

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

Theme: "The Testing of Your Faith"

Lesson: 42

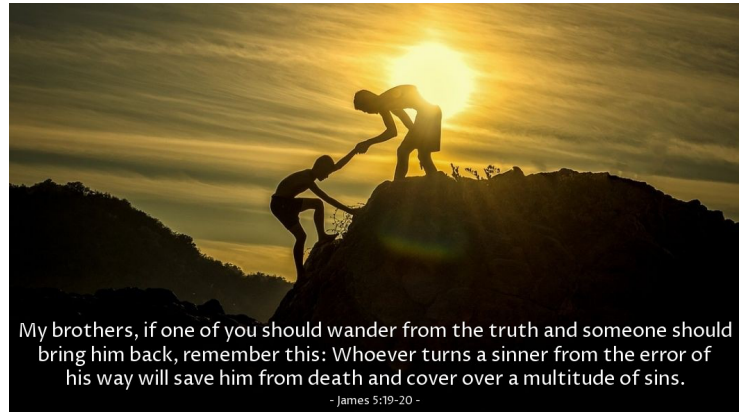
Text: 5:19,20

Date: 2-11-24

Trinity Lutheran Church

Pastor David Nehrenz

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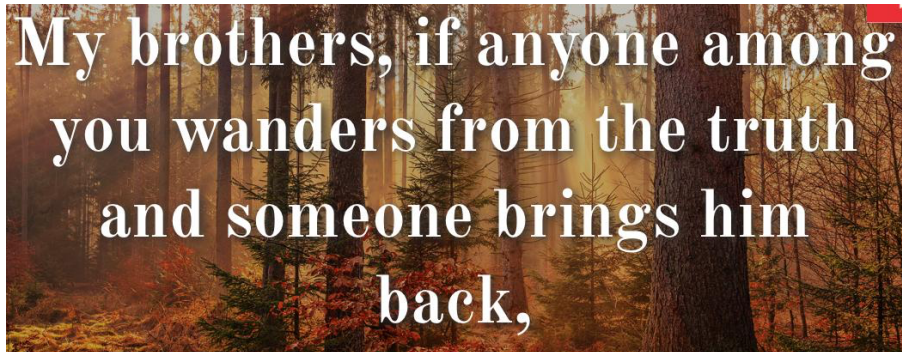


TEXT AND STUDY NOTES

(19) My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from **the truth** and someone brings him back,

(Ps 51:13; Dan 12:3; Mal 2:6;

**Matt 9:12,13; 18:15-20; Mark 2:16,17; Luke 1:16; 5:31,32;
Gal 6:1)**

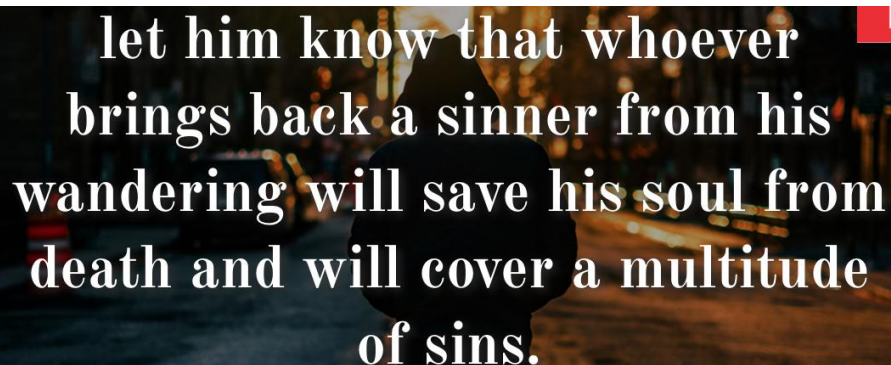


**My brothers, if anyone among
you wanders from the truth
and someone brings him
back,**

(20) let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

**(Neh 4:5; Ps 32:1; 85:2; 119:10,21; Prov 5:6; 10:12; Zech 10:2;
Luke 7:36-50;**

Rom 11:11-16; Heb 9:24-29; 1 Pet 4:7-10)



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brings back a sinner from his
wandering will save his soul from
death and will cover a multitude
of sins.**

Correcting a Doctrinal Problem (5:19-20)

The last verses in the epistle, vv. 19-20, address the problem of handling doctrinal aberrations.

My brethren, if anyone among you wanders (*planēthē*) from the truth (*alētheias*) and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from the error of his way (*ek planēs hodou*) will save (*sōsei*) his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

James shows a concern for the necessity of true doctrine not in punishing the erring teacher by exclusion but in restoring him. The Greek work *planaō* is used of erring teachers (2 Peter 2:15). It means wandering. It is the root

word for planets, bodies in the heavens (unlike the more predictable stars) whose course appeared irregular to the ancients. The erring Christian was one who forsook the message delivered by Christ. Teachers err (Matt. 24:4-5), and believers are led astray (1 Peter 2:25). “Truth” refers to the entire revealed body of Christian doctrine as a pattern for living, a thought adopted from the Old Testament and Judaism. The sinner has forsaken Christian truth for an erring way (*hodos*). The erring way is opposed to “the Way,” a term used as a synonym for Christianity (Acts 9:2). In the very earliest period of the church it would be most natural to see erring ways thus.

Returning the erring teacher is said to cover a multitude of sins. James is in no way suggesting that the act of returning an erring brother to the truth is an atoning or sacrificial act, but rather his returning to the truth will have the effect of preserving his congregation, i.e., those who listen to his preaching, in the truth. The soul of the erring preacher and those who listen to him will hear the message of forgiveness preached and will be saved.¹³ It is with this evangelistic note that James ends what is probably the first New Testament writing.

During his lifetime James remained as a symbol of the church’s unity in the midst of its controversies as no other apostle did. He guided the church through persecution and supervised it as it left Jerusalem. As a rallying point for the dispersed Christians, he conducted the first church council at Jerusalem. He was the first to write an epistle, one that was directed to persecuted Christians. James stood between Jesus and Paul at the dawn of the New Testament, but the dawn lasts for only a short time. His epistle is a window to what that dawn looked like.

LIFE APPLICATION

1. “If anyone among you wanders from **the truth** and someone brings him back.”

How can this best be done?

2. “Whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.”

What are the ways in which people will wander?

NEW BIBLE STUDY – STARTS 2-18-24

The Book of Haggai - Theme: “Prioritize Our Lives – Work Together!”