 - d) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16