

Paul H. Dixon
Study in James, Part 9: Show Your Faith and Be Not Proud
April 21, 1980

Unedited Transcript

Paul H. Dixon:

Thank you, Dave and Marsha. That was beautiful. We have with us today, through Wednesday afternoon, the examiners from North Central. Some of them are with us in chapel this morning. I'd like to tell you who they are. The four on the team, to give you a little background, and then have those who are present to stand. The chairman is Dr. Charles L. Balsler from the president of Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Dr. Barbara Anne Barbado, professor of history and director of the at Webster College in St. Louis Missouri. Dr. C. Hobart Edgren, assistant to the president in North Park College, Chicago, Illinois. And Dr. Margaret Watson, professor of biology at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa. Those who are present, if you would stand, please. Right over here, we'd like to give you a Cedarville welcome.

Paul H. Dixon:

Before I get into my message this morning, as we continue in the book of James, I would like to give our college family a report of the recent trustee meeting. Something I know that all of you have been eagerly awaiting is the report on the increased cost for next year. The trustees have voted a budget next year that includes an overall increase of approximately 10% for tuition, room and board. Across my desk come many reports as to what colleges are doing across the country. Now I have to say that is very seldom that I see any under 10%. One came across my desk on Friday, that was 12.%. I have seen them as high as 18%.

Paul H. Dixon:

And talking with our sister schools, the other approved agencies it appears that all of them are either increasing their costs this much or more. And you might ask, why? Well, I think you understand, I am sure you're in contact with your parents enough to know that in your families, we're all faced with inflation. Everything's going up. And to give you an idea of what's going up here at Cedarville College, our water bill next year for our large dormitories will go up 40% in cost to the college.

Paul H. Dixon:

We are estimating right now that our utilities will go up somewhere around 20%. And what we're going to have to pay for gas, electric, and oil. Our food costs will go up somewhere between 13% and 18%. And of course we project these costs a year ahead of time. Some of the costs that we projected last year for this year, they've gone up considerably more because of facing an 18% cost of inflation that we've had during this present school year. So perhaps at least that will help you to understand what we are faced with as an administration and as trustees.

Paul H. Dixon:

The trustees also authorized the beginning of a new network system for our radio. Our radio station has been in contact with a number of Christian high schools who are interested in starting their own radio stations and would like to use our programming. And we'll provide that by laser beam. And right now there are at least two, as many as four, who are looking into this very interested, they will be funding the entire project. Our chapel service will go out. One of them is in Columbus, one in Mansfield, one in Charleston, West Virginia. It's a great opportunity for the college, for more folk to become acquainted

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with what we're doing at no additional cost to our own operation. They would pay all of those costs. So that's exciting.

Paul H. Dixon:

There's a desire of the trustees to continue meeting with students in select groups. We started this this year. We found it to be very profitable. The trustees have found it profitable and enjoyable. They plan to continue the same. There was an approval of the planning effort that has gone on to this point. As you know, we have the administrators, faculty, staff, and student leaders involved in a planning effort for the next decade, for this decade of the '80s. And we presented our findings to the trustees. And they encouraged us to continue this. We hope to give them some specifics at the June meeting. So this will take the form of a case statement for the '80s that can be prepared this summer and into the early fall and be released hopefully around homecoming or at least by the end of the year.

Paul H. Dixon:

They also authorized that we begin the drawings for the remodeling of the student center gymnasium. Of course, that will then become just the student center, and provide for our dining facility. I know you're excited about that as we realize that that could be just around the corner, and Lord willing, we hope to at least be able to move in there and have the dining hall facility by the fall. They also authorized the beginning of the construction of a third dormitory that will house 64 students, to take care of at least some of those who are making application for next year. That should be started somewhere within the next week to 10 days.

Paul H. Dixon:

I'd like to just share something won't be finished by then, but started. I'd like to address myself to two areas that have concerned me. One, again, it seems like every spring we enjoy this weather so much and many people comment about our lovely grounds and few freshmen. You haven't seen anything yet. Just wait until our staff gets out there and puts in all the flowers and everything starts to bud. It's going to be something beyond what you can imagine around here in a few weeks. But please stay off the lawn. It's green, it's beautiful. And I would appreciate it. And I know that the rest of our staff would, who work in landscaping, if you would not cut the corners, stay on the sidewalk. The only permission I will give you to walk out into the lawn is if you see a dandelion out there, I can't stand them. Walk out and pick it. You can pick the dandelions, but please help us with that.

Paul H. Dixon:

And then I have heard, by various ways, the concerns that some of you have shared regarding the food service. I would like to just kind of put everything in perspective, if I may. First of all, I would like to assure you that the trustees and the administration, we're vitally concerned about the food service, about how you're fed, the quality of it, the quantity of it.

Paul H. Dixon:

In fact, I received a letter from someone just last week who had been here four years, and commented about how great the food had been in the last year and a half or so, and saying, we don't want that to change. We don't want that to change either, but you must understand that a year and a half ago, the trustee said, let's turn it around. Let's put the money into it. Let's put the energy into it, let's work at it and turn that food service around. And we have seen that take place. And we're grateful for Steve Dyker

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and all who've had a part in that. And we're continuing to study this. We don't ever want to be satisfied. We don't ever want to stop studying everything around here. And we are making a study right now as to what should be the future of our food service.

Paul H. Dixon:

But I also want you to know that you can trust us, that we're concerned for you. And a decision has not been made as yet. We are still looking into it. We're looking at outside services, we're looking at our own service. We're interested in what you think. And we will be working through the student senate to get information to you and for you to get information to us. So I wanted to assure you of that as well.

Paul H. Dixon:

Some notes of prayer, please pray for Dr. John R. Rice, Dr. Rice office called me last week and he's had another heart attack. Dr. Rice is 84 years of age. They're not sure that he'll be able to get out and speak anymore. And I know he's been here in chapel, and many of you have been greatly blessed from books and from the sort of the Lord. And I like to encourage you to pray for Dr. Rice.

Paul H. Dixon:

I was mindful also of praying for our missionaries in Liberia. Yesterday morning I was driving along, preaching in Columbus. It was a beautiful morning to drive, and I was thanking the Lord. I got up excited about the day God had given. And I don't know about you, but I just loved Saturday. Hey, to be able to get out there. And we worked out in the yard for quite a while. And then Scott and I were able to get out and get in 17 holes of golf.

Paul H. Dixon:

Say 17? Right. We didn't have time to get in 18. We had to get back. Mrs. Dixon was waiting on me to wash the windows and put in the screens. So I had to skip number 18, and that was worth it. We got the screens in and washed the windows. Just a beautiful day. And yesterday the same way. I'm all excited. Opportunity presenting the gospel yesterday morning. And then it suddenly hit me. What it must have been like in Liberia yesterday for all of our brethren. You realize we have many missionaries in Liberia, that that president who was murdered and his son who was beheaded, was a professing Christian, who was a friend of the cause of Christ. And who was a friend of the United States of America. We ought to pray for Liberia as well as many other countries in these troubled times. And just continue to hold these folk up before the Lord. So put them on your prayer list.

Paul H. Dixon:

Take your Bibles and turn with me to the book of James chapter four. Would you please? We started out last quarter in this book, working our way through it. The title of the book, show your faith. A practical challenge of demonstrating our faith in Jesus Christ. Chapter one, show your faith in the warfare, in the midst of the trials of life. Your faith should come through loud and clear. And chapter two, show your faith by your works. In chapter three, show your faith by your words. And in chapter four, show your faith and be not worldly.

Paul H. Dixon:

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And as we entered into chapter four, in our last session, we noted their problem. And as we read through this portion of scripture, we saw that their problem had to do, first of all, with the flesh, secondly, with the world, and thirdly with the devil. And the same problems the people faced, the Christians faced in that day, we face today. We contend with the flesh, the world, and the devil.

Paul H. Dixon:

Now, today, we want to look at their pride. We've looked at their problem. Now let's look at their pride as we go through the rest of the chapter. Let's start with verse six, "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. And he shall lift you up."

Paul H. Dixon:

It appears to me that pride surfaces in three ways in the conclusion of chapter four. The portion we just read, I believe we see pride manifesting itself in a contempt for God. We will note that in verses 10 through 12, we see pride as it shows its head in a criticism of others. And then in conclusion, in verses 13 through 17, we see pride as it manifests itself in a confidence in self. But let's first of all, think of pride as a contempt for God.

Paul H. Dixon:

When we think about the chapter devoting itself to the theme of world limits, show your faith and be not worldly. Worldliness and pride are Siamese twins. They go together. And as James speaks to this subject, I am mindful of how pride was the downfall of Satan. As we would study Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, that's why God judged Satan and threw him out of heaven. And as we read the record, we see pride as it runs its way, all the way through scripture. Pride is a problem we constantly contend with.

Paul H. Dixon:

And it's interesting what James has to say about it. James says that we would not have the problem with pride, and Satan would not have his foothold in our lives if we exercise the proper humility, and the proper relationship to God. When we are prideful, we show a contempt for God. Did you ever notice that whenever we start talking about humility and pride, we do come back to the devil. Keep a finger in James and turn over to 1st Peter chapter five. Here's humility in verse six. It sounds so much like what James called to our attention, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." 1st Peter 5:7, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Peter calls for humility. So we can overcome Satan as he would devour us. James calls for humility so we can overcome Satan and that pride that would come as we would follow in his steps.

Paul H. Dixon:

I think it's interesting that James not only calls for humility, he calls for holiness. He says humble yourselves, but he also says cleanse yourselves. Verse eight, "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded." Have you noted as we've worked our way through James, how we picked up different themes. We've picked up the theme of the tongue, and we'll get it again in chapter

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four, of the theme of riches that runs all the way through and he will come on heavy with that emphasis in chapter five. The matter of double mindedness here it is again. Ye double minded.

Paul H. Dixon:

Now there is a verse in the songs that I'm sure James had in mind when he talked about clean hands and pure heart, and it's been such a blessing to me, I did memorize it and I don't know whether you've done so, but I think you should. At least underline it for future memory. Work a finger in James four, and Psalm 24.

Paul H. Dixon:

Psalm 24:4, "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.⁵ He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." The importance of what we think, what we are, and how we act, clean hands and a pure heart. And you'll also notice that it's a broken heart, because he says in verse nine, "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness."

Paul H. Dixon:

The Christian life begins with repentance. It begins with sorrow over sin. It begins with mourning. And there is much joy in the Christian life. But many times, if we are full of pride, we no longer have the broken heart over anything. And as I search the scripture, I find that our God is continually pleased when we have a sensitivity to sin. When we have a sensitivity to him, when we are broken over the needs of a world that is around us. And I believe that when we practice what James is saying here, we can defeat pride.

Paul H. Dixon:

It's interesting that James said in verse seven, resist the devil, because if you don't, in verse six, God will resist you. God resisted the proud. God will hold us at arms length if we do not do the same to the devil. Oh, but you say, brother Dixon, I can't do this. I'm too weak. I know what my shortcomings are. I'll confess to you, I can't either. And I come back to something James said, and he seemingly does this. Every time he gives us a challenge, what does he say? Verse six. But he giveth more grace. That's our only solution. That's all the help we have. But all what hell, weak as we are, casting ourselves upon the grace of God for his enablement. So pride reveals itself in a contempt for God. We must defeat that pride through humility and holiness, holiness, submitting ourselves to God, drawing nigh to God. But it also rears its ugly head in another manner. And that is a criticism for others.

Paul H. Dixon:

Verse 11, "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.¹² There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?"

Paul H. Dixon:

Now please understand, James is not saying, nor is Matthew seven saying that we never exercise judgment. We have appointed people in places of authority who must make decisions as judges. We

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have people in places of authority over us who must make judgemental decisions. Parents, people in authority on jobs at an institution like this, elsewhere. James is not saying that we should not exercise critical thinking.

Paul H. Dixon:

Some have come to my office and we've discussed this matter. When we talk about criticism, does that mean we should not be critical thinkers? I don't know. I challenge you to think through what I say this morning. These were more noble in [inaudible 00:21:15] in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and search the scripture whether those things were so. If you're going to be a good student and a good Bible student, you must not just take something at face down, you go home, open your Bible and dig it out. That's what the word of God teaches. See if what the speaker has said will hold up under the searchlight of God's word as he continue to search it out.

Paul H. Dixon:

But James is talking about a harsh criticism. James is talking about the kind of back biting, tail bearing, mouthing, putting down carelessly of people. Pastor [inaudible 00:21:55] did such a capable job of dealing with this. Making decisions before we have all the facts. Drawing conclusions before all the facts are in. So easy for all of us to be guilty of that. A couple of the faculty members have said to me, it's unbelievable how much we've heard on the tongue this year. Not only as you've preached in James, but other speakers common. They want to preach from James and pastor [inaudible 00:22:32] comes, and he wants to speak on the tongue in the mornings. And you begin to get the idea that God must be trying to tell us something.

Paul H. Dixon:

Well, I don't know about you, but he has been me, because I need it. Maybe you don't need it. But I do, because this is one of the biggest problems that I have. And I'm so glad that James is so forthright. And he says, you shouldn't do this. And he gives some reasons why. He says you shouldn't do it because we are brethren. We shouldn't be doing this of other people who are not brethren, but what about the brethren? And you notice the emphasis, verse 11, brethren, brother, brother, the emphasis there. We're part of a family. You don't do that in a family. We also become judges of the Royal, all, James says, what is the Royal, all thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, with all thy mind. Thou shall love thy neighbor as thy self. We violate that when we become critical.

Paul H. Dixon:

Number three, he says, you shouldn't do it because God is the judge. Just leave that to him. Number four, he says, you shouldn't do it because after all, who are you? Who do you think you are? Who are you to judge? There is one law giver who's able to save and to destroy. Who are thou that judgest another?

Paul H. Dixon:

And then there's a third way that pride would surface. Number one, and a contempt for God. Number two, and a criticism for others. Number three, and a confidence in self, verses 13 through 17. "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord

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will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings." Interesting word for boasting there. It's the Greek word for quackery. You rejoice in your quackery, your false claims that you really cannot support. "All such rejoicing is evil." It's vain. It's prideful. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

Paul H. Dixon:

I don't know about you, but I think is one of the classic passages in the New Testament, the folly of us, self sited, conceited, making all of our plans, all that we're going to do in the future without looking to God, without any recognition of his will, of his enablement, and just acting like we're going to be living forever. No, it's not wrong to plan. In fact, a pastor said to me recently, he said, I wish that our colleges and seminaries were doing more to train us as pastors, how to administrate, how to plan. He, he said, we need to know how to plan as preachers. We need to know how to plan as businessmen. You need to know how to plan a class schedule. As school teachers, we need to be planning here at the college. That's not wrong. What's wrong is when we don't take God into this matter. And when we act like, God somehow can't stop this or stop us.

Paul H. Dixon:

And I love that question. What is your life? Have you answered that lately? What is your life? If I could hand out some three by five cards this morning and ask everyone in this chapel to put on that card, what your life is? What would you to put down? Well, what James is saying in the context here, evidently some people in that day caught up in their business dealings would say, "For me, life is to make money and to spend money and to have possession." A lot of people live their lives like that, especially the unbeliever. But that surely should not be the case for us as believers.

Paul H. Dixon:

Oh, thank God for Christians who make money and make lots of it and use it for the glory of the Lord. There's not anything wrong with having money or having possessions and using it for the Lord, and for his honor and for his glory. But if that becomes our life, that becomes everything, that's sin, that's pride, that's self conceit. For others, they would say, "For me, to live as pleasure."

Paul H. Dixon:

And I fear for most of us. If it not be possessions, it'd be pleasure. We just live to try to take our fill the niceties of this life and just try to coast through life and enjoy life. Some, they try to find it in the pleasure of lust and sex. And I wish I could tell you that's just a problem for people outside the walls of this college, but it's our problem too. Many of you young people are having some real problems in this area. Some of you have been very careless in this area. And I don't know of a faster way to blow your life than an immorality, and illicit sex and satisfying the sex drives and the lust of the body, and taking your fill of the pleasure of this world thinking that's what life is all about. It isn't.

Paul H. Dixon:

I'll never forget preaching at one of our schools. And after a service was over, many young people had responded to the invitation. It was an outstanding week. Someone said, "There's a young lady over here who wants to talk to you." And she was just weeping. So I sat down, and she said, "I graduated from this school, and brother Dixon while I was here I hated it. And I'll tell you why. I grew up in a Christian home

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where they put restrictions on me. They told me where I could go and where I couldn't go and what I could do and what I couldn't do. And I couldn't wait to get out of the home.

Paul H. Dixon:

Then I went to this Christian school and wouldn't you believe it? They did the same thing. They told me where I could go and where I couldn't go and what I could do and what I couldn't do. And they had standards. And I didn't like that either. And I couldn't wait to get out and do my own thing. I was missing light. So I got out. And I found me a young man who could show me the ropes. I said, now I'm going to live. And she said, I went the drug route. I went the alcohol route. I went the sex route. You name it. We did it. I did my own thing. I kept thinking now I'm living, and I was miserable."

Paul H. Dixon:

And then she started crying and she wept and wept. And finally she'd stop. And I kept waiting. I knew there was more, she said, "Brother Dixon, that young man was killed last week in an auto accident. I tried to lead him to Christ. I became so convicted the way I was living. He wouldn't even listen to me. I had no testimony with him. He died in an auto accident, and I'm going to have his baby." And she wept and wept and wept. You know what she found? The way of the transgressor is hard. And the pleasures of this life do not satisfy. And that is not what living is all about. Not the possessions of this world, nor the pleasures of this world, nor the praises of this world. All of its applause, all no.

Paul H. Dixon:

Paul summed it up for me to live in Jesus Christ, that's life. And we must not wait. We must not dilly-dally around about it. Don't wait until you finish this school year or until you graduate, make Christ your priority now. Why? Because James says life is just a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. You know when I preached to you, I love to go back to my college days. I hope you don't mind me doing that, but God did some many new things for me. I was a new Christian when I went off to college. About everything I ever had given to me was at a Christian college. Just saved a few months before I went off to school. I'm thankful for the church and the pastor before that.

Paul H. Dixon:

But I got married between my junior and senior year. God gave me one of those great Southern bells, and she's been such a wonderful wife, and Mrs. Dixon and I made a sign, and we put it in my closet. And just two verses of scriptures. Psalm 39:4-5, "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is: that I may know how frail I am."

Paul H. Dixon:

All that we would get what the Psalmist was saying. What James was saying, the [inaudible 00:32:33] of life. We must do away with all of our a worldly living and our pride and showing our contempt for God and a criticism of others in a conceded life, a self-centered life, and rather live for the Lord with everything we have and all what a great way. I can think of no better way to close this message than the way James closed the chapter, Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

Paul H. Dixon:

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May God speak to us. Let's bow for prayer. Thank you father, for meeting with us this morning. You know where the message was needed in all of our lives. I pray for our young people today. Some are going through some real struggles, some no doubt who are living in sin right now. Some who are facing some tremendous temptations. God, some who have priorities, all wrong, that you would use the message to bring conviction. I pray, Lord you not only use it to bring conviction to meet us where we are, where our needs might be, but also preventatively for those as we face the trial and the tests down the road, meet the needs of our college family. Bless each faculty member, staff member, administrator, and student this day in Christ name. Amen. God bless you, and have a good day.