

Lessons Learned About God, Life, and Man

1. We're not supposed to be Christians and at the same time racists or snobs of any kind; we're not supposed to think we're better than anyone else in any way, shape or form. This does not represent Jesus' glory in us in any way whatsoever; this is not the way He taught us to live our faith in Him (2:1-6).
2. Our thinking will get twisted if we fail to apply what Jesus taught us: we will mistreat those we're supposed to love, we'll ingratiate ourselves with those who mistreat us and give the Lord a bad name, and we'll be convinced that our religious faith has nothing to do with how we live (2:1-4, 6-7, 18-19).
3. Your poverty can't stop you from being wealthy: God can use it to make you superrich in your faith towards Him and thereby an heir of His Kingdom (2:5).
4. God doesn't grade on a scale: if you think God will give you credit because you did some good or more good than bad, you're mistaken. When it comes to sin, God's standard is "A+" not "C+". You can't treat some people nicely while treating others horribly; if you behave this way, God will judge you the way you treated others, without mercy (2:8-13).
5. We're supposed to live as Christians in every way imaginable, in how we think, in how we speak, in what we do, as those who have a permanent connection to the Lord of glory, as those who are accountable to Jesus Christ because we are (2:12).
6. God's mercy is greater than His judgment: when He judges us, He would rather show us His mercy instead of His judgment and that's how He wants us to behave towards others (2:13).
7. You have to be a Doer of the Word not a Hearer only, i.e., faith without works is dead, i.e., what we believe is useless unless we apply it: believing that you should love your neighbor as yourself will not save you (from God's discipline) or your neighbor (from their need) unless you actually love your neighbor by providing what they need (2:14-17).
8. If you act on your belief that God can do the impossible, your faith can become bulletproof and you'll be blessed by it: Abraham believed God's promise that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars even though he had no son. Then when God asked him to sacrifice his only son Isaac, Abraham acted on his faith and his faith was perfected and he became known as the friend of God. Rahab's faith was also perfected when she acted on it: she believed that Israel's God was the God of heaven and earth, in control of life. So when God asked her to protect Israel's spies, she protected them and her life and the lives of her entire family were spared (2:21-23, 25).
9. There are two kinds of justifications: one that is by faith before God (*"Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."*) and another that is by good works before mankind (*"And he was called the friend of God"*). Justification by faith makes you a child of God. Justification by good works gives you good standing before your fellow man (2:20-25).
10. Every human being (Christian or not) has a spirit; if you lack a spirit, then you're a corpse (2:26, cf. Ecclesiastes 12:7).