

Why a Mission to Mexico?

May 10th & 11th, 2014

James 1:26-27

“Religion that is Pure”

Religion: (Greek – *threskeia*) “signifies ‘religion’ in its external aspect...”¹

- f James purposely uses this term to contrast the difference between religion that is worthless and religion that is pure and true.
 - Worthless religion is all talk! “...*does not bridle his tongue...*”
 - Pure religion combines action “...*visit orphans and widows...*” and personal holiness “...*keep oneself unstained from the world.*”
 - ♦ Pursuing personal holiness without serving others leads to spiritual pride. *Matthew 23:1-5*
 - ♦ Giving ourselves to serving others without the pursuit of personal holiness results in a worthless religious belief system that gives no glory to God! *Matthew 5:16*
- ❖ James uses the same word, “visit” (*episkeptomai*), that Jesus used when our Lord said “...*I was sick and you visited Me,...*” *Matthew 25:36*
 - Pure religion that is undefiled before God is to visit those who are in dire need of help.
 - God Himself is revealed as a father to the fatherless and protector of widows.
“*Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in His holy habitation. God settles the solitary in a home; He leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a parched land.*” *Psalms 68:5-6*

The Gospel in Action

- ❖ James is reminding God’s people to remember the poor as they proclaim the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.
“*I went up because of a revelation and set before them ... the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, ... Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.*” *Galatians 2:2,10*
 - God comes to the aide of the Fatherless and Widows.
“*For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing.*” *Deuteronomy 10:17-18*
 - The needy shall not be forgotten.
“*For the needy shall not always be forgotten, and the hope of the poor shall not perish forever.*” *Psalms 9:18*
 - Blessed are those who are generous to the poor.
“*Whoever despises his neighbor is a sinner, but blessed is he who is generous to the poor.*” *Proverbs 14:21*
Poor: “Wholly destitute of property, or not having property sufficient enough for a comfortable subsistence; needy”²
“*Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will repay him for his deed.*” *Proverbs 19:17*
“*Whoever closes his ear to the cry of the poor will himself call out and not be answered.*” *Proverbs 21:13*

- Jesus came to bring good news to the poor.
“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor; He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;” Isaiah 61:1
“...and the poor have good news preached to them.” Matthew 11:5
- God’s people always have the opportunity to help the needy.
“For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me.” Mark 14:7
- The poor in the world are rich in faith.
“Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which He has promised to those who love Him?” James 2:5

Why a mission to Mexico?

- ❖ God has given us an opportunity to live out the kind of faith that is pure and undefiled before Him!

Endnotes:

¹ Vine, W.E. *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words*. Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers, 1997.

² Webster, Noah. *American Dictionary of the English Language (1828 Facsimile Edition)*. San Francisco: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1989.

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