

## Scripture Readings / Reflection for 8/17/2025

*Read each passage, then take time to reflect on the question in silence*

James 1:12-18 *What is one word or phrase the Holy Spirit impresses on you?*

New International Version

<sup>12</sup>Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

<sup>13</sup>When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; <sup>14</sup>but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. <sup>15</sup>Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

<sup>16</sup>Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. <sup>17</sup>Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. <sup>18</sup>He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

James 1:12-18 *What do you feel? What situation in your life today relates to this reading?*

The Message

<sup>12</sup>Anyone who meets a testing challenge head-on and manages to stick it out is mighty fortunate. For such persons loyally in love with God, the reward is life and more life.

<sup>13-15</sup>Don't let anyone under pressure to give in to evil say, "God is trying to trip me up." God is impervious to evil, and puts evil in no one's way. The temptation to give in to evil comes from us and only us. We have no one to blame but the leering, seducing flare-up of our own lust. Lust gets pregnant, and has a baby: sin! Sin grows up to adulthood, and becomes a real killer.

<sup>16-18</sup> So, my very dear friends, don't get thrown off course. Every desirable and beneficial gift comes out of heaven. The gifts are rivers of light cascading down from the Father of Light. There is nothing deceitful in God, nothing two-faced, nothing fickle. He brought us to life using the true Word, showing us off as the crown of all his creatures.

James 1:12-18 *What is Christ's personal invitation to you from the Scripture?*

New Living Translation

<sup>12</sup> God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. <sup>13</sup> And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, "God is tempting me." God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. <sup>14</sup> Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. <sup>15</sup> These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

<sup>16</sup> So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. <sup>17</sup> Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. <sup>18</sup> He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession.

**Sermon / Reflection:**

[Alarm goes off on my phone]

Okay, so this is what happened when I was driving my car...

New electric car

Alarm goes off – what is wrong with the car? ... it's my phone.

In our lives, we have alarms going off all the time.

Watch out, be careful, everything is falling apart ...

We need time to stop what we're doing,

see what's really happening, turn off the alarm,

and pay attention to where God is at work.

Walter Brueggemann says that the tasks of prophetic ministry are  
criticizing and energizing.

**Criticizing** what is wrong in the world from God's perspective

is sounding the alarm. Turn around! Destruction is coming!

**Energizing** is turning off the alarm and sitting in God's presence

and being empowered to live faithfully in our circumstance.

Last week, we did the first part:

I looked at how God spoke through the prophet Isaiah

to criticize the worship life of Israel,

to put worship on trial because it ignored justice.

This week, we are doing the second part:

considering how every good and perfect gift comes down from above

from the Spirit of God.

With everything that shifts and changes like the shadows,  
we need to make space to be with the One  
who remains steadfast and reliable.

As we have read and meditated on this passage, what has stood out to you?

What invitation did you hear?

Have you been through a trial?

Blessed is the one who has been through a trial,  
for yours is the crown of life. Do you hear the beatitude in that?

Have you faced temptation... and realized that it comes from within you?

Blessed are you, for God is making you into a new creation –  
God is giving birth to us as a Mother,  
God's word is renewing us to be prized possessions.

Have you seen the stars this summer,

have you glimpsed a meteor during the Perseid meteor shower?

Blessed are you, for every good and perfect gift comes  
from our heavenly Father.

If we look, there are always gifts.

What are the gifts God is giving you in this season? [Share if they wish]

***Hear the alarm, pay attention to it,  
and then turn it off.***

***Look for the gift of God's energy and love.***

***You are God's prized possession.***