September 13, 2026 **Pastor Andy McClellan**
Series Title: Introduction to James
Sermon Title: James
Text: James 1:1

1. We identify ourselves by the One we **SERVE**, v. 1 *(see also 1:22-25; 2:1, 10-12; 4:7, 10, 15-17; 5:7; Matthew 6:24; Mark 3:21, 6:3; John 7:5; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 15:7; Colossians 3:23-24; Jude 1).*

2. We live in this world as those who **BELONG** to God, v. 1 *(see also 1:2-4; 1:17, 27; 2:23; 3:9; 4:4-5; 5:13-18; Gen. 49; Psalm 122:4; Galatians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:9; Titus 2:14).*

3. We endure various **TRIALS** as we await Jesus' coming, v. 1 *(see also 1:12-13; 5:7-11; John 16:33; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 12:1-3; 1 Peter 1:6-9; 4:12-19).*

FOR FURTHER STUDY & DISCUSSION

1. The book of James serves a distinct purpose in "God's Big Picture" of the Bible. Using a study bible or commentary, answer the following:
- What kind of book is it (narrative, letter, poetry, etc.) and how is it organized? How does that direct the way we read it?
- When, by whom & to whom was it written? How does its context help us understand it?
- What is its main message and what contribution does it make to our understanding of our life as servants of King Jesus?

2. Based on Mark 3:21, 6:3; John 7:5; Acts 12:17; 15:7, 21:18; 1 Cor. 15:7; Gal. 1:19, 2:9-12; and Jude 1, how would you describe James? What do you think it was like to be known as the half-brother of Jesus, especially since he didn't initially believe in him? Why, then, is it significant that James identifies himself in James 1:1, not as Jesus' brother, but as a "servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ"? How had the Gospel changed his view of his true identity in Christ, and how is that instructive for us?

3. Who were the twelve tribes in the Old Testament, and what was their relationship to God? Considering that James is likely writing to Jewish Christians scattered during the persecution of Acts 8:1, why does he call them "the twelve tribes" in v. 1? What about God, and about their relationship to him, would that title have reminded them, and why would that have been both an encouragement and an exhortation to them? Likewise, as God's people today, why is it important in our trials that we remember that we belong to God?

4. The Jewish Christians to whom James was writing had been dispersed by persecution. How might that have negatively influenced their view of the character and promises of God? How do trials like these test the authenticity of our faith and what fruit should we expect to see in our lives when our true faith is in Jesus? Scanning the subtitles of each of James' five chapters, what fruit will we be challenged to look for in our own lives as we study this book? Pray with someone else that God would produce fruit of true faith in your life.

NEXT WEEK: Three Cheers for Trials!, James 1:2-8, Pastor Andy McClellan
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