

Epistle of James VI James 3—Horses & Boats

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As we come to James 3 we find that it follows in a proper sequence. In chapter 2 we saw that faith without works is dead. Now we're moving from faith without works to *the tongue without control*. We're going to see how important that is. What you might want to do is reach in and grab hold of your tongue and you're going to see that it's awfully hard to control. It's not like picking up something that is more firm in its form. We're going to see there're a great deal to that.

James 3:1: "My brethren, do not many of you become teachers, knowing that we will receive more severe judgment; because we frequently offend, every one of us. If anyone does not offend in what he says, this one *is* a perfect man *and is* able also to hold in check the whole body. Remember, we put bits into horses' mouths in order that they may obey us, and we direct their entire bodies. Consider also *that* ships, being so large, and being driven by strong winds, are turned about by a very small rudder, wherever the will of the one who is steering may decide. In the same way also, **the tongue is a little member, but it boasts great things**. See how large a forest is set ablaze by a little fire" (vs 1-5).

Now there's an awful lot here and there's a reason why James chose horses and ships.

Let's go back to v 1 and see something that is very, very important concerning being a teacher. A lot of people like to set themselves up as teachers and some people think that they are called to be teachers. Well, if that is the case then you better make sure that what you're going to be teaching is correct. You better make sure that what you're teaching is according to the will and the Word of God, because we're going to receive the more stern judgment.

It's very interesting how James worded this. He didn't say, 'Brethren, don't many of you become teachers, because you will receive the more stringent judgment.' He said, *we*; he includes himself. When you go through this whole situation, James includes himself, as well. He is not talking about some remote other person: 'the they.' You know how it is: *they* did this, *they* did that, *they* did the other thing. He is saying, *we*; so we need to keep that in mind in relationship toward teaching. If you're not teaching the Words of Jesus Christ and you're not preaching the Words of Jesus Christ—what then are you doing? You need to think about that an awful lot if you want to be a teacher! There's nothing wrong with being a teacher, but you are going to have the

more stringent judgment as James said.

2-Tim. 2 is quite a section on teachers. As a matter of fact, all of what are called the *Pastoral Epistles*, which is 1st & 2nd-Timothy and Titus. Those three are called the *Pastoral Epistles*. Philemon somewhat, but not as directly as 1st & 2nd-Timothy, and Titus. These were written from the Apostle Paul to those that he trained in teaching.

We'll cover a quite a bit of the first and second chapters of 2-Tim., so we can understand what it is that are some of the requirements for being a teacher. 1-Tim. 3 are the requirements for an overseer, bishop. It's too important to just tell you to read it. Here's the foundation. I've seen where that people have been elevated to a teaching or preaching status and later on they just go down the tubes badly. I don't think it's necessarily a mistake upon selecting that person at that time to be a minister or teacher. *But they have to be faithful in what they are teaching after they become teachers!*

Here's the foundation, 1-Timothy 3:1: "Faithful *is* the saying, 'If any man aspires to *be* an overseer, he desires a good work.'" It is a good work, however there is no great office in the sense of we think of an enthroned, entitled position. It's not! This means just an official overseer of the Church, which you have to have. You cannot have someone saying, 'Well, I'm the overseer' and another one saying, 'No, I'm the overseer.' And then you have nothing but fights and struggles and all the political battles that go on with that. And I've seen that happen, too, and it's a mess.

But he says, v 2: Now then, it is obligatory *that* the overseer be blameless, *the* husband of one wife, vigilant, serious-minded, respectable, hospitable, skillful in teaching." You have to teach the Word of God, and you have to be teaching yourself if you are a teacher.

Verse 3: "Not given to much wine, not a bully, not greedy for selfish gain ... [because he has to handle the money of God] ...but kind, not a quarreler, not a lover of money; one who rules his own house well, having his children in subjection with all respect; (for if a man does not know how to rule his own household, how will he take care of the Church of God?)" (vs 1-5). Very simple, straightforward, common sense, down to earth, fundamental, foundational qualifications for anyone who is going to be a teacher.

Verse 6: "Not a novice..." Not someone

newly come to the faith and that's the big problem with Protestantism. They confuse teaching with witnessing or testifying. Someone newly come to the faith can testify what God has done for them. They can witness by telling someone else; 'I'm telling you what God has done in my life,' but for them to be a teacher is another whole ballgame. That's why so many of the ministers just turn out wrong and bad, because they are newly come to the faith. They are not someone who has been tried and tested by God in their Christian life as to how they are going to live. "Not a novice..."; *not someone newly come to the faith*.

"...lest he become conceited *and* fall into the same condemnation as the devil" (v 6)—which means exactly what it says. He's going to think:

- how good I am
- how great I am
- how much I know
- how much I've experienced
- I can teach
- I can lead

Then you're going to get all carried away in your vanity. If you're not willing to teach one person, but you want a thousand, then you are not a teacher indeed. Because you have to teach because of the Spirit of God in you, regardless of the numbers; because numbers don't mean anything.

What does it say about *the way*? '*For broad is the way that leads unto death and many there be which go in that gate.*' There are the vast numbers. '*But straight is the way and narrow is the gate that leads to life and few be that go in there at.*' So, if a person thinks it's going to be a grand and glorious thing and I'm going to have notoriety and my picture is going to be here and everyone is going to know my name, forget it! The snare of pride is going to come and cut you down. The one exercising that sword will be the devil. That's what it says right here; and "...and fall into the same condemnation as the devil."

Another warning. Don't set yourself up to be a teacher, because the devil is going to be after you. That's what it's saying here:

Verse 7: "It is mandatory that he also have a good report from those *who are* outside the Church, lest he fall into reproach and *the* snare of the devil."

Just like some of these politicians. 'I'm going to run for President and I am your best man, believe me! I am righteous, I am good, I have the best ideas.' And, lo and behold, someone comes along and says, 'Now, you know I remember this guy when he was over here and I know all of these bimbos that he was committing adultery with.'

Remember Gary Hart? Was he not cut down? *Yes!* This says that the devil is going to be after those who are teaching. And does he get to some? *Yes!* What happens? *They twist and they turn the Scriptures to their own destruction!* This is very important that we understand what it's saying here and the foundation.

Verse 8: "In the same way also, the deacons..." That doesn't mean deacons as policemen at the door of a church meeting hall or church building. This means *those who serve*. That's all a deacon is. Paul said he was a deacon, a minister, an apostle, and *all of those are ministering and serving positions*.

"...who serve *must* be serious-minded... [that means not flippant-minded] ...not hypocritical... [not double tongued] ...not given to much wine, not greedy for selfish gain; holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience" (vs 8-9).

In other words, if you are going to be a teacher, then you have got to hold the mystery of the faith as the top and absolute primary thing in your mind, in your heart, in your life and in your teaching, otherwise you loose your qualifications of a teacher.

Verse 10: "And let those *who meet the qualifications* also be proved first..."—tested; in other words, some kind of training program for them, as we will see later. Timothy was told to commit these things to faithful men who are able to teach.

"...then let them *be appointed to serve, if they are found to be* blameless. In the same way also, *their wives must* be serious-minded, not slanderers, sober *and* faithful in all things" (vs 10-11).

I want to say something here: I heard of a woman who one time said that she—being a minister's wife—had an office. Popycock! Isn't any such thing! That is vanity, pride, arrogance and presumption upon such a woman who would assume to take that to herself so that she can carry on her husband's ministry, who has since died. *There is a false teacher indeed!* Just one example; we could have all kinds of other examples, but that one serves the purpose for right now.

Here's what a minister needs to rely on: not on his brain, *because his brain is as carnal as anybody else's*; not upon his intellect, *because intellect is not the thing which is going to produce the Spirit of God and the works of faith*. Paul makes that very clear right here. He's telling Timothy, who is a minister, and he knows he's going to be going on. He knows he's going to be martyred here real

soon.

2-Timothy 1:6: “For this reason, I admonish you to stir up the gift of God that is in you by the laying on of my hands.” That is by the ordination that comes. There is a gift for a ministry. There is a gift of God’s Spirit for teaching, and that has to come from God. What does Paul say? *Stir it up!* How do you stir it up? By letting the full exercise of God’s Spirit be with you through all your circumstances, through your whole life and what you are doing. And stir that up.

- draw close to God
- study God’s Word
- drink it in
- do the things that God wants you to do

That’s how you stir it up.

Verse 7: “For God has not given us the spirit of fear...” *Oh, I wonder what the members of the congregation will think? What does God think? I wonder what the world will think? What does God think?*

Where there is fear there is torment and there is opportunity for politics and shenanigans. I know and I speak from experience, and I can tell you wherewith that is true.

“...but of power, and of love, and of sound-mindedness” (v 7).

- the right kind of teaching
- the right kind of intellect
- the right kind of approach

will come from God’s Word and God’s Spirit as you apply yourself as a teacher. This is what you have to base your ministry on or teaching on; the power of God, the love of God, and the mind of God. What did the Apostle Paul say in Phil. 2? *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus!* Is that not the source of our right-mindedness? *Yes, absolutely!* See how all of these things tie in? *Very important!*

Verse 8: “Therefore, you should not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner; but jointly suffer with *me for the sake of the Gospel*, according to *the power of God*.” They are going to come and if you are not willing—what is the old saying? *If you can’t stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen!*

Verse 9: “Who has saved us and called us with a Holy calling...” That’s what teaching is and teaching the Bible is a Holy calling.

“...not according to our works... [because we are great or anything like that] ...but according to His own purpose and grace, which *was* given us in Christ Jesus before the ages of time” (v 9). The whole purpose of God.

Verse 10: “But has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, Who has annulled death, and has brought to light *eternal* life and incorruptibility through the Gospel... [that’s what we are to preach] ...unto which I was ordained a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of *the* Gentiles; for which cause I am also suffering these things; nevertheless, I am not ashamed. For I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He has the power to keep what I have committed *to Him* for that day” (vs 8-12).

In other words, he’s saying: ‘I’m going right on, (Phil. 3) until that very final day.’ That’s how important it is.

2-Timothy 2:1: “Therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that *is* in Christ Jesus.” That’s the whole source of what a teacher and a minister is:

- to do
- to have
- to preach
- to teach
- to rely upon

—the very grace of God. All those trials and difficulties that you go through in your life is so that you’re going to see:

- that you need mercy
- that you need forgiveness
- that you need grace
- that you are no big mucky-muck, whatsoever

The first time you think you are a big mucky-muck, God just may throw you in the muck and let you see and understand where you are. That applies to everyone, me and everyone else, whomever is a teacher.

Verse 2: “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, these *things* commit to faithful men, such as will be competent to teach others also.” Then with the qualifications as we read there in 1-Tim. 3, about what they should do.

Verse 3: “You, therefore, endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one who is serving as a soldier becomes involved in civilian pursuits, so that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier” (vs 2-4).

He’s saying, ‘Now look, you’re not going to do it with your armor, you’re not going to do it with your way, but you’re going to do it with the armor of God.’

Ephesians 6:10: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in *the* Lord, and in the might of His strength. Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (vs 10-11). That’s what he needs:

- the tools of God, not his own
- the tools of the Spirit, not his own
- the tools that God alone can give

Through His grace, for the ministry and for teaching.

2-Timothy 2:5: “Also, if anyone strives to *win* in the athletic games, he is not crowned unless he has competed lawfully.” Need I say anymore? *Everything must be done lawfully according to the Word of God!* Not great ideas of vanity of how you come up with new fangled doctrine, which is not in the Word of God. There are plenty of them in the world that are doing that.

Verse 6: “*Moreover*, it is necessary for the husbandman to labor before partaking of the fruits. Give careful consideration to the things *that* I am telling you, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things. Remember *that* Jesus Christ, of *the* seed of David, *was* raised from among *the* dead according to my Gospel; for which I am suffering hardship, *even* to the point of being imprisoned like a criminal; but the Word of God has not been chained. Because of this... [here’s the attitude we need to have if we are going to be teachers]: ... I endure all things for the sake of the elect in order that they may obtain *the* salvation that *is* in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (vs 6-10).

Then he says, down here a little further, v 14: [don’t] “...argue over words... [v 15]: ...Diligently *study* to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who does not *need to be* ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of the Truth.” With that, because of these responsibilities and because of these things, therefore James says, ‘Don’t many of you become teachers because we are going to receive the sterner judgment.’

Now let’s come back to James 3:2 and this is quite an interesting verse here. “Because we... [he’s including himself here] ...frequently offend [sin]...” Now the word for sinning here in the Greek means *missing the mark*, but it is the same word that he uses in:

James 2:10: “For *if* anyone keeps the whole law, but sins... [misses the mark] ...in one aspect, he becomes guilty of all. For He Who said, ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ also said, ‘You shall not commit murder.’ Now, if you do not commit adultery, but you commit murder, you have become a transgressor of *the Law*” (vs 10-11).

So therefore, instead of just saying, ‘we offend,’ which can in our modern terminology today mean you may ruffle someone’s feathers or to miss the mark, but you still hit the target. I thought it would be better to put in sin.

I’ll tell you why I did it that way right now: because as Christians, when we have the Spirit of God and we begin this fight of resisting sin and human nature; and we really see and understand the sin that is within us, in our minds, in our hearts, in our being, because of the law of sin and death and so forth; we understand that we are not just offending someone and ruffling their feathers. We understand that we are not just missing the mark, but we feel the more intensity of sin. Just like Jesus said, ‘You’ve heard it said in past time, you shall not commit adultery, but I say unto you, whosoever looks upon a woman to lust after her has committed adultery already with her in his heart.’ And that’s the way that human nature is. So therefore, it is sinning.

James 3:2: “Because we frequently offend [sin], every one of us....” We find ourselves sinning. Why do you think Jesus said, ‘Forgive us our sins’? And that’s on a daily basis as we forgive those who sin against us or trespass against us.

“...If anyone does not offend in what he says, this one *is* a perfect man *and is* able also to hold in check the whole body” (v 2).

Let’s see who is accusing us of sin all the time, constantly. Not only do we have the fight against sin, which we do, but there is also Satan there, accusing us before God. ‘God, you called that one; look at that one; yea, look at that, he’s sinning. There he goes again.’ And when you do, you say, ‘Oh, God, why did I do that? Oh, have mercy on me. Forgive me.’ Remember Jesus Christ died for sinners; the good, the bad and the ugly.

Revelation 12:10: “And I heard a great voice in heaven say, ‘Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ because the accuser of our brethren has been cast down, who accuses them day and night before our God.’” If you never sinned, there would be nothing to accuse you of. That’s why James is saying, ‘We all frequently are sinning.’

Let’s see how this operates so we can understand the full impact of the fight of human nature that we have; that I have, that you have, that everyone has. What we understand here, that James is writing about, and he’s truly saying, ‘Look, even I,’ and James was considered by most people as the most righteous Christian around. He said, ‘We all frequently sin.’ Paul said the same thing of himself.

Romans 7:14: “For we know that the Law is spiritual; but I am carnal, having been sold *as a slave* under sin.” That’s the way human nature is, totally. He says, ‘That in my flesh dwells not one good thing,’ because of the motivation of man. This is the most important thing for us to understand, that Christ is there with the grace of God to bring us out

of these kinds of things.

Verse 15: “Because what I am working out myself, I do not know....” In other words, the sins that he is doing he really doesn’t want to allow and do, but they are there.

“...For what I do not desire to do, this I do; moreover, what I hate, this *is what* I do” (v 15). That’s the conflict we all go through. That is the conflict of human nature, which then pulls us down. Again you might say, ‘Well, is there any hope?’

- you are not out here killing
- you are not out here stealing
- you are not out here committing adultery
- you are not out here committing idolatry
- you are not out here taking the name of God in vain

—but the inner struggle is in the mind, and which relates then to the tongue and that’s what James is talking about.

Verse 16: “But if I am doing what I do not desire to do, I agree with the Law that *it is* good.... [it’s the standard which shows us the right and wrong] ...So then, I am no longer working it out myself...” (vs 16-17). In other words, I am not deliberately, by choice, willfully doing this.

“...rather, it is sin *that is* dwelling within me; because I fully understand that there is not dwelling within me—that is, within my fleshly being—*any* good. For the desire to do good is present within me; but how... [the means of myself] ...to work out that which is good, I do not find. For the good that I desire to do, I am not doing; but the evil that I do not desire to do, this I am doing. But if I do what I do not desire to do, I am no longer working it out myself, but sin *that is* dwelling within me. Consequently, I find this law *in my members*, that when I desire to do good, evil is present with me” (vs 17-21).

That’s the whole struggle of human nature. We find that that is called *the law of sin and death*.

Verse 22: “For I delight in the Law of God according to the inward man.” Sure we do. It’s right, it’s Holy, it’s just, it’s spiritual, it’s good, it’s true, it’s wonderful, it’s marvelous.

Verse 23: “But I see another law within my own members, warring against the law of my mind... [that’s where it is taking place] ...and leading me captive to the law of sin that is within my own members.”

For the Christian he is in an extricable position, as it were. Kind of, as you would say in the world, ‘dammed if you do and damned if you don’t’

and that’s why some people say, ‘Ah, why even try?’ But with the Spirit of God that’s not what we are to do.

“...the law of sin that is within my own members.... [it’s there by inheritance] ...O *what a* wretched man I am!....” (vs 23-24). Notice the repentance, the understanding of self, the understanding of his own way.

Verse 24: “O *what a* wretched man I am! Who shall save me from the body of this death? I thank God *for His salvation* through our Lord Jesus Christ” (vs 24-25). Yes,

- Christ is going to deliver him
- Christ is going to deliver me
- Christ is going to deliver you
- Christ is going to deliver every one of us

“...Because of this, on the one hand, I myself serve the Law of God with *my* mind; but on the other hand, with the flesh, *I serve* the law of sin” (v 25)—*constantly overcoming*.

Romans 8:1: “Consequently, *there is* now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit; because the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus...” (vs 1-2).

- What is that law of the Spirit of Christ?
- Have you ever understood what that law of the Spirit of Christ is?
- Have you ever understood how God applies that to you?
 - ✓ in relationship to sin
 - ✓ in relationship to forgiveness
 - ✓ in relationship to overcoming

Since we have ‘the law of sin and death’ in us; if we’re constantly condemned by God, what hope is there for anybody? That’s why grace super-abounds above and beyond. It’s called the law of the Spirit.

Verse 2: “Because the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has delivered me... [made me free, justified me] ...**from the law of sin and death**” (v 2). You’ve been justified from that through Christ. Now, let’s see how that operation is taken care of.

- that’s why we need to come to the throne of grace daily
- that’s why we need grace to cover our lives constantly
- that’s why we need the sacrifice of Jesus
- Christ perpetually

We overcame him [Satan] through the blood of Christ. After we are accused day and night, but we have overcome him with the blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony (Rev. 12). Even though Satan is there, even though that sin is there;

if we do what 1-John says to do, then we will be in that righteous right standing with God!

1-John 1:5: “And this is the message that we have heard from Him and are declaring to you: that God is Light, and there is no darkness at all in Him. If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth. However, if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin” (vs 5-7).

Not all as a bundle, but every sin as we find ourselves frequently sinning! Why? *Because of the law of sin and death within us, which is human nature!*

“...and the blood of Jesus Christ His own Son cleanses...” —‘katharizo’—which means it is cleaning, scrubbing, wiping away, overcoming that sin through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Verse 8: “If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us.... [here’s the operation that takes care of it]: ...If we confess our own sins, **He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**” (vs 7-9). That is a tremendous blessing!

When a person comes to the point of committing the unpardonable sin, then they don’t want their sins forgiven. They don’t care about that, and they harden their heart and their mind and their attitude in absolute callous rebellion to God and trample under foot the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. That is the unpardonable sin. But as long as your attitude is sensitive, as long as you understand that you frequently sin on an ongoing basis, because of human nature, and you are coming to God and you are asking the blood of Christ be applied to you—to cover your life through the grace of God—your sins are being forgiven.

Verse 10: “If we say that we have not sinned...” Like the rich man: ‘Oh, good Lord, what should I do to inherit eternal life?’ And He says, ‘Keep the commandments.’ He says, ‘Well, I have done that. I haven’t sinned. I’m a good boy.’ Jesus said, ‘Sell all that you have.’

Verse 10: “If we say that we have not sinned, we are making Him a liar...” Why? *Because it says, ‘All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.’* We’re going to see that is why the Apostle James uses horses as an analogy, because human nature unconquered by God is just like a wild ravaging horse, good for nothing!

“...we are making Him a liar, and His Word

is not in us” (v 10).

1-John 2:1: “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.... [he doesn’t want us out practicing sin] ...And *yet*, if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ *the* Righteous; and He is *the* propitiation for our sins; and not for our sins...” (vs 1-2). To forgive sin, it is covered in two ways:

1. *expiation*, that is remove a specific sin
2. *propitiation*, which means a continuous, on going, cleansing, and forgiveness as we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us

Lest we get all lifted up in our own vanity and say, ‘Boy, I’ve got God to forgive my sins.’ Even though that’s a true statement, said that way would be in vanity.

So John says, “...and not for our sins only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*” (v 2). That’s the ultimate plan of God in His time.

Let’s go over James 3 and see how we can apply this to our lives.

James 3:2: “Because we frequently offend, every one of us. If anyone does not offend in what he says, this one *is* a **perfect** man...”—that you think you have attained to the whole goal of God, but you haven’t.

“...and **is able** also to hold in check the whole body” (v 2). The word *able* comes from the Greek ‘dunamis’; you have the power to do that. Well, who of us have that power? *None of us!* I can think of things that I said even yesterday that I wish maybe I had not said that way or said at all. This tongue in here is an *unruly evil*.

(go to the next track)

Here’s the analogy and the lesson with horses and he says, v 3: “Remember, we put bits into horses’ mouths in order that they may obey us, and we direct their entire bodies.”

You think about that for a minute. Let’s look at a horse. A horse in the wild has got to be captured, corralled, and then broken; which is called tamed. A horse in the wild is likened to human nature unchecked. The only thing it is interested in is eating, drinking, maintaining his harem and making the herd larger.

- they are non-productive
- they don’t carry anyone on their backs
- they don’t pull any loads
- they don’t plow
- they are not fit for anything but to just eat, procreate and die

That's why he uses horses. Another reason he uses horses is because there are many different kinds of horses:

- there are little horses
- there are big horses
- there are work horses
- there are pull horses
- there are race horses
- there are show horses
- there are quarter horses

That's why he chose horses, because it also reflects the diversity of human beings in this analogy.

I saw a television show where it depicted the first crusade coming through Europe on down to Jerusalem and it showed those French horses that they used. Those were huge, bulky—it looked just like a tank—big thick neck, big thick chest, big thick legs, and it was needed to carry the knights with all of the steel and the armor that they had. It was quite a horse! It was some horse! Then they had a companion horse with it, which was just kind of like a nice little quarter horse that we might have today, or an Arabian horse. It was beautiful and nice; that big ole thick workhorse was kind of ugly looking really, and muscular compared to it. But, each one has a purpose. Each one had to be trained and each one had to have a bit in its mouth to make it go and do what the driver or the owner wanted, it had to have control over it. Now that's why he uses this.

"...that they may obey us, and we direct their entire bodies" (v 3).

Now let's look at some things concerning horses, concerning another analogy from that; the reins, try the reins, try the heart and so forth. Let's see what happens when a whole society runs like horses, live like horses. That's what we have today: bucking, kicking, stomping, breeding, neighing. You'll see quite a prophetic statement about how people conduct their lives.

One night here recently I had an opportunity to go to a restaurant to have dinner and I didn't know what was going on there because I wasn't used to this restaurant. After sitting there eating and watching the people for a while, I realized that we had a horse scene going on here. We had the women in there looking for their pickups for that night. When I read this Scripture here it just reminded me of it; that here you've got unbridled, unchecked human nature with everyone 'neighing' after his neighbor's wife.

Jeremiah 5:7: "How shall I pardon you for this? Your children have forsaken Me, and have sworn by them that are not gods.... [just like the wild, unbridled horse] ...When I had fed them to the

full, then they committed adultery, and gathered themselves by troops in a harlot's house. They were *like* lusty, well-fed stallions in the morning; every one neighing after his neighbor's wife. Shall I not punish for these *things*?' says the LORD...." (vs 7-9).

Sure, He's going to visit for these things, but that's just the way that human nature is; just like a wild horse.

Now let's look at some other Scriptures giving some other analogies about human nature. We'll see some various things that have been used and this is why James, the brother of Jesus, took this and used this. This was a well thought out verse. This was not something that was: 'Oh, well, that's good—horses. Yea, I'll write about horses.' He got this out of the Bible.

Psalms 32:9: "Be not like the horse, or like the mule..." What about mules? They're stubborn! Mules are half-breeds; they're a cross between a donkey and a horse. That's why their nature is contrary. There are too many half-breeds out there; too many half-breed Christians that are stubborn, that won't do the will of God, but they want their own way. That's why here is the perfect Psalm for you, perfect verse.

Verse 9: "Be not like the horse, or like the mule, which have no understanding—which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you." That's why James wrote the verse the way he did. We can understand that we're not to be that way; but as an analogy that's what you do to animals to control them.

Another reference in the Psalms concerning horses, concerning their behavior in relationship to how that fits into our lives now:

Psalms 7:9: "O let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous, for the righteous **God tries the hearts and reins.**"

If God tried your reins... In other words, do you have with the Holy Spirit the control of God? Jesus said, 'The Churches ought to know and remember that I, Jesus, am the One Who tries the reins and the heart to give to every man according to his works' (Rev. 2). How are your reins? If God picked up the reins of your life:

- Is He going to find you a bucking bronco?
- Is He going to find you a stubborn mule?
- Is He going to find you a wild ass in the wilderness?

or

- Is He going to find you ready?
- Is He going to find you willing?
- Is He going to find you working?

- Is He going to find you plowing?
- Is He going to find you struggling to pull that weight and that load?

—regardless of your circumstances! See why that was used. It's so fantastic! What an analogy! What a beautiful picture that that is for us.

David says, Psalm 26:1: “Judge me, O LORD...” Didn't he say that we'll have the sterner judgment? *Yes, indeed!* See how that ties in. The Word of God fits together, always fits together beautifully.

“...for I have walked in my integrity... [which is really God's integrity] ... I have trusted also in the LORD without wavering. Examine me, O LORD, and prove me... [test me] ...try my reins and my heart... [not saying how good I am, how great I am God] ...for Your loving kindness is before my eyes; and I have walked in Your Truth” (vs 1-3).

He's taunting God here 'to test me to see how good I am.' No! But 'O God help me to walk in Your ways and let that be the test whether I am walking in Your ways.'

Is your heart and your mind submissive and yielded to God? If it is, don't let any man leverage that to himself and take it from you, but let your heart and your reins:

- be supple
- be controlled
- be yielded
- be directed by the Spirit of God

That's what it's saying here.

Psalm 139:1 talks much about the same thing here; this is where David says: “O LORD, You have searched me and have known me.... [How? *By trying the reins and the heart!*] ...You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thoughts afar off. You measure my going about and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways, for there is **not a word on my tongue**, but, lo, O LORD, You know it altogether” (vs 1-4).

Now that's why it's so important that we control our tongues, very important. We're going to see some other things about our tongue and the use of it as we go through the entire third chapter of James.

David talks about how he was made, v 13: “For You have possessed my reins; You have knit me together in my mother's womb.” He's saying, 'God has that control over me my whole life, even from conception.' You think about that. Be sure and read and study all the rest of Psa. 139. Absolutely marvelous where he says:

Verse 14: “I will praise You, for **I am awesomely and wonderfully made...**”

Yes, you are made in the image of God. Psa. 8:5^[transcriber's correction] says that you have been made a 'little lower than Elohim'; *that means God!* You are made a little lower than God, not just the angels. It's true you are made lower than the angels, but there it's talking about Elohim; a little lower than God, because that is your potential to become a very member of the Family of God. That's why it's very important that we let God help us, guide us, lead us, direct us and **that we obey Him**; just like we would require horses to obey us had we had them tamed and broken and with the bit in their mouth:

- so that they can work
- so that they can perform
- so that they can do fantastic and wonderful things

And they can be trained to do wonderful things, but the same thing is true with our human nature and behavior.

- with the Spirit of God *the untamed can be tamed*
- with the Spirit of God *that which is unruly can be controlled*
- with the Spirit of God *we can take that which is wild and direct it into direct action toward growing and overcoming and working toward the Kingdom of God in faith, through the Spirit of God*

Again James draws the analogy here by using ships. Why use ships?

James 3:4: “Consider also *that* ships, being so large, and being driven by strong winds, are turned about by a very small rudder, wherever the will of the one who is steering may decide [for himself].” Now I translated it that way because it reflects quite a few things.

Let's understand about ships. It says here, “...being so large...” What are ships made to do? They are made to carry people! They are made to carry burdens! Let's carry the analogy a little further.

- your life equals the boat or ship
- the sea equals the world in which we live
- the wind is the power or the force that moves your life

We find in Rev. 13:17, first of all, the beast that comes up out of the sea, the woman that is standing upon many waters and those many waters are peoples and nations and multitudes and tongues. *That is the world!* The power that directs your life:

- Is it the power of God Who is filling your sails?

or

- Is it the power of Satan who is filling your sails?

Eph. 2 talks about the power of Satan filling your sails, because he is ‘the prince of the power of the air,’ *if* you are not letting the power of God fill your sails. So, it’s quite an analogy that he has here. It’s really apropos in what we are studying and then we will see that there are going to be storms in life.

- Don’t we talk about the storms of life?
- Don’t we talk about the waves of things that come along in this society?
- *Sure we do!*

Ephesians 2:1: “Now, you were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you walked in times past according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit...” (vs 1-2).

The one that has that power of the air! So in this analogy, is Satan filling your sails? And if he is, where is your port of call going to be? Life is just like the ocean, there are going to be smooth parts and there will be tempestuous parts. There are going to be stormy parts. There are going to be catastrophes, which you could liken to a hurricane. But nevertheless, that’s all a part of life.

So here’s the “...prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working... [or inner working] ...within the children of disobedience; among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest of *the world*” (vs 2-3). That’s why he uses the analogy here of ships. There is so much to be learned from that.

- How is your ship?
- Do you have leaks in it?
- Are you maintaining it?

And if you are on the ocean you have to make sure that every once in a while you get it up on dry dock and you scrap off the barnacles and you paint it, maintain it, repair the sails, fix the ropes, get all pulleys and all of these things together. All of those analogies fit and you could probably go on and on with this analogy as applied to human life and what we are doing.

Let’s see that this also applies in the book of Matthew, and see where this same thing is used in the very life of the disciples and is a witness that Jesus did for the disciples. We’ll see two accounts of

this, and this is fantastic. In reading this I want you to mentally put yourself into the boat with the disciples and they’re in a storm; in a smaller boat, if you have waves four or five feet high and the boat is loaded down with all of the disciples.

Matthew 8:23: “And when He entered into the ship, His disciples followed Him. Now a great tempest suddenly arose in the sea...” (vs 23-24).

Who do you suppose stirred this up? Who was after Jesus wherever He went? *Satan the devil!* He stirred up the storm. ‘Boy, let’s get them with this storm. Let’s sink that ship and drown the Son of man and kill all of the disciples. We’ll nip this Christianity in the bud before it ever gets a start.’ So, here came this tremendous storm.

“...so great that the ship was being covered by the waves...” (v 24). Coming over the top of it. Now you want to have a helpless feeling? Wow! That is it! The waves coming over the top of the ship and its open and then things coming in there.

“...but He was sleeping. And His disciples came to *Him* and awoke Him, saying, ‘Lord, save us! We are perishing.’ And He said to them, ‘Why are you afraid, O *you* of little faith?’?...” (vs 24-26). *If you knew and understood who I really was, it wouldn’t matter if I was awake or asleep.*

“...Then He arose... [notice this lesson that He taught them]: ... *and* rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm” (vs 24-26).

And here’s another analogy. We all like to have smooth sailing. We all like to have life calm. Who alone can give that? *God can!* Who alone can bring us out of the storms of life into the safety of the calmness of God’s way? *Jesus Christ!* Again, tremendous analogies that are here for us. Absolutely tremendous!

Verse 27: “But the men were amazed, saying, ‘What kind of *man*... [or manner of man] ...is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?’” That’s why this analogy is used here.

Let’s see another account relating to faith and the sea and the boat and the storm and walking toward Christ and all of that.

Matthew 14:22: “And immediately Jesus compelled His disciples to enter the ship and go before Him to the other side, while He dismissed the multitude.” He sent them off ahead of time and they didn’t know how He was going to join them.

Verse 23: “And after dismissing the multitude, He went up into the mountain apart to pray; and when evening came, He was there alone. But the ship was now in *the* middle of the sea, being tossed by the waves, because the wind was contrary.

Now in *the* fourth watch of the night...” (vs 23-25).

Jesus was up there praying all night. The fourth watch would be what we would consider from three in the morning until six in the morning; the fourth watch of the night. Here it was just before dawn. Here are all the disciples out there rowing, working hard, all night, can't make any progress.

Do you feel that way sometimes in your life; that you're out here working as a Christian, you're doing all you can—you're not making any progress? It's just like you're rowing against the wind. You make a little progress and the wind pushes you back. And you row and you row and the water is coming in your face and the wind is blowing. You got all these trials. You got all these things pushing in on you. You're rowing and you're rowing and not making any progress. It seems like you're about ready to be exhausted.

Verse 25: “Now in *the* fourth watch of the night, Jesus went to them walking on the sea.” That which is impossible with men *is possible with God!* God can intervene and help you in those circumstances. All your work, all your labor, all your effort seems to be to nothing. Why? *Because you are not looking to Christ!* That's why! You're out here battling this problem, out here battling this storm and rowing and rowing yourself to a frazzle and then all of a sudden you come to yourself and you say, ‘Ah, I need to go to Christ.’ And that's what Peter did.

Verse 26: “And when the disciples saw Him... [walking on the water] ...walking on the sea, they were troubled and said ‘It is an apparition!’... [it's a spirit, a demon] ...And they cried out in fear... [‘O God, help us!'] ...But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘Be of good courage; *it is I*. Do not be afraid’” (vs 26-27).

With this analogy, think of all the tempestuous problems and the foaming of the sea and the roaring of the wind and your exhaustion from working and Jesus said, “...Be of good courage; *it is I*. Do not be afraid.” You can take that as a lot of comfort in your life, regardless of your circumstances.

- if it's health
- if it's a loved one
- if it's old age
- if it's weakness
- if it's a job problem
- if it's an employment problem

—whatever it is—there is nothing that overwhelms Christ. That's the whole lesson here. He said, ‘Be of good cheer “...*it is I*. Do not be afraid.”

Verse 28: “Then Peter answered Him *and*

said, ‘Lord, if it is You, bid me to come to You upon the waters.’ And He said, ‘Come.’ And after climbing down from the ship...” (vs 28-29). It took a certain amount of guts on Peter's part to even ask the question and an awful lot of guts to even start down.

“...Peter walked upon the waters to go to Jesus” (v 29). There are many times we are going along and we loose faith and BOOM! we do the same thing as Peter.

Verse 30: “But when he saw *how* strong the wind *was*... [the boisterous wind] ...he became afraid; and *as he* was beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, ‘Lord, save me!’”

There are so many times we get ourselves into these positions. It's kind of like walking on the water, as it were, but we could say today: walking on the edge, walking on the brink between those things we know are of faith and those things we know we ought not be doing. And when we finally realize that this whole thing is going to overwhelm us, we say, ‘Lord, save me!’ And what happens? *The Lord intervenes and saves in His grace and His mercy and kindness!*

Verse 31: “And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, ‘O *you* of little faith, why did you doubt?’” There are also many analogies you can have here:

- Are you holding onto the hand of Jesus?
- Are you having the faith of Jesus?
- Are you looking to Him?
- Are you walking on the water thinking, ‘it's not too deep. I can make it’?
- What if the waves come up and the bottom finally falls off?
- How many times have you gone
- swimming and you've been walking out and all of a sudden there is a drop off?

I remember one time we were baptizing a woman up in northern California in the Smith River. That river has banks and big boulders. It is pretty swift, because the lay of the land is pretty steep. sloping toward the ocean. So here we are—we're going to baptize this woman. Now the Smith River is cold, really cold! So, we put on our waders, another minister and I, and we went out there in the Smith River to baptize her. I was the one standing at the head, because the other minister was the one who was doing the baptizing and I was assisting him. We made the mistake of baptizing the woman down current, instead of up current. Well, when we put her down the current started taking her away. All of a sudden we had to step out to rescue her from getting carried away going down the Smith River.

We stepped out and plunk, went down in, and all of a sudden our wading boots all filled up with water. What a near disaster that was! We can be thankful that God was in it and didn't let her go down stream and we didn't slip under the water and all that sort of thing. There are going to be times in your lives when it's going to be like that. You come to your senses, you have the faith, the wind stops, the trial is over.

Verse 33: "And those in the ship came and worshiped Him, saying, 'You are truly the Son of God.'" I guess so! Just remember that in relationship to your life and your trials and your boat and your sail and your wind and all the storms that you go through.

I want to tell you a couple of other stories since we are right here with this. I want to relate, if you have ever seen the movie Papillon starring Steve McQueen and Dustin Hoffman. It's a good example of judgment without mercy. They were crooks. They committed whatever they committed, sent to the French penal colony of Guyana in South America. Right next to that is the Devil's Island. If you are not too bad you go to Guyana and you are really bad then you go to the Devil's Island.

Well, needless to say, the whole story of Papillon centered around how they were put there in these unmerciful conditions: in the jungle, in the heat, in the mud, in the slop, in the mire, in the leeches, with these cruel taskmasters with whips. They had chains and leg irons. Their food was wretched and rotten. The most miserable conditions you could think of in the heat of the jungle, with all of the bugs, mosquitoes, snakes, crocodiles and everything you could think of. They had to slop out there and cut this hard wood in the jungle and without any of the tools that we have today to get any of that; work and labor.

They devised a way to escape; they escaped and got caught, and that put them in solitary for two years. It showed Steve McQueen in there, in solitary and you talk about judgment without mercy! What cruel and terrible things were done! He could not talk to anyone; he couldn't see anyone. They were fed through a little hole in the wall. They got the most wretched and awful food. One of his friends sent him the half coconut; where if he ate that he wouldn't get as run down being in solitary confinement there. He only could take five steps, five steps, five steps; that was it.

Finally, they got caught with the coconut and then he was asked to tell who it was and they had what they called prisoner show yourself and he opened up a little cubicle like that and you stick your head out and he was caught with one of these things;

one of these rods right on his throat and saying, 'All right, you tell who gave that to you.' He wouldn't tell, so then he was given six months with no light, half rations and he grubbed and he lived on millipedes, centipedes, cockroaches, slugs, whatever came in there. And the half ration was mostly just wretched, rotten soup and slop. He almost gave in before that six months of darkness and he was going to tell who did it. He said, 'I want to tell the warden, I want to tell the warden,' and then they came out prisoner show yourself so he stuck his head out and he looked and he says—he changed his mind, and he says—'I really wanted to tell you but I forgot. I forgot, I forgot!' Pitiful, *pitiful*, **pitiful!** BAM! He was back in there in that solitary confinement.

Finally he served his two years and he got out and then he was able to go and work and recover. And they took him to the infirmary and he got his health back and everything. Then he tried to escape again and got caught again, and this time five years solitary confinement—same thing. Then it showed at the end his five years were up and the warden came out and said, 'Prisoner show yourself,' and it showed him as an old man with gray hair and everything. 'Now your five years is up.' So then, he sent him to Devil's Island and there is no way off Devil's Island.

I felt so sorry for the man, the way that it was pictured and everything and he finally figured out a way how to escape from Devil's Island. He would go out and sit and watch the waves, count the waves, and finally figured out that every seventh wave—it would carry him out if he got into the water. He figured out how he could do this with coconuts and make a big coconut raft. He threw that down, jumped in the water and he drifted out and got over to mainland. He was the only one to escape Devil's Island! Boy, what a trial that was! And just thinking of all the things that he went through, and that's right when I was preparing for this sermon.

And then one other story I've got to tell you. It is the historical account in 1916 of Captain Shackleton^[transcriber's correction] and his expedition to Antarctica.

You talk about terrible and extreme conditions! They went down to Antarctica and they didn't get out in time and their ship got frozen in. They had three-foot thick wooden hull. It was fierce, it was terrible, 100-degrees below zero, 100mph winds. They were able to have the still photographer take pictures of it, and some of it was moving pictures, too. It showed how the ice finally crushed the ship and they had to get up and get out of it. They had been there 16 months in Antarctica. They survived the whole winter. Then they had to set out with their dog teams and they were going to go to

Elephant Island. So, they got on this big ice raft, as it were, this big iceberg, which was floating up that way. They had their dogs, they had their boats and everything. They finally got up to where they'd get to Elephant Island and it was so warm that the iceberg was falling; everything was falling apart from all around them.

You talk about a trial in life! Everything falling out from underneath you! So, they had to get into their boats and they tried to go to Elephant Island, because they knew there were supplies there. They couldn't make Elephant Island so they had to regroup. They were then going to go to St. George's Island. It showed the wind and the waves; tremendous 50-foot waves in this cold, cold, miserable, God forsaken place!

They finally got to St. George's Island, but they landed on the wrong side, so Captain Shackleton and two others had to climb this unclimbable mountain. They finally got to the top of it exhausted! They couldn't see down the glacier because of the cloud covering that was there. They left the other people there saying, 'We'll be back and get you. You take care of yourself.' They got up there and the three of them tied themselves together and decided just to slide down the glacier. They slid down the glacier a couple of thousand feet and untied themselves and they found themselves just within a short distance of the whaling station at St. George's Island. Shackleton and the two men walked in and said, 'Hello, I am Captain Shackleton. Can you send a boat to rescue my men?'

Everyone had thought the whole expedition had died out. Here it was a total of 18 months! Now you talk about difficulties and problems! Then it took them two months to come around and get those men that were left on the other side of St. George's Island. They were all alive and they all lived!

- when we think about our life
- when we think about our problems
- when we think about the difficulties we are going through

then we need to go back and read this here and understand that our lives are not much different than anybody else's.

Liken your life as it were to a boat or to a ship, and let the wind of God, the Spirit of God—because the wind of God comes from Acts 2—that 'the Holy Spirit came as a mighty rushing wind.'

Let that be the wind that fills the sails of your life, to blow you to the port and let that port be the Kingdom of God. So, this is why James uses horses and uses boats.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) James 3:1-5
- 2) 1 Timothy 3:1-11
- 3) 2 Timothy 1:6-12
- 4) 2 Timothy 2:1-4
- 5) Ephesians 6:10-11
- 6) 2 Timothy 2:5-10, 14-15
- 7) James 3:2
- 8) James 2:10-11
- 9) James 3:2
- 10) Revelation 12:10
- 11) Romans 7:14-25
- 12) Romans 8:1-2
- 13) 1 John 1:5-10
- 14) 1 John 2:1-2
- 15) James 3:2-3
- 16) Jeremiah 5:7-9
- 17) Psalm 32:9
- 18) Psalm 7:9
- 19) Psalm 26:1-3
- 20) Psalm 139:1-4, 13-14
- 21) James 3:4
- 22) Ephesians 2:1-3
- 23) Matthew 8:23-27
- 24) Matthew 14:22-31, 33

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Philippians 2; 3
- Revelation 2
- Psalm 8:5
- Revelation 13:17
- Acts 2

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