

Receive the Implanted Word

James 1:16-21

The Fifth Sunday of Easter, April 29, 2018

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

There is a view of mission work that is incorrect. This view states that missionaries enter a community with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, people respond positively to that message. Those who respond positively are baptized. Then the missionaries leave and all is well. The missionaries go on to the next community and do the same thing.

Such a view of mission work assumes that the administration of the Word of God is a one time deal and that it will not take place repeatedly or continuously over time. That is not the view that God takes. If God took that view, then He would not have told you to receive the implanted Word.

The book of James is addressed to the Twelve Tribes scattered throughout the diaspora. Make no mistake God is aware of the transformation of Israel that He has brought about in sending His Son Jesus Christ incarnate in the flesh.

God knows that He promised Abraham that he and all of his descendents would bring forth a blessing to the nations. God is aware that the blessing that He had in mind was His Son, Jesus Christ. God is also aware of the prophecies that He made that all people would stream unto Mount Zion and that He would select His priests from all people. The only way for God to keep all of these promises the way that He made them is to take the Gentiles who believe in His Son and graft them into Israel. In fact the Lord Jesus Christ is Israel.

In the book of Exodus God says that Israel is His firstborn Son. In the Gospel of John God says that Jesus is His only begotten Son. These two have to be the same Son otherwise God is a liar and we know that God is not a liar. Therefore Jesus is Israel. To believe in Jesus is to be grafted into Israel and to become a member of the body of Christ.

In the book of Hosea God says that He called His Son out of Egypt. God is talking about bringing Israel out of Egypt under Moses through the Red Sea. In Matthew God says that He called His Son out of Egypt when Jesus returns from Egypt with Mary and Joseph to Nazareth. In both cases Israel and Jesus His Son come out of Egypt. Therefore Jesus is Israel. To believe in Jesus is to be a member of His body. To be a member of His body is to be grafted into Israel. You, Immanuel Lutheran Church, are part of Israel. You are sons of Abraham according to faith and heirs of the promise.

Therefore when James writes His book to the twelve tribes scattered throughout the world, He is writing to you. You are Israel scattered throughout the world. And God through James tells you to receive the implanted word.

Therefore even people who already confess faith in Jesus Christ are to receive the implanted word. If people who already confess Christ are to receive the implanted word then they are to receive the implanted word all of the time. They are to receive the implanted word each time it is given. They are to receive the implanted word continuously throughout their lives. The implanted word is able to save their souls. Who would not want to receive such an implanted word?

Do not be deceived, beloved. Be quick in order to listen. Be slow in order to speak. Be slow to become angry for a man's anger does not work God's righteousness.

I always took those words to be common advice for daily living. And they are good advice for daily living. When you are in a situation where you are meeting with people and you feel anger toward them, that is the time to be quick to listen and slow to speak.

When a man is angry there are chemicals that your body releases into his bloodstream that prepare him to flee or fight. Those chemicals shut down the higher functioning parts of your brain so that you may make the split second survival decision. That is all well and good when you feel threatened by the car that is driving on the wrong side of the road, but that is not so helpful when you feel threatened by the person who is speaking to you. Unfortunately these chemicals do not turn off your mouth. When you feel threatened, if you are quick to anger and quick to speak you will wind up saying all kinds of things that you will later regret. In fact when you look back on them you will realize that does not even sound like you and even others may observe the same thing. If you are quick to listen and slow to speak, that gives those hormones time to dissipate in your blood and when they do your higher functioning part of your brain will turn back on. You will be able to think of something sensible to say even if you need to say anything at all. And when I am quick to listen and slow to speak and the person gets to say all that they have to say, most of the time I have found out that they were not a threat to me to begin with. I only thought that they were. So this is great advice for daily living, but that is not what God is talking about in the book of James.

In the book of James God warns us not to be deceived and then He tells us to be quick to listen and slow to speak and slow to get angry. What is it about which we are not supposed to be deceived? We are not supposed to be deceived about the implanted Word, which means the implanted Word is the thing to which we shall be quick to listen and to which we shall be slow to speak and slow to get angry. It means that the implanted Word has the power to make you mad.

You have seen examples of this where the preacher preaches the Word of God and someone gets mad at it and leaves. God does not want you to get mad at it and leave because the Word of God is able to save you. He does not want you depart from that which is able to save you. But God realizes that what He has to say about sinful humanity makes sinful humanity mad. Therefore before He tells us to receive the implanted Word, He warns us not to be deceived and then tells us to be quick to listen and slow to speak and slow to get angry. If you get angry at the implanted Word, you will not receive the righteousness that the implanted Word imparts.

Therefore put away all filth. Put away everything that has to do with death and the things of death. Put away all malice. Put away all violations of God's commandments and all of the things that lead to them. Put them away and then you will not get angry. You will be able to receive the implanted Word in gentleness.

And it is the implanted Word which means that the Word that you receive is the Word that you have already received. It is the Word that is already implanted in you and commands you to receive it again. Receive it continuously. It is able to save you.

The implanted Word comes down from the Father of lights.

Why does God call Himself the Father of lights in the book of James? He does not call Himself that very often. First of all, He is the Father of lights because He made the lights in the heavens. He is the creator of the sun and the moon and the stars and all other astronomical phenomenon. Secondly, He is the Father of revelation. He imparts light to our spiritual darkness so that we may see our salvation. He is the Father of lights.

He is also a Father who is without variation or shadow of change. The systemeticians call Him impassable. Sometimes people call Him unchangeable. There are paradoxes here, but it does mean that

God is reliable. He can be trusted to give every good and perfect gift which is exactly what He promises to do. And when He gives every good and perfect gift, He gives them in such a way that they are whole and entire.

God cannot be divided into parts. Even the trinity is not a dividing of God into parts. God cannot be divided into parts. He is indivisible. The systematians call Him simple. He is undividedly simple. God does not piecemeal Himself out to you.

There are people who believe this. There are people who believe that God piece meals Himself out to you. That He sends you some of His gifts, but not all of His gifts. There are people who believe that God gives a few gifts at a time and then waits to give more of them later on. Or they will say that God gives a little bit of Himself now and gives a little bit more of Himself later and then a little bit more of Himself later. And every time people say this they are saying it in order to justify salvation by works. What they will say is something like this: God has given you this gift. Now you work a little harder and God will give you another one. Or they will say that God has given part of Himself to you, now you work a little bit harder and God will give you more of Himself.

God cannot be divided in this fashion. God is simple. He is God. Even the trinity is not a division of God. As we confess in the Athanasian Creed we do not divide the substance.

Therefore when God the Father gives you the good and perfect gifts, He gives them all. He gives them completely. And then when He has given you everything, He gives you even more. When He gives you the implanted Word He gives you everything and then He gives you even more of the implanted Word because He bids you to receive it without malice or filth, but in gentleness. It is this Word which is able to save you.

It is this word which gives you birth.

The word gave you birth in the beginning when God told our first parents, "Be fruitful and multiply." If God had not given that word our parents never would have been here much less would they have given birth to us. But God gave that word and the entire human race came into existence across time and you came forth from your mother.

But this is not the only birth that the word gives. The other birth that the word gives is life with God, the salvation of the soul. That is why God has James tell the Christians of the Twelve Tribes that He gave us birth by the Word of truth so that we would become a first fruits of His created things. The created things exist by His Word, but now you are a first fruits of His created things by His word. So the Word of God which brought forth the creation is the same word of God that made you the first fruits of the creation.

The first fruits of the creation are those parts of the creation that are brought into the presence of God before the rest of the harvest. That is the first fruits in the Old Testament. Before the harvest Israel brought in the first cuttings of the grain to the temple. It was given over to the priests in the presence of God. Then and only then was the rest of the harvest completed. So also you are the first fruits of all created things. God will bring you into His presence before He completes the harvest of the rest of the creation. This is the salvation of your souls which the implanted Word is able to give to you.

You are the new creation. You are born again. It is done by the will of God. It is done by the Word of truth.

This is the Word that gives you birth. This is the Word that God commands you to receive. This is the Word which God bestows from above whole and complete and not in fractions and in parts. This is Word of God which became flesh. This is Jesus

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.