

25-0831p Transcript

25-0831p - Challenge of faithful living, Steve Cain

Bible Reader: John Nousek

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Challenge of faithful living

Transcript (0:04 - 39:53)

Scripture Readings

<p>1st Reading (0:04 - 2:28): John Nousek</p> <p>Romans 12:9-21: (0:04) This evening's reading from God's Word comes to us in two passages. (0:13) And the first one is Romans chapter 12. It's a number of verses. Chapter 12, verses 9 through 21, (0:24) which reads, Let love be without hypocrisy. (0:30) Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, (0:40) in honor, giving preference to one another, not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, (0:48) serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer, (0:58) distributing to the needs of the saints, giving to hospitality. (1:05) Bless those who persecute you. Bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep (1:14) with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, (1:23) but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. (1:31) Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. (1:39) If it is possible, as much as it depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, (1:47) do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath, for it is written, (1:55) vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord. Therefore, if your enemy is hungry, feed him. (2:09) If he is thirsty, give him a drink, for in doing so you will keep coals of fire on his head. (2:21) Do not be overcome by evil, overcome evil with good. (2:28)</p>	<p>2nd Reading (2:33 - 3:23): John Nousek</p> <p>1 John 2:15-17 In the second reading, this comes to us, (2:36) God's word in 1 John chapter 2, three verses, 15, 16, and 17. (2:47) God says, Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, (2:54) the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, (3:01) the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world. (3:12) And the world is passing away, and the lust of it, but he who does the will of God abides forever. (3:22) Amen. (3:23)</p>
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Transcript

Preacher: Steve Cain

(3:28) Good to see you, everyone.

I'm glad you're here. (3:31) And I hope the message is what it ought to be, rewarding to you, and also uplifting God (3:39) in every way. It's my desire to uplift God and to promote him and to just magnify him as much as I (3:47) can.

God has a very, very important way of dealing with his people. And he has answers. He has (3:58) answers to life's problems.

And that's one of the reasons why I entitled my lesson, (4:06) Challenging Faithful Living, is because oftentimes we find it a little bit difficult (4:14) to approach our particular problems the way God would have us to do it. And the reason for that (4:23) is that we concern ourselves with the way we look among our friends, our neighbors, the world, (4:33) if you will. And so the challenge that I want to give to us this evening is, can we ignore the (4:44) world and approach our lives the way God wants us to approach them? And God is assuring us that if (4:51) we approach our problems the way he wants us to and suggests that we approach them, it's going to (5:00) work.

It's going to come out. But the main thing is, we've got to believe it. We've got to have (5:09) faith in the fact that if we deal with our personal problems that we have with our families, (5:16) with our world, with our employment, employer, and friends, that if we approach those problems (5:24) the way God wants us to approach those problems, we will have peace, love, joy.

(5:32) And what else can you ask for? And he's assuring us that that is the case. But the problem is, (5:42) can we do it? And will we do it? Take a look at James, the first chapter. And as we take (5:52) that in consideration, James is my favorite book, and that's one of the reasons why I'm preaching (5:59) today is because it was one of the first books that I memorized.

I would be driving my truck (6:06) down the road, and I had written out my verses that I was going to memorize, and James was the (6:13) first book that I memorized. And that's one of the reasons why I'm still here, (6:19) because of David and James. I like James.

But notice what he has to say. (6:25) Picking up with, let's pick up with verse 2 and see what he has to say. (6:33) Consider pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, (6:38) because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

And let perseverance (6:45) finish its work, so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. So there's the (6:52) first challenge. The first challenge is knowing that you can become mature and complete if you (7:00) approach the problems that come our way in the way that God wants us to.

Notice he says, (7:06) consider pure joy. Really? Consider pure joy. I'm going to be using a word that I used this (7:15) morning, but it's going to be more tonight, and I'd say, let's be realistic.

When we use that word, (7:24) let's be realistic. What are we saying? Here you are perhaps talking to a friend, and the friend (7:34) suggests that you do certain things, and you know that it's not going to go across. He's asking you (7:42) to do something that you just don't believe in.

So you say, let's be realistic. It ain't going to (7:51) work. It's not going to work.

So how many times does an individual approach God's word, and he (8:00) says, let's be realistic. You remember this morning when we were talking about Abraham, (8:07) and he's confronting God about the fact that he hasn't got that child yet, and he basically is (8:15) saying, come on, God, you can't come across with that. Let's be realistic.

Let's be realistic. (8:24) Well, God says, you are going to have a child, and he will be the child of promise, (8:32) and you will have an inheritance. You'll have a seed that covers a multitude.

(8:40) But Abraham was saying to him, before that promise from God, let's be realistic. (8:49) So as we look at this, how does the world approach our lives? So let's continue on with James. (8:59) Consider pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, (9:03) because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

So there's the first (9:10) challenge. Remember that if we face our problems the way God wants us to face our problems, (9:17) let's consider it pure joy, because it's going to help us become mature and complete. So your faith (9:28) produces perseverance.

Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, (9:34) not lacking anything. And if we were reading 2 Peter, you would see where Peter is saying, (9:41) add to your faith virtue and to your virtue knowledge and to your knowledge. Why is he (9:47) saying that? Because he knows that we need to develop and we need to become and have these (9:57) particular attributes in our lives.

We don't have them as automatic. We have to work at it, (10:03) and we have to develop it, and we have to experience it. So we're going to have, (10:10) we're going to be tested, and as we're tested, your faith produces perseverance.

And let (10:16) perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. (10:22) And then he goes on and says in verse 5, if any of you lacks wisdom, (10:28) you should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to (10:34) you. So what is wisdom? If you're lacking wisdom, God is promising to give it to you.

So (10:46) when would you need wisdom? You would need wisdom when you're facing a problem. (10:51) You would need wisdom to know how to solve that particular problem, and God is giving you (10:57) wisdom. He is the source of that wisdom, and that source of that wisdom is recorded in the (11:03) scriptures, isn't it? And we're going to look at that in just a minute.

So God is giving us advice, (11:13) and he's telling us how to approach your particular problems that you have, (11:17) and he's asking you to have faith in the way he's given it to us, and act it out. Do it. (11:27) Follow up on it.

Do it the way he's asked you to do it. But if you don't, he's promising not to (11:36) berate you, because if you don't follow his wisdom, you come back to him and say, God, (11:44) I need some more wisdom, and God is not going to say to you, he's not going to say to you, (11:50) what'd you do with the last wisdom I just gave you? That's what he means when he says, (11:55) I'm not going to upbraid you. I'm not going to ridicule you.

I'm not going to run you down. (12:02) You need wisdom. I'm the source of that wisdom.

Keep coming to me. I promise you I will give it (12:08) to you, whether you use it or not. I'll give it to you, and I won't upbraid you.

What'd you do with (12:16) the last wisdom I gave you? He's going to give it to us. So if any of you lacks wisdom, you should (12:26) ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault or upbraiding, as some of the (12:32) say. And it will be given to you.

But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one (12:42) who doubts is like a wave of the sea blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect (12:48) to receive

anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all that they do.

(12:56) So he's just basically telling us, I'm giving you the wisdom. I expect you to follow through with it. (13:04) And if you don't, you're a double-minded person.

I want you to come back. He's the source. He's (13:13) the source of wisdom.

Is the world the source of the wisdom? No. And we're going to look at that (13:22) because the world approaches our problems in a far different way than God would have us to do it. (13:31) Or should I say, God is asking us to do it in a far different way than the world would advise us.

(13:39) So he's looking at it from that standpoint, isn't he? So we're looking at and wanting the wisdom, (13:48) but we want to make sure that we understand that it's coming from the world. And so let's take a (13:56) look at 1 John, which was already read in our hearing. Let's take a look at 1 John, the second (14:02) chapter.

And what is he telling us? Starting with verse 15. And I love the world. Oh, in other words, (14:13) don't pay attention to the world.

Don't let the world influence you. Don't concern yourself with (14:19) the world. Don't worry about whether the world is agreeing with you or not.

Don't worry about (14:26) whether the world is laughing at you and ridiculing you because you want to approach your (14:32) problems the way God wants you to. Don't love the world. So he says, do not love the world or (14:42) anything in the world.

If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. (14:50) For everything in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, (14:56) comes not from the Father, but from the world. The world and its desires pass away.

(15:05) But whoever does the will of God lives forever. So what is John trying to get across to us? (15:17) Lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. Those are the things that we concern (15:24) ourselves with as whether or not the world is looking down on us, laughing at us, or ridiculing (15:33) us for the way we want to follow God and God's advice and God's wisdom.

Now, the lust of the (15:43) eyes, obviously, is something that we can deal with fairly easy. Not really real easy, but fairly (15:53) easy because the lust of the eyes is you like what you see and you would like to have it. (16:00) Doesn't matter what it is, whatever your desires are for, they're attractive.

The lust of the eyes. (16:09) The lust of the flesh. And the lust of the flesh may be harder even to deal with because the lust (16:18) of the flesh is where pornography comes from.

The lust of the flesh is where drug addiction and (16:24) alcoholism and all the various other things like that. The lust of the flesh is saying, (16:29) feed me, feed me, feed me. And so that could be very difficult to overcome.

But to my mind, (16:36) the most difficult thing to overcome is the pride of life. The reason why I think the pride of life (16:45) is, is because that is the source of where we fail short in approaching our problems the way God would (16:55) have us to do it. Because we're concerned about what our family says to us.

We're concerned about (17:01) what our friends may say to us. We're concerned about those who are around us and how they think (17:09) I ought to solve my problems. And so you're going to get all kinds of advice.

All kinds of advice as (17:19) to how to deal with your marriage problems, how to deal with your kids' problems, how to deal with (17:25) your employer, how to deal with et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. You're going to get all kinds (17:33) of advice. There's no question about it.

So the pride of life, it is pride. You know, I just (17:43) rather think in terms of humility. Sometimes when I look at a word that I want to describe, (17:51) what is pride, I try to sometimes look at the opposite.

And so God is saying to us, (18:00) be humble. So how are we going to demonstrate what pride is versus humility? (18:12) So am I going to want to stand out and deal with my friends and my family and say, okay, (18:20) I'm going to do it your way because I want your love. I want your approval.

I want your, (18:29) or do I humble myself and say other people are just like me and the same boat I am. (18:36) And God is saying to me, approach this problem this way. Take a look at James, the fourth chapter, (18:46) and then we'll get into the particular scripture that I really want to take a look at.

(18:52) James, the fourth chapter, starting with verse one, reading from the New International Version (18:57) again. What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle (19:03) within you? You desire, but do not have, so you kill. You covet, but you cannot get what you want, (19:12) so you quarrel and fight.

You do not have because you do not ask. You do not ask God. (19:19) And when you do ask, you do not receive because you ask with wrong motives (19:24) that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

There's your pride involved. (19:32) You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against (19:40) God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. (19:48) Or do you think scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused us (19:58) to dwell in us? But he gives us more grace, and that is why the scripture says.

Now what is he (20:07) saying? He's giving us more grace. In other words, he's being with us. He's going to make sure that (20:12) things happen.

He's going to be looking after us. He's going to divinely intervene. He's going to (20:17) providentially intervene.

He's going to look after us. More grace. He's going to be approving of the (20:26) fact that we can humble ourselves and that we can bring ourselves down and answer our problems (20:33) the way he wants us to.

So, he's going to give us more grace. He gives more grace. That is why (20:43) the scripture says God opposes the proud.

He opposes those who are prideful, but shows favor (20:54) to the humble. Submit yourselves then

to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

(21:00) Come near to God, and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your (21:06) hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn, and wail.

Change your laughter to mourning, (21:13) and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. (21:20) So, he's wanting us to be humble.

He's wanting us to say, okay, I can swallow my pride. I can bring (21:30) myself to do what God wants me to do, and I'm going to ignore what the family wants, what the (21:39) world wants, and how the world will answer these problems. I'm going to humble myself, and I'm going (21:44) to bring myself to do what God wants me to do.

So, this morning we looked at a passage, (21:52) and that passage was in James, the second chapter, and I would like, of course, just briefly to look (21:59) at it before I get into my lesson, starting with verse 14, reading from the New Internet Version. (22:13) What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? (22:19) Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one (22:27) of you says to them, go in peace and keep warm and well-fed and does nothing about their physical (22:34) needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, say, by itself, if it is not accompanied (22:45) by action, is dead.

But someone will say, you have faith? I have deeds. Show me your faith without (22:55) deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. You believe that there is one God? Good.

Even the (23:03) demons believe that and shudder. So, what God is asking us to do is to believe that He does interact (23:14) in the world. He created us.

He knows how He created us, and He knows how we are to interact (23:24) with one another. He instilled that in us. And so, He's saying, my way is the correct way.

(23:36) So, what is this passage trying to say to us? Do you believe God? If so, (23:46) then do it the way He's asked you to. If you don't do it the way I've asked you, what good is (23:56) your faith? If you don't do it the way God wants you to do it, what good is your faith? You need (24:03) to do it the way God does it because you believe Him. You believe His way is the right way.

(24:14) So, now, let's take a look at Romans, which was read in your hearing, and we're going to read it (24:24) in its entirety again, the passage that He read for us. Romans, the 12th chapter, (24:31) and we're going to go down to, let's pick up at verse 9. God must be sincere, okay? (24:40) What I want us to do at this point is to consider what Paul is writing under the inspiration of the (24:47) Holy Spirit, which is wisdom from God, how to approach problems. What is the world's reaction (24:55) when they hear God's way of following particular problems? And how would the world react? (25:07) That's my challenge.

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil. The world doesn't hate what is evil, (25:18) do they? Cling to what is good.

Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above (25:26) yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor serving the Lord.

(25:34) Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who

are (25:41) in need. Practice hospitality.

Now, the world probably would not have a whole lot of problem (25:48) with that particular passage. Let's go on and see what else Paul is writing and suggesting (25:58) and how we should answer our problems. Bless those who persecute you.

Right off the bat, (26:08) bless those who persecute you. What is the world going to say? Hate them. What else would the (26:16) world say? You know, anything but blessing them.

Bless those who persecute you. Bless and do not (26:24) curse, but the world would say, curse them. God is asking us to resist that.

(26:34) We have people who abuse us, and God is saying, bless them. You've got to have faith because God (26:48) says, bless them. That's going to be difficult for a Christian because if he's prideful, (26:56) he can't bring himself to do those things.

And he's concerned about what the world would say. (27:03) And so if the world knows that you've just been cursed, they're going to say, cursing back. (27:10) Cursing.

Rejoice with those who rejoice. Yeah. Mourn with those who mourn.

Live in harmony with (27:22) one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. (27:30) Do not be conceited.

The world would have a problem with all of that, really. But God is (27:38) asking us to take that particular position on, isn't he? Now it's going on. We have to have faith (27:47) that God knows what he's talking about.

We have to have faith to know that this is the way we are (27:54) being, with wisdom, asked to approach our lives and the people who are in our lives. (28:06) Do not repay anyone evil for evil. The world wouldn't go along with that, would they? (28:17) Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone.

If it is possible, (28:22) as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Now that's going to be a very difficult (28:29) term. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath.

For it is written, (28:40) it is mine to repay, or mine to avenge. I will repay, says the Lord. On the contrary.

(28:52) So, revenge is the way of the world, isn't it? Revenge is the way of the world. (29:01) But God is saying, have faith. I will look after you.

And if they need to be reprimanded, (29:08) I will reprimand them. Don't you? Let me do it. Vengeance is mine.

So if there's going to be (29:17) vengeance anywhere, let me take care of your issue. Let me do it. God is asking us to have (29:27) faith in them.

God is asking us to approach our problems with them. You show me your faith without (29:40) your deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. In other words, I'm going to, for God's (29:50)

advice, I'm going to do it this way.

You show me your faith without doing it this way, or good is (30:01) your faith without deeds. Our faith without deeds is dead. So he's asking us to leave it in his (30:17) hands.

For it is written, it is mine to avenge. I will repay, says the Lord. On the contrary.

(30:27) And here's the on the contrary. And this is something that anybody will have a hard time (30:34) doing because it's just not in our nature. We were raised in the world.

We were raised (30:41) to do the things that God or that the world does. We're being asked to conform our lives (30:49) to God's will, to present our lives before God without spun, to conform to God's will. (30:59) So this is a very difficult thing for Christians to do and to accept.

And that's why I call it (31:08) the challenge of faithful living. It's difficult to be able to divorce the world and to ignore the (31:18) world and to become humble. Very difficult.

He's asking us to be humble. And what is he promising (31:30) us? More grace, more grace. So he says, if your enemy is hungry, feed him.

Come on, let's be (31:42) realistic. That's what the world is going to say. Let's be realistic.

You ain't going to feed (31:49) your enemy. Come on, let's do that. If he's thirsty, give him something to drink.

Oh, come on, (31:58) let's be realistic. We're not going to do that. Can't do those things.

The world is asking us to (32:05) and telling us, let's be realistic because they're not going along with God's way of life. (32:12) They don't want to adopt God's way of life. They want their pride and lust of the eyes, (32:19) lust of the flesh, the pride of life.

They've been taught that. That's the way the devil (32:27) teaches them to do it too. So if he's thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, (32:34) you will eat burning coals on his head. I'm not real sure how to (32:44) deal with that because I've heard so many different ways that that can be solved. (32:49) But the one way that I like, and I'll share that with you, is that God is not asking us to be the (32:57) judge.

He's asking us not to have revenge. And he's asking us to laugh with him when he laughs. (33:07) He's asking us to mourn with him when he mourns.

And so when we do these things, (33:16) it's like putting coals of fire on his head. Well, I heard it explained this way, (33:24) and it'd be more in keeping with what God is asking us. And that's the reason why I want to (33:28) approach this particular solution this way.

And that is, you remember? Maybe you don't. (33:39) In the cold days, in the old days, when you had the potbelly stove in the middle of the house, (33:43) and then you had a register that the heat could go up, and you had the bedrooms up here, (33:53) and subzero weather, what would they do? They'd get coals into a (34:03) container and put it up and put it under the pillow. And so you're heaping coals of fire, (34:11) making them comfortable, doing everything you can possibly do to make them comfortable.

(34:19) And so you're being hospitable, and you're doing what God would expect you to do. (34:26) So they're going up to a very, very cold bedroom, and they're going to get into a very cold bed, (34:34) but they have this hot iron, whatever they call it. I can't remember what they call it.

(34:42) They're with cold embers, and it's warming the bed, and it's warming the head, (34:49) and you're making them comfortable. I like that approach better than any of them. (34:58) Because we're not to take advantage on them, and we're not to judge them.

It's God's place. (35:06) So then he says in verse 21, do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (35:21) So the challenge of the Christian living is to approach our problems with God's wisdom (35:32) and the way God would have us to deal with our problems.

The challenge then is, (35:42) do show me your faith, because it's going to take faith to believe that God is going to (35:48) deal with you, and the outcome will be the desired outcome that you want. (35:56) Faith in God. Faith that he divinely intervenes in our lives, and he providentially works in our (36:03) lives, and preserves our lives.

Believe in God. Believe him. It took Abraham what? The birth of a (36:18) child.

Fulfillment of a promise that God had given to him. It took a long time for God to get (36:26) him to that point, didn't it? So, God is working on us, and God is saying, do it my way. (36:37) And if we do it his way, it should increase our faith in God, and our belief in God.

(36:44) What pleases God? To believe that he is, and that he's the rewarder of those who diligently seek him. (36:54) That's what pleases God. So the challenge for us is to please God.

And our lives should be one (37:07) that pleases God. God is reaching out to us, as I mentioned this morning. (37:16) The faith that he wants us to have is the faith that God does love us, and that God (37:23) wants us to be his children.

God wants us in heaven. Because, you know, John points that out (37:33) to us, doesn't he? God does not desire that any should perish, but that all should come to (37:38) repentance. God loves us, and he's reaching out to every soul that is in the world today, (37:48) no matter where they are.

He's reaching out to them, and he's working in their lives. (37:54) And I appeal to Acts, the 17th chapter, where Paul is talking on the Athenian Mars Hill, (38:01) how he's going to explain to them the God that they are ignorantly worshiping. (38:09) And he wants them to know that he works in our lives, and he does so in such a way (38:18) that he wants us to search for him, and to become aware of him.

And Paul in Romans says (38:26) that we are without excuse, because God works in everybody's life. (38:32) And they should recognize the fact that he exists. So he's wanting us to believe (38:40) that because he wants us to be with him in heaven, he's offering us the opportunity to (38:45) be reconciled to him, because we know our sins have separated us from him.

(38:50) And he's wanting to reconcile us to us, and he's offering us the way and the plan which (38:57) to be reconciled to him. And that is, he sent his son to be the sacrifice for our sins, (39:06) to redeem us. He wants us to believe that he's reaching out, and he wants us to believe (39:13) that he wants us to come to him through Jesus.

And he wants us to accept Jesus as his son, (39:21) and he wants us to accept Jesus as our Savior. So Jesus is telling us, (39:30) I want you to become a disciple of mine. And whoever becomes a disciple of mine, (39:36) they must be baptized for the remission of their sins.

If you're here this evening and have not (39:44) accepted God's reconciliation, we'd like to extend to you the opportunity to do so. (39:49) While together we stand and sing the song of reconciliation.