

SERMON OUTLINE James 1:9-11

The Lowly and the Lofty in God's Kingdom

THE LOWLY ARE EXALTED

The Lowliness of James's Readers Came from Following Jesus

James Prescribes an Unworldly Response to Lowliness

Lowliness Helps Reveal a Deeper Lowliness

Realizing Our Spiritual Lowliness Leads Us to God

When Our Lowliness Leads Us to God We Are Exalted

It Is Right to Boast in God's Exaltation

THE RICH ARE HUMBLED

SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

MAIN POINT

Distilled, there's one main point in our passage for this morning: it is a gift from God to recognize the lowliness that sin has produced in all of us, because it is only the lowly who look to God for the mercy and grace we so desperately need. In other words, James was telling his readers that the world's understanding of lowliness and loftiness involved more grievous value misjudgments, and those misjudgments were robbing them of the joy and sanctification God meant them to have in their trials.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What were your thoughts on the text/sermon? What most stood out? How was it helpful? Confusing?
2. What is the most counterintuitive principle you've come across in the Bible?
3. Have you ever felt lowly? What were/are the circumstances? What did you do/are you doing?
4. Have you ever been made to feel lowly solely on account of your faith in Jesus? What was your response to that? Was there any sense in which you felt exalted and eager to boast in it when that happened?
5. Can you describe any ways in which your lowliness made you feel further from God? Closer? Were there any lowly circumstances that caused you to seek God? What happened?
6. Are you now or have you ever been in a place of abundance as a Christian? Did that make you feel more proud or humble? Were you tempted at all to trust in your abundance? How does James's words help reshape your understanding of wealth?
7. Have you ever had an experience that helped you to understand the temporary nature of wealth?
8. In what way do you most clearly see the greatness of God in this passage?

AREAS OF APPLICATION

9. Spend some time this week considering whatever lowliness you've encountered—in yourself or in others. Prayerfully check those encounters against James's words. Rejoice where appropriate. Repent where appropriate.
10. Find someone who is lowly and share with them how they can be exalted in Jesus.
11. Find someone who is financially well off and share with them how they can be humbled in Jesus.
12. Find some way to boast in the glory of God.
13. Give sacrificially to Together for Good, Reach Global, or some other Christian ministry that works with the lowly.
14. What is one specific thing you mean to do differently in the power of the Spirit as a result of the things you saw or heard in this text or sermon?

PRAYER POINTS

15. Adoration. Praise God that He is highly exalted above all! Praise God for being merciful and gracious to the lowly. Praise God for exalting the lowly and humbling the lofty. Praise God for being wise beyond comprehension.
16. Confession. Admit your pride in wealth and humiliation in lowliness. Admit your indifference to the lowly. Admit your esteem of the lofty. Admit your trust in your own worldly wisdom instead of God's heavenly wisdom.
17. Thanksgiving. Thank God for revealing your lowliness to you and drawing you to Himself. Thank God for your church's teaching of God's Word and partnership in caring for the lowly. Thank God for exalting and humbling you.
18. Supplication. Ask God to save an unbeliever in your life. Ask God to humble someone (maybe yourself) who is proud and lift up one who is lowly. Ask God to give our church an increasing dependence on Him for all goodness, beauty, and truth.