***Third Street Presbyterian Church***

 ***Midweek Prayer and Bible Study***

***Wednesday, May 6, 2020-6:00pm***

**Introductions/ Welcome/ Opening Prayer: Pastor Reid**

**This Month we will be studying the Epistle (Letter of James).**

**Theme:** *Faith and Wisdom - God is generous in giving wisdom to those who ask in faith.*

**James 1-1-11**

**Salutation**

**1**James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion:

**Faith and Wisdom**

**2**My brothers and sisters, whenever you face **trials** of any kind, **consider it nothing but joy, 3**because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; **4**and let **endurance** have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing.**5**If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you. **6**But **ask in faith**, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a **wave of the sea**, driven and tossed by the wind; **7, 8**for the doubter, being **double-minded** and unstable in every way, must not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

**Poverty and Riches**

**9**Let the believerwho is lowly **boast in being raised up**, **10**and the rich in **being brought low**, because the rich will disappear like a flower in the field. **11**For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the field; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. It is the same way with the rich; in the midst of a busy life, they will wither away.

**Reflection:**

This letter is categorized as a General epistle. It does not appear to have been written to a particular church among the communities but to the 12 tribes scattered among the nations. Unlike Paul’s letters, James does not address controversies unique to a specific community but rather gives general wisdom for the faithful. The term ―scattered (diaspora) occurs in only two other places in the New Testament (John 7:35; 1 Peter 1:1). It refers to the Jews who were scattered among the Gentiles as their ancestors had been in the days of the Captivity. Though the 12 tribes of Israel are scattered, they are never lost. They are again listed at the close of biblical history in the Book of Revelation: Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin (Rev. 7:5-8)

**Setting of today’s scripture-** James’s audience was primarily Jewish Christians as reference was made to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion( 1:1). Therese groups met primarily in house churches outside Palestine which fits the situation of persecution and poverty in this letter.

**Sharing/Discuss in Group:**

**James 1:2-4**

1. What is the thing does James tell them to have **joy** over?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. How does this relate to the message in Peter’s first letter? (1 Peter 4:12-13)
2. The goal of perseverance is to make one \_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.(James 1:4).
3. It is typical in the ancient world for Jews and Christians to face local persecution due to their faith. Jews and Christians had customs that were very different than the world around them. Romans didn’t understand worshipping one God. They accused Christians of being cannibals because they come together to eat the body and drink the blood of the Lord. What we called the Lord’s Supper today. So to live in the pagan world, Christians had to seek and gain\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(James 1:5)
4. In **1:6-8** James says someone who asks God and then doubts the answer is like the\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(1:6). Can doubt that God will answer prayer cause one to be double-minded (*of “two minds”)?* How?
5. God answers yes, no or not yet. The answer God gives to our prayer is not always seen immediately because God’s timing is better than our own. Can you find other scripture to support how **God’s timing** works?
6. What trails are you going through now that you believe God could be using to help your faith grow?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
7. How does looking at the struggles grow your faith? Does greater faith help make struggles easier to bear?
8. **James 1:9-11**- Both poverty and riches bring pressure on a person to focus on the world rather than on Christ. The poor should boast in their high status in Christ and the rich boast in realizing that their wealth is temporary and brings them no advantage before God. What message do you feel James is sending to those of poverty and wealth these verses?

**Put Your** **Faith in Action: **

Prayer changes things. This week try a prayer in which you extend your cupped hands, visualizing hold up to God whatever specific need you have for wisdom. Off this need to God in a simple prayer saying “O God grant me wisdom in dealing with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**WE ARE GOD’S CHURCH –** Stay connected with those in need, give back a little of what you have to those that don’t have (Time, Talents and Treasure). Please use safe social distance in these times of COVID-19. Even though we are staying at home we can reach out, phone call, email, mail, text

**What Inspires you these days?**

What's giving you inspiration and hope these days? Think about a song, hymn, scripture, quote. How has it helped inspire you? If you feel led, share with the study group.

**For Further Study:** During this time some in the churches had fallen into a worldly lifestyle (1:27) and have failed to put their faith into practice(1:19-26). What are some ways that a worldly lifestyle results in “double-mindedness”? In these times, do we see those that waver between God and the world? What is James saying about this?

**Mid-Week Prayer Time-Pastor Reid - Let us lift up people/situations for prayer:**

*This week add a name(s), situation(s), etc. to your prayer requests. Place on slip of paper in a place you can find it in your prayer time (bible, prayer journal, etc.) Whisper a prayer for each of them this week.*

***Song: “God’s Grace” – Rev. Luther Barnes-Youtube music***

*How did I make it through the storm? How did I make through the rain? If you want to know how I got here it is so easy to explain it was God’s Grace… I made it this far by the grace of God!*

**Closing Thoughts for the Group -**

 **Sending and Blessing - Pastor Reid**

**Thank you all for joining in on our study of The Letter of James**