

HIGHLANDS CHURCH

Deceived or Devoted? | James 1:16-18 | Thomas Slager

[Full Transcript](#)

Unknown Speaker
February 9, 2026

Duration: 40:32

God's Goodness in Every Season

- 0:06 I was just thinking while Todd was praying, like it's weird to be in a season that doesn't feel good, but at the same time recognize God's goodness in it. And I don't know what season you find yourself in this morning. Maybe you are highest of highs, things are great. Or maybe you are valley of the shadow of death, lowest of lows. Maybe you're feeling and thinking and experiencing things that just aren't good. What I find a lot of rest in today is knowing that we serve a good, mighty, and holy God who has good, good plans for our life. That's what we've been talking about in our study in the book of James, really from right out of the gate, James chapter one, verse one.
- 0:46 We learned that this group of people that James is writing to are part of this thing called the dispersion. They're the first Christians ever facing immense persecution, and they all have been kicked out of their home. And then with the audacity James has to write, consider it joy when you encounter trials of various kinds. Why? Because we know that God is good and because we know that God is working. We're really going to turn to that same theme this morning, but we're going to look at it from slightly different of a perspective. If you haven't been with us throughout the study of James thus far, I'd invite you to open to the book of James, whether you've been with us or not.

James the Skeptical Brother Becomes a Pillar

- 1:29 I do want to catch you up just a little bit so we can familiarize ourselves. Again, with who this James character is. James was the brother of Jesus, the actual brother of Jesus. James was known as James the younger. He was a bit younger than the other James, and he was also about 10 to 15 years younger than Jesus. So we can imagine a little bit what that must have been like growing up with Jesus and hearing things from Mary and Joseph, James's mother and father saying things like, why can't you be more like your brother, Jesus?
- 2:02 Which is a little unfair of a comparison, if you ask me. But you can imagine what that must have been like to experience your brother doing these things and saying these things, claiming to be God. Many people around Jesus at the time believed in him, but what we saw is that Jesus's own brothers did not. In fact, Jesus was out and about saying things like talking about how he's the Christ, the son of God, how he's the Messiah, how he's the anointed one, how he's the Lord, how he's the Lord of the world, and so on, telling people to repent and believe. Why? Because the kingdom of heaven is at hand, and there's a handful of times throughout the gospels that says, but Jesus's own brothers thought he was crazy.
- 2:45 So while Jesus was here walking, talking, living, breathing, ministering, preparing God to do a mighty work through Christ's death and resurrection, his own brother James denied him. His own brother James didn't even believe in him, which gives him a pretty unique perspective on his brother. Fast forward, Jesus dies on the cross. He raises from the dead. First Corinthians 15 says Jesus makes a few special appearances to some specific people, one of which is James. He shows up to James and maybe that's the moment of conversion. Maybe that's the aha moment where James finally believes that Christ is the son

of God, that he is the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

3:28 We're not entirely sure if that's the moment, but we do know from that moment on, according to the book of Acts, James became a significant, significant part of the early church in Jerusalem. Many called him a pillar. That's what the apostle Paul referred to James as, a pillar in the church at Jerusalem. So he begins ministering, serving, caring for all of these brand new Christians, like the first Christians ever in Jerusalem. They face immense persecution. They're scattered all over the place, and James has this moment where he stands on the temple mount where we see Jesus stand in the same place in Matthew chapter four, and he's given two options. You can renounce your faith in Christ and live, or you can profess faith in Christ again and you'll be thrown from the temple and martyred for your faith.

Understanding James's Context and Message

4:17 And Christian history and Christian church tradition tells us instead of renouncing his faith in his brother Jesus, he stands, professes faith where he's thrown down from the temple, ultimately stoned to death for having faith in Christ. It's a remarkable story, and it's the story we get to read, and it's from that story we get to learn and understand what's going on in James's heart. Now we got to remember James is the leader of like the very first church ever in Jerusalem, so he's ministering primarily to what we'd call a messianic Jew, or a fulfilled Jew, or a completed Jew, someone who's placed their faith in Christ all the while, kind of living their life according to the principles of the Old Testament, which to them, at the time, they wouldn't have called it the Old Testament, they just would have called it their Bible.

5:08 I mean, we use the word Bible, they wouldn't have used the word Bible, but that's what they had. So when we're reading and studying through the book of James, there's all sorts of things that we find throughout James's letter to this Jewish church that are deeply, deeply rooted in the Old Testament.

5:27 Language and images of God as creator, language and images as God as Father, which are very deeply Jewish in nature, and that's kind of what we're going to see today. We're going to see how we can look at trials and the things going on in our life through this perspective of the goodness of God, the goodness of God. Last week, we talked a lot about sin and temptation, more on trials, and he's going to return to that theme once more, and then kind of turn the corner and start bringing us to the next place that we'll go together. So this morning, we're in James chapter one, verses 16 through 17. James chapter one, verses 16 through 17.

The Text: Do Not Be Deceived

6:03

James 1:16-18

Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

- 6:14 Hopefully that'll be this week. That'd be sweet. James chapter one, verses 16 through 18. Let me read it for us, and then I'll pray. Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow. Due to change. Of his own will, he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.
- 6:46 Let me pray for us. God, what's my voice that's been heard? We know today it's your word that's been spoken. God, I pray today you would give us the humility to submit to your word as the authority for our life.
- 7:04 God, would you help us not just read and hear and understand what we read in the Bible today, but God, would you help us not just read and hear and understand what we read in the Bible today, but God, would you help us do it? Would you help us believe it? Would you help us put it into real practice?
- 7:18 God, I pray today we wouldn't just show up in church and sit and listen and then leave, but God, I ask that we would be deeply changed by your spirit through your written word.
- 7:33 God, by your spirit this morning, would you open minds that we might be able to understand? Would you open eyes that we could see you clearly? God, would you open ears that we could see you clearly? God, would you open ears that we could hear you speaking to each and every one of us this morning? God, open our hearts to respond in love and faith and belief.
- 7:52 And God, would you open our mouths that we go out into the world and preach this gospel of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world? God, we are so thankful for your presence in our life this morning. This time is yours. We ask you to do with it whatever you will. We pray that your kingdom come, your will would be done here in our life as it's being done in heaven. God, we love you. Give you this time. It's in Christ's name we pray. Amen. Amen. Three verses, two application points for you. You'll see in your outline, one a do not and one a do.

The Cycle of Deception to Death

- 8:26 First, we'll start with the do not. He says, do not be deceived by the world. Do not be deceived by the world. Now, why would I use the word world? Well, world, think of it, Jesus calls the devil the prince of the power of the air, that's the way God refers to the devil. So don't be deceived by the devil. Don't be deceived by the system he's created and the system he's curated, a system that really is designed to trip us up, to deceive us, to bring death into our life. That's where he begins. Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Do not be deceived. I mean, last week we talked about this process that happens when we sin, what this process looks like.
- 9:14 It begins with some kind of deception. Last week we talked about elk hunting and fishing and how there's deception involved with the intended outcome. If you're fishing, your goal is to deceive a fish into biting onto something that's not good for them. If you're out hunting, maybe you employ some tactics where there's deception involved to draw things out for the purpose of killing an animal.

- 9:42 There's deception involved. See, the devil used these same exact kind of tactics. We talked about how deception ultimately leads to some kind of desire. You'd be, man, I think I do actually want that. And then it moves from desire into like really dwelling and really thinking about it. And then eventually there's this moment of action where we're no longer just dwelling, but now disobedience comes into play. And disobedience, when it's fully grown and left unrepented, unchecked, it says that ultimately brings forth death.
- 10:14 We talked about how it brings forth death maybe in three different ways. There are some sins we can commit that can lead to physical death. Like that can be a consequence for that. We see the wages of sin is death. So there's a spiritual death that comes from sin. Then there's also this other consequence of this death -like existence. So even though you're alive, it's like you're not quite really living.
- 10:37 The sin in your life is just bringing more and more lackluster experiences, more and more lackluster experiences. And so we talked about how it brings forth death. And so we talked about how it brings forth death. So even though you're alive, it's just bringing more and more of so we talked about how it brings forth death. So even though you're alive, it's just bringing more and more of a death -like experience, things that feel like they're just off, things that feel like they're just wrong, things that feel like they just aren't intended to be the way they're intended to be.
- 10:56 Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. I think there's three different ways that we can take this. The first is the way I just mentioned, deceived into sinning. Don't be deceived into sinning. You could go all the way left to the Old Testament, Genesis chapter three, the tempter, Satan, the devil shows up. His job is to steal, to kill, to destroy. First Peter says he prowls around like a roaring, hungry lion looking for people to destroy. Jesus comes to give life, but Satan comes to bring death. So he shows up in the Garden of Eden as a serpent, and he begins to tempt Adam and Eve.

Three Forms of Deception to Avoid

- 11:35 And we see that this temptation, this deception, ultimately leads to their disobedience. He says, did God really say you can't have any of this fruit? And Eve responds, no. He says we can have like 99.99999 % of it. We've got a pretty good thing going here. We just can't eat from that one, that one tree in the middle.
- 12:00 No, God doesn't want you to eat that, because he knows that when you eat that, you'll become like him. Where if you read early the creation account, Genesis chapter 1 verse 26 says, let us make man in our likeness. We're already like God. But this is what Satan does. He shows up, and he deceives. He tells half-truths and half-lies to get us to bite.
- 12:26 So we know the story. Adam and Eve, they eat the fruit, and then God confronts them and says, what happened? And Eve says, the serpent showed up, and he deceived me. This is what the devil does. He tempts us to sin. He tricks us to sin. He deceives us into doing things that will produce, death, maybe physical death, maybe spiritual death, or maybe this death -like existence where we're alive, but we're not really living.

12:55

James 1:13

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.

13:33 And James corrects their bad theology by saying, no, no, no, no, no. That's not how God works. Do not be deceived into thinking that God actually wants you to sin. That is entirely out of character. That's entirely not who he is. God doesn't desire your sin. God desires your holiness. Don't be deceived into believing God is tempting you. Or maybe there's a third thing he's talking about. Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Maybe it's this next topic he turns to. Do not believe or do not be deceived into thinking that good things and perfect things come from anyone other than God.

14:13 That's where he's going to go to next in our text. Now, which one? Which one? Which one? Which one? Which one? Which one? Which one is it? I think it really can be all three. Do not be deceived into sinning. Brings forth death. Do not be deceived into thinking that God's the one tempting you. He's not. He doesn't desire you to sin. He desires you to be holy.

Every Good and Perfect Gift Comes from Above

14:33 Do not be deceived into thinking that good things and perfect things we experience in our life come from anyone, anything, or any place other than God, because it's who he is. God is good.

14:49 My beloved brothers, every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. He introduces two categories here, every good gift and every perfect gift. I think these are two different things. And I think these good gift categories extends to all people for all of time without exclusion. We refer to it commonly as God's common grace. If you want to turn Matthew chapter five, I'd invite you to turn there, where Jesus actually speaks of this common grace. He talks about the grace of God. He talks about how God is good towards everyone. This isn't just unique to the teachings of Jesus. We also see the same thing. John the Baptist in John chapter three says, anything good that anyone has comes down from heaven.

15:33

Matthew 5:43-45

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

15:50 Jesus' teaching and teaching in teaching in Matthew chapter five, verse 43, he says this, you have heard that it was said. In other words, this is the teaching of the day. This is what's normal. This is how everyone tends to live their life naturally. You have heard that it was said, you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. Like that's, that's his natural thinking. Like if we're being honest, who's good at that right here, right now? Like we're all like, yep, I'm good at that. I love people who love me. People who hate me, I'm pretty good at hating them back. That's just normal life. But the way of Jesus is, is radically different.

16:22 You have heard that it was said, you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you so that you may be sons of your father who is in heaven. For he makes the sunrise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. God doesn't just give good things to people who are Christians.

16:47 God doesn't just give good things to people who profess faith in Christ. God doesn't just give good things to those people who do good air quotes things. God provides good for all of his creation. Colossians chapter one, you could say Jesus who created all things that we get to enjoy. I mean, that's a good gift available to everyone. Colossians chapter one says, Jesus isn't just the creator of all things, but Jesus is the sustainer of all things. The one in whom we live and move. Jesus is the creator of all things. The one in whom we live and move. And have our being. So every single person all across the world who woke up this morning with air in their lungs is because Jesus caused them to do so.

17:34 It wasn't just like the whole world went to sleep and only Christians woke up. Everyone, the evil and the good. If you wake up early and experience a beautiful sunrise, it's not as if only Christians get to experience good. Now, the whole world, gets to experience God's goodness in some ways.

17:58

Matthew 5:46-48

For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Good Gifts vs. Perfect Gifts

18:25 He goes on and says, if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You, therefore, must be perfect. Great. As your heavenly father is perfect.

18:46 Now this word perfect, I think when we see perfect, we think of like moral perfection, right? Any perfect people in church this morning don't raise your hand you'll ruin your streak no

19:02 We know we're not perfect no one's righteous no not one no one does good no one seeks God all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God each and every one of us imperfect the idea that we can completely achieve perfection in this life no longer sin again no longer even think sinful things is totally bogus it's impossible thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord well

19:27 Then what's he talking about perfect you'd bust therefore you must be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect well God gives perfect gifts earlier on in the book of James we saw that we would allow endurance to have us full effect so that we may be perfect and complete lacking in nothing this word perfect it's this word teleos which means completeness needed lacking nothing brought all the way out to its intended end its intended finish line so for you and I what are the perfect gifts that God gives us I think these perfect gifts are different than good gifts God's good gifts are for everyone God's perfect gifts I think are meant to bring us to that intended finish line that sanctification process that process

- 20:16 Of becoming more and more and more like Christ who is perfect these good and perfect gifts perfect gifts are salvation by through Christ grace Faith alone faith is a perfect gift Grace is a perfect gift Conviction of the Holy Spirit in our life is a perfect gift being filled with the spirit is a perfect gift the ability to walk with the spirit so that we don't desire the and satisfy the desires of our flesh that is a perfect gift the gifts the Lord do the things in our life, our spiritual gifts, to go do the work he's called us to is a perfect gift.
- 21:02 Even suffering that produces character, that leads to endurance, that produces completeness and perfection is a perfect gift. Wisdom, when we don't understand, when we go before God and say, God, what the heck is going on? Can you help me see things from your perspective? Can you help me see what you're doing here? God, can you please give me wisdom? Wisdom is a perfect gift.
- 21:33 We experience good things all around us, but the perfect things God gives us are intended to bring us to that product he wants us to be more and more like his son, Jesus. Every good thing we experience, every perfect gift we have, James says, hey, don't forget where that's from. That's from above.
- 21:56 That's from God. The good things we experience are not just meant to be the good things on their own. The perfect things we experience isn't meant to just be an end in and of itself. All of those things are just a means to something much greater. We receive good gifts for the purpose of being reminded there's a good and perfect giver.
- 22:21 Moms and dads, think about it like Christmas or even students. Think about this Christmas morning. Think about this like it's your birthday. When you give a gift to someone or you receive a gift from someone, it's never really about the gift. It's not about the gift. It's nice to get cool things and it's nice to have cool things until cooler, better, more awesome things come out and then the good things you got are suddenly not good enough and you need a \$500 putter because that's going to fix everything. You're 13. You don't need a \$500 putter.
- 22:51 I need a \$500 putter. You're 13. You don't need a \$500 putter. The gift isn't about the gift. The gift is, it's about the giver. We give things to people because we want them to know we love them. We care for them. We're in their corner. We're with them.
- 23:10 It's never just about the gift. I think that's what James is reminding us of here. Hey, the good things you experience, you experience healing in your life. What a beautiful gift, but don't forget that healing came from a healer. Worship the healer, not the healing. You receive a good gift. You receive a good gift. It's not about the gift. It's about the giver.
- 23:33 You receive amazing provision. That's awesome. So glad you received the provision that you need. We prayed for that earlier. God, thank you for your provision, but it's not about the provision. It's about the provider.

The Father of Lights Never Changes

- 23:47 James reorients. He says, yes, these things are good. These things are perfect, but we got to remember where they come from and where he reminds them is that it comes from the father of lights. He goes back

to creation. He roots things back in who God is. God, the father in the Old Testament and what he does. He's the creator of everything. We could read the story of creation. God creates the sun, the moon, the stars, everything. He creates, he speaks, let it be and it is, let it be and it is, let it be and it is, and he sees it and it's what? Good. It's good. Why? Because our good God does good things.

24:25 It's who he is. He is goodness. James reminds his people, even as you struggle and even as all of this turmoil and tumultuous stuff is going on in your life, even as you're encountering these trials of various kinds, we got to remember that God's in it and God is good. He is the creator of all things. The creator of all things is sovereign over all things. He's sovereign even over our life and our trials. Our good and perfect God gives good and perfect gifts to us, his creation.

24:58 All of the good and perfect things are from above coming down from the father of lights with whom there's creation or shadow due to change. I think what he's doing right here is comparing and contrasting who God is compared to his creation. God is the father of lights and if you were to tonight, if it's a clear sky, look up at the stars, it kind of seems like they're shifting and moving and changing. Or if you were to look up at the sun compared, not the sun, don't look at the sun, that'll burn your retinas. I'd heavily advise against it. If you look at the moon, much safer,

25:35 Experience. If you look at the moon tonight compared to the moon two nights ago, compared to the moon in two nights up ahead, it seems like it's changing. It waxes, it wanes, it seems like it just kind of moves all across the sky. Sometimes it pops up in the middle of the day and you're like, that's weird.

25:56 Or the sun, for example, it sets, it rises in one place in certain parts of the year and it's still in the east, but then in other parts, it kind of seems like it changes its mind. Well, now it's rising from over there and it sets over there and that looks like it's shifting and it's changing and sometimes it's like stars just up and explode. We see new things. You see stars we've never seen before and there's these crazy satellites with pictures and it's discovering awesome stuff and there's new things and there's things that are changing, really, really awesome things. I think what James is doing is he's contrasting that creation with the character of God.

26:33 God's creation is shifting. It's changing. There's shadows, there's things that are different all the time. It is not so with God. God is the same as he was yesterday. He is who he always has been and he will continue to be who he is forever. God is good and what he does is good. That will not change.

26:55

Numbers 23:19

God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

27:14 Numbers 23 and verse 19, it says, God is not a man that he should lie, thank God for that, or a son of man that he should change his mind.

Brought Forth by the Word of Truth

27:25 It's not in his character. He has been, is, and always will be our good and perfect God. That's what James reminded these people here. There's no shadow, no variation due to change. Don't be deceived by the world. Don't be deceived by the world. Trust in who God is and what God has done. There's a second point beginning in verse 18. He kind of introduces this next idea of what it might look like for us to be devoted to the word. Do not be deceived by the world. Instead, we ought to be devoted to the word.

28:04

John 1:1-2

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

28:45 Maybe what he's saying here is from his own will he called us into relationship with him and brought us forth. The words brought us forth, just like last week we talked about childbirth briefly through this imagery of desire when it's conceived gives birth to sin and sin fully grown gives birth to death. He uses childbirth again here of something being brought forth.

29:09 From his own will he brought us forth. It makes me think of John chapter three, the story of Jesus and Nicodemus. Nicodemus asked this question like, hey, who are you? What's going on? And how does this whole salvation thing work? That's my paraphrase. He says more than that, but that's my version of John chapter three. And Jesus says, you got to be born again.

29:28 You got to be brought forth. And Nicodemus is like, how is that scientifically possible? I'm supposed to enter my mother's womb and be born again? Yuck. He says, no, not, no, not that way. You got to be born of the spirit, water and spirit. Physically born, but spiritually you must be reborn.

29:55 This could be what he's talking about here. Of his own will he brought us forth, called us into relationship, caused us to be reborn. Word of truth might mean Jesus. Maybe word of truth just means God's spoken word or God's written word.

30:22 Maybe the word of truth refers broadly to the gospel of Jesus. Jesus is the way, Jesus is the truth, Jesus is the life. No one comes to the father except through Jesus. Perhaps word of truth here is just gospel. Of his own will he sent Jesus to live, to die, to raise again for us so that by his own will we might be reborn as new creatures.

We Are God's Firstfruits

30:54 If anyone's in Christ, in fact, they are a new creation. The old is gone and new has come. Again, which one is it? Yes. I think all three can be true. Of his own will, he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we

31:15 May be fresh among men and at peace among women. And when he's '22' of young men and at peace among common men that may come is the word of confusion, and those that find is the word of confusion, and those that find smiles by the Word of God in individual eyes of the Spirit of Jesus. [This section is severely corrupted and does not correspond to any coherent portion of the sermon text]

- 31:32 [This section is severely corrupted transcription] like you make the plate you salt bay it garnish it make everything look as perfect as possible it would be really weird if you said this one's actually for the dog and you go and fed the dog the first fruits of your dinner we don't do that our guests are the first fruits there's the of our own will we've prepared something incredible for them and
- 32:04 He says we are god's first fruits i think more specifically what he's referring to is this church in jerusalem you have to remember this is god's first people these are his first fruits these are the first converts these are the first ever christians romans chapter 1 verse 16 i'm not ashamed of the gospel why because it's the power of god for salvation for all who believe first for who for the jew
- 32:36 Jewish believers in the new testament were the first fruits of believers and i think what james is doing here with this jewish church who's facing immense persecution is reminding them god is good he has good plans for your life he only does good and perfect things and let's remember for a second who we are we are god's first fruits we are god's people you've got to remember who you are i was sitting in my office at home last night trying to think through man that's a powerful phrase remember who you are remember who you are where have i heard that lion king so
- 33:16 I come out of my office and i talk to my wife babe this might be crazy what do you think of this and she's like i think that actually makes a lot of sense you should share this tomorrow so if you don't like it you can talk to my wife
- 33:31 But i'll go with it remember who you are remember the movie lion king the greatest disney movie not up for debate of all time lion king's a great movie like every wonderful disney movie it begins with tragedy

Remember Who You Are: A Lion King Parable

- 33:47 And then simba who's feeling responsible for his father's death full of guilt and full of shame just leaves he goes rogue goes prodigal flies the coop things get pretty bad this fella named scar takes over pride rock starts making all the ladies go out do all the work nala goes out hunting looking for food who does nala run into but her childhood best friend and love of her life simba
- 34:12 Is like i'm going to give you the first thing i ever asked and i said that was something i've been thinking to give you the first thing i ever asked and i said that was something i've been thinking about for a long time she says you got to come home you don't i mean crazy things are happening you got to come home scar is taking over things are not the way they once were and he's just so stricken with guilt and shame he's like i can't do it i can't go back i've done too much like there's no way i can return to this whole thing there's too much going on this dude rafiki shows up up.
- 34:38 And Simba's trying to tell him, you don't know me. And he says, no, you're Mufasa's boy. He says, you knew my father? And Rafiki says, no, I know your father.
- 34:51 He says, let me show you. So he leads him through this twisted rat's nest jungle thing, and he ends up, and he says, look, here he is. And he looks into a pond, and he sees first his reflection, but then his reflection fades and slowly sees who? The reflection of his father.

- 35:09 And then you hear these words, remember who you are. Remember who you are. Remember who you are. And I think this is what James is doing with this church. There's a lot going on. Maybe you've been deceived. Maybe you've been led astray. Maybe because you've been so stricken with guilt and shame that you've just gone rogue. You've gone prodigal. You're doing your own thing.
- 35:34 Or maybe you're trying to walk with Jesus, but there's just so many hard things going on. And what James is telling them is, you've got to remember who you are. You are God's firstfruits, the one who created all things, the one who created all good, the one who created all perfect, the one who created everything for us to enjoy and experience in this life. He loves you. He's for you. He's good. He's perfect. Remember who you are. And maybe more than that, remember whose you are.
- 36:02 That we're a child of the Most High God. But friends, I'm not sure. I'm not sure what you got going on in your life. Again, maybe it's good stuff. Maybe it's hard stuff. This morning, can we just sit in stillness and for a moment remember that the God who created all things, the Father of lights, the Father of the heavenlies, is your Father as well, that
- 36:32 God the Father who for so loved the world sent his Son to live, to die for you. That the one who created all things gives you all good things. What we experience just for a moment, not just the gifts, but the giver.

Call to Remember and Return

- 36:54 What we see that God is sovereign even over all of the hardship, over all the trial, over all the tragedy, that he's actively working all of those things for the good of those who love him.
- 37:09 John chapter 1, speaking of Jesus, the word, it says, if we believe, if we receive him, who believe in his name, we too. We too We too can become children of God. I'm not sure where you're at in your faith this morning. Maybe you're walking with Jesus. Maybe you walked with Jesus for a while, but you've been deceived by the world, and you too have gone prodigal.
- 37:31 And this morning, would you hear God the Father calling out to you, remember who you are. You're his child. He loves you. He wants you. He cares for you. Would you receive him? Would you believe in his name? Would you become a child of God this morning? Would you bow your heads and close your eyes with me as we close in prayer?
- 37:52 God, you are good, and you are perfect. God, that's who you are. That's not just what you do. God, it's who you are.
- 38:04 God, everything you do, everything you say flows from who you are. God, you speak good things. You do good things. You speak perfect things. You do perfect things.
- 38:18 So God, this morning, can we rest assured, knowing that we serve an unchanging God? We serve God. We serve a God who only speaks truth. God, we don't just serve a God. We serve the one true only God of all things.

38:39 God, this morning, would you help us remember who we are? That we are children of the most high God. That our God, that our Father who created all things is presiding even over the situations in our life.

God's Goodness in Every Season

38:56 *God, thank you that you don't waste our pain. You don't waste our suffering. God, you continue to perfect us. You continue to complete us.*

39:07 Father, we continue to give you this time, continue to submit to you, asking you to do whatever you want with it. Even if we just have one song left, Father, we submit ourselves to you. Ask you to have your way in us, to accomplish your will in us. For your glory alone. It's in Christ's name we pray. Amen. Amen. Hallelujah. Praise God. Praise God. Man, it's so good to be with you guys this morning. Our prayer team is going to be down front. Maybe you're going through one of those highest of highs and you'd love to just glorify the Lord for his goodness in your life. Man, these friends would love to pray with you and praise with you.

39:46 Maybe this morning you're in one of those lowest of lows and you want to bring that before the Lord. Man, they'd be honored and privileged to pray with you this morning as well. For the rest of us, let's remember, service isn't over till you love somebody. So love somebody in here well. The barbecue's also open. So you can go love somebody well out there. But as we go out of these doors and into the world, church, let us remember this. Remember who we are. Remember who we are. And then let's go live on mission for the glory of Christ and Christ alone. We love you guys. God bless you. We'll see you next week. Bye -bye.