**Swift to Hear, Slow to Speak, Slow to Wrath**

*James 1:19-20*

**Introduction**

1. The eternal fate of any man has always come down to one simple thing – their attitude toward God’s eternal word.
   1. **Romans 1:16** – the gospel saves.
   2. **1 Corinthians 1:21** – the foolishness of the message preached saves.
2. There are myriad reactions to the word of God, but when the nuances are set aside it all boils down to two possible outcomes:
   1. Humble acceptance of truth in full obedience resulting in fellowship with God and the hope of heaven.
   2. Stubborn rejection of truth in disobedience resulting in sin and forfeited hope.
3. It is paramount that we examine our hearts and prepare ourselves to follow the divine pattern of acceptable interaction with God’s word, and those who proclaim it to us.
4. James gives us a simple pattern to follow – **James 1:19-20**
5. Swift to Hear
6. Knowing that God has Spoken
   1. Swift to hear what?
      1. **James 1:5** – request for wisdom.
         1. From above (God) – **3:17**
         2. Revealed by HS in word – **1 Corinthians 2:13**
      2. **James 1:16-18** – temptation not from God, but good from God – Example of spiritual birth via word of truth.
         1. **(v. 19)** – ***“So then…”*** – hear word.
      3. **James 1:21** – receive implanted word.
      4. **James 1:22-25** – hearer and doer of the word.
   2. God has spoken – **Hebrews 1:1-2**
      1. In all our doings as followers of Christ, we recognize this first and foremost.
      2. **Jude 3** – once for all delivered.
      3. **Psalm 119:89** – forever settled in heaven.
      4. **Acts 15:18** (James speaking) – After quoting Amos to establish it has always been God’s plan for Jew and Gentile alike to be justified the same – by faith in Christ – Called Gentiles to kingdom – don’t need to become Jews.
      5. **2 Timothy 3:16** – inspired by God (infallibility) (**Psalm 19:7-9** – perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, true and righteous)
   3. The word will judge us – **John 12:48**
      1. Not our conscience; opinions; preconceived notions; culture; family; preacher; elders; etc.
      2. ***“He who has ears to hear, let him hear!...take heed how you hear.” (Luke 8:8, 18)***
         1. Hearing whole word with honesty.
         2. NOT – partial; biased; etc.
7. Knowing that God has Chosen Men to Proclaim His Message
   1. Some realize the authority of God’s word, and the need to heed it, but do not like the idea of another man telling them what they should and shouldn’t do according to God’s word. (when in reality, if it truly is God’s word he is speaking, then it is God speaking)
   2. Foolishness of messaged preached – **1 Corinthians 1:21**
      1. **Romans 10:14** – how believe if not heard, how hear w/out preacher?
      2. God’s will included the committing of truth to faithful MEN for further teaching – **2 Timothy 2:1-2; Ephesians 4:11-12** (3 of 5 uninspired)
   3. Implications:
      1. Man can understand God’s will – **Ephesians 3:4; 5:17**
      2. Man can accurately explain God’s will to others – **Nehemiah 8:2, 8** (distinctly, gave sense)
      3. Man can accurately understand God’s will as explained by others (producing faith) – **Nehemiah 8:8, 9** (helped understand – they understood; wept – understood sins as convicted by law)
      4. Man is required to submit to the authority of God’s word regardless of the messenger (so long as the message rings true) – **Nehemiah 8:13-14, 17** (Had word explained, realized their lack, obeyed – OBEYED WORD, NOT MESSENGER – inconsequential)
      5. Man must test what is spoken to know whether it is of God – **1 John 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22; Acts 17:11**
8. Slow to Speak
9. Knowing Your Speech Reveals Your Heart
   1. In context:
      1. ***“swift to hear”*** – God’s word **(vv. 18, 21)**
      2. ***“slow to speak”*** – against God’s word.
      3. **(vv. 6, 8)** – doubting man (contrast to “in faith”), double-minded.
         1. Doubting – *diakrinō* – “lit., "to separate throughout or wholly" (*dia*, "asunder," *krino*, "to judge," from a root *kri--*, meaning "separation"), then, to distinguish, decide, signifies, **in the Middle Voice** **(vv. 6, 8)**, "to separate oneself from, or to contend with,"” (VINE)
         2. Contending with God – **cf. Romans 9:20**
      4. **(v. 26)** – not bridle tongue.
         1. Closest antecedent – **(v. 19)** – slow to speak.
         2. God says something, and the man replies in contention with it. (Could be literal, could be figurative – in the mind – double-MINDED)
            1. Useless religion (devotion to God) – because not according to revealed standard.
            2. Self-imposed – **Colossians 2:23** (***“these things”*** – not bound or loosed in God’s word)
   2. Known by fruit of speech – **Luke 6:43-45** (false prophets, but applicable to anyone)
      1. In line with God, or in rebellion to His will?
      2. EX: “I know that’s what it says, but…”
10. Knowing You Must Speak where the Bible Speaks
    1. Our speech must be in agreement with God’s word, else we are found His enemies:
       1. **2 John 9** – does not bring doctrine of Christ, not have God.
       2. **Psalm 19:14** – let words be acceptable.
       3. **1 Peter 4:11** – speak as oracles of God.
    2. Believe and speak – **2 Corinthians 4:13**
       1. Believe – **Romans 10:17** – faith from God’s word.
       2. What is spoken is in agreement with God’s word.
    3. Regardless of conviction, if what is spoken is not in line with God’s word it is without profit:
       1. Deceiving self – **2 Timothy 3:13** – more they deceive others with false doctrine, they deceive themselves.
       2. **2 Peter 2:17-18** – speaking of false teachers and the doctrine they offer.
          1. This can be true of our own speech.
          2. What we say is worthless UNLESS IT IS AN AMEN IN RESPONSE TO GOD’S WORD. (**cf. 1 Corinthians 14:15-16** – implication: hear, understand, amen – agree)
11. Slow to Wrath
12. Knowing You are Fallible
    1. Fallible – capable of making mistakes or being erroneous (New Oxford American Dictionary)
       1. NOT – sinful by nature.
       2. Always a choice, but capable of making the wrong choice.
    2. **Romans 3:23** – all have sinned.
    3. IMPLIES – when confronted with an infallible standard it is very possible for sin or error to be exposed in our lives.
    4. Reactions – godly sorrow, or sorrow of the world – **2 Corinthians 7:10**
       1. Godly – repentance.
       2. World – anger, sorrow devoid of repentance (fades, swallowed by sorrow), etc.
    5. Gospel meant to expose our sin so as to rescue us from it – **1 Timothy 1:8-11**
    6. Not above reproof, correction – **2 Timothy 3:16-17**
       1. **Cf. Galatians 2:11** – Peter withstood to the face.
13. Knowing Wrath Does Not Produce the Righteousness of God
    1. In the moment of shameful conviction, we must remember what our goal is – **James 1:12** – want to attain to the crown of life. (Reach heaven.)
    2. ANGER TOWARD GOD’S WORD ACCOMPLISHES NOTHING SAVE BEING MADE AN ENEMY OF HIS.
    3. **James 1:20** – not produce righteousness of God.
       1. NOT – that God is righteous.
       2. RATHER – God’s plan for man being made righteous.
          1. **Romans 1:16-17** – in gospel – righteousness of God revealed – just shall live by faith.
          2. I.e. in accord with God’s revealed gospel/word – **Romans 10:17**
          3. EX: **Romans 9:30-33** – did not attain to righteousness because sought it by the wrong standard.
    4. ANGER AGAINST GOD’S REVELATION ACCOMPLISHES NOTHING. ONLY HUMBLE ACCEPTANCE OF IT WILL DO ANY GOOD.
14. Receive the Word with Meekness
    1. **James 1:21** – required repentance, and acceptance of God’s word.
       1. Meekness – *prautēs* – “It is that temper of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting” (VINE)
       2. EX: **Matthew 26:39** – not My will, but Yours.
    2. GOD SAID IT. THAT SETTLES IT. AND I BELIEVE IT.
    3. The one who has received God’s word with meekness will bear fruit by doing what it says – **James 1:22-25**
       1. NOTE: a verbal or mental assent to what is said as true does not equal a reception of God’s word in meekness. (Requires obedience.)
          1. Some say, “I see what you’re saying,” or “I see what it’s saying,” but do not apply it.
    4. Only then is it ***“able to save your souls.”***

**Conclusion**

1. If it is truly our goal to be faithful to God and reach heaven then:
   1. We will be careful to hear all that God’s word says.
   2. Think before we reply against God, and instead agree in faith.
   3. And never get angry as a result of hearing God’s word, but instead accept it and obey it in humility.
2. Let us examine ourselves that we are receiving God’s word in this way.