

A Bible Believing Church James 1:18-25

A church that claims to have answers for a hurting world but doesn't believe or teach the Bible is like NASA claiming life on Mars based on a hunch. As Christians our evidence, our authority for believing all we do, is found in this book; we believe in eternal life, we believe in miracles, we believe in forgiveness, we believe in God become man, we believe in the immaculate conception, we believe in Christ's death, we believe in His resurrection because all these things have been written for us, that we may believe and have life. The Bible is our first and final authority on all things, without error it is the greatest treasure a person can possess on earth!

Q. How many Bibles roughly do we possess collectively as a life group?

Q. Countless number of people have given their lives that we might have access to the Word of God, do you think we value this book as we should? If not why not?

1) Words of Life – Verses 18 and 21

Read Luke 16: 19-31

The rich man and Lazarus lived very different lives on earth, one was very comfortable the other very poor, one had all he desired the other found himself alone and in great pain. However, the most significance difference between the two was that Lazarus believed what was 'written' and the rich man didn't, hence why upon their deaths they found themselves in extremely opposing places.

Q. Why is a 'comfortable' life potentially a dangerous one to live?

Q. Is it harder for those who are rich to accept the gospel? If so why?

Jesus taught in this passage that all we need for our souls to be saved is the Word of God, because these are the words of life. In Luke 10 Jesus was asked this question, '**What must I do to inherit eternal life?**' His answer... '**What is written?**' There are 1800 verses of Jesus speaking in the Bible and 10% of these are Him quoting scripture, Jesus loved the Bible, believed the Bible and knew it contained the words of life and so should we!

Q. The rich man wanted Lazarus to go back to tell his brothers about his torment, Jesus taught that all they needed to believe is what is written in the Bible, can we also think we need 'other' things in order for people to be convinced?

2) Words of Freedom – 'Law of Liberty' Verse 25

When we think of the 'law' I'm not sure we'd automatically see it as a freeing thing, but James says the Word of God is the 'law of liberty', how can this be? Jeremiah 31:33 says '**I will write my laws on their hearts**' the Holy Spirit takes God's word and instead of it being a heavy thing for us to carry becomes a strengthening and nourishing source of life for us. Like my rucksack full of food and drink that weighed my down as I climbed the hill, once the picnic was consumed my bag was lighter and my body was strengthened so the remained or the walk was much 'happier; and 'freer'. The gospel takes the law of God and puts it 'in us' and releases us to enjoy the life we were created for... These words are not the end in and of themselves but are given to lead us to freedom, to lead us to Christ.

Q. How does knowing that all scripture is given to lead us to Jesus change how we read the Bible?

If our purpose is to '**enjoy God and glorify Him forever**' then scripture liberates us to be who we are meant to be by setting the conditions we need to thrive – a fish is restricted to water because that is the environment in which it is most free to fulfil its purpose, if the fish is thrown onto the land it will die. In the same way we are restricted by the law on certain things (i.e. not to sin) because it is in enjoying God and living for him that we are most able to thrive! **If you abide in my word you are truly my disciples & you will know the truth and the truth will set you free** – John 8:32

Q. How does the bible protect us from being slaves to sin?

Q. Can you share any examples of when you have known greater freedom having said 'no' to something?

3) Words of Blessing – Verse 25

'He will be blessed in his doing', that is a promise! If you abide in the word and do what it says, then you can be certain of being blessed. The Greek word here for blessed is 'makarios' which also means happy – so the promise is this- those who believe the bible and do what is instructed by it will be 'happy' – this is not a frivolous/fleeting happiness but a joy so profound that even in great suffering (persecution such as the church knew as James wrote) it remains – only Christ can make that possible! Those who are strong in the word are able to cope with some of the toughest circumstances of life.

To finish read Matthew 7: 24-26 and discuss why building our lives on the words of Christ provides such a strong foundation and then pray for one another that we would all grow strong in the word.