

Rev. Janet R. Doyle

Elmer Presbyterian Church

Third Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday, June 14, 2026

Scripture: Proverbs 2: 1-10; James 1:21-25; 2: 14-26

Sermon: Off To Work We Go

An older man sat in his rocker day after day. Fixated in his chair, he promised not to remove himself from this spot until he saw God.

On one fine spring afternoon, the older man rocking in his chair, relentless in his visual quest of God, saw a young girl playing across the street. The little girl's ball rolled into the man's yard. She ran to pick it up and as she bent down to reach for the ball she looked at the man and said, "Mr. I see you everyday rocking in your chair staring off into nothing. What is it that you are looking for?"

"Oh, my dear child, you are too young to understand," replied the man. "Maybe," replied the young girl, "but my momma always told me if I had something in my head I should talk about it. She says to get a better understanding. My momma always says, "Miss Lizzy, share your thoughts. Share, share, share my momma always says."

"All right, Miss Lizzy. I am looking for God," said the man.

"With all due respect, sir, you rock back and forth in that chair day after day in search of God?" The young girl responded, puzzled.

"Why yes. I need to believe before my death that there is a God. I need a sign and I have yet to have one," said the man.

"A sign, sir? A sign?" said the girl, now quite confused by the old man's words. "Mr. Sir, God gives you a sign when you breathe your next breath. When you smell fresh flowers. When you can hear the birds sing. When all of the babies are born. Sir, God gives you a sign when you laugh and when you cry; when you feel the tears roll from your eyes. It is a sign in your heart to hug and love. God gives you a sign in the wind and in the rainbows and the change of the seasons. All of the signs are there, but do you not believe in them? Mr., Sir, God is in you and God is in me. There is no searching because he is there all of the time."

Lizzy walked up to the older man and placed her young hands over his heart and spoke softly into his ear. "Sir, it comes from in here, not out there," pointing to the sky. "Find it in your heart, in your own mirror. Then, Sir, you will see the signs."

This little girl seemed to understand God more than the older man. We can sit all we like but it is faith in God and faith in action is when we see God at work in our lives and in others.

Faith is not just an intellectual concept; it is the basis for a relationship with God.

The little girl was talking about loving God, trusting God, and letting God show you His wonders when we open our eyes to really see it.

We won't see anything if we just sit and rock on the porch with our eyes closed. We need to get up and move with our eyes wide open to see the signs and wonders of God moving among us. We need to be people of thought, of study, but also of action.

We need to get up and be a part of the action.

In our scripture lesson this morning, James is concerned about the people he was writing to because they were living their lives saying they had faith but they didn't practice their faith with love. Remember James is writing to help these Christians mature in their faith, in their walk with God and in their service of Christ.

James cannot stand profession of faith with practice, words without deeds. Faith without deeds he says is dead. Don't just be hearers of the word but also doers. This is an important element in our walk with God.

James calls God's word, in verse 21 of chapter 1, "The Implanted word." This reminds us of the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13:1-9. He compares God's Word to seed and the human heart to soil.

There is the Hard Heart, the Shallow Heart, the Crowded Heart, and the Fruitful Heart, which takes root and produces a bountiful harvest of fruit. The Fruitful Heart is a changed heart, a changed heart, in character and in conduct. How to treat others. Their love for others. It's what's in here, the HEART.

James is saying this is the heart you need- a fruitful heart. Real fruit has in it the seed for more fruit, so that the harvest continues to grow fruit. (John 15:1-5)

We need to have ears that hear instructions from the Lord so that we can then “DO” the things that bring blessings to others.

James wants the people to look at themselves and what their lives are like. Not to deceive yourself, thinking you are doing alright. We all need to examine ourselves in the mirror.

As we look into the mirror of God’s Word, we see ourselves as we really are but many times we just glance at ourselves, we don’t make a careful study because we don’t want to see certain things in our life.

If you think you broke your arm would you rather have the doctor take a picture of your arm with a 35 mm camera or with an X-ray machine?

What would tell you more about your arm? The X-ray machine of course. Well, the word of God tells us more about our lives when we look at it longer and closer.

Many times after we look in the mirror we forget what we saw, and we keep living life the same—unchanged in our heart or actions.

And we also fail to obey what the word of God tells us to do. We think that hearing is the same as doing or we don’t think it applies to us, or we choose not to see it.

If we are to use God’s mirror profitably, then we must gaze into it carefully and with serious intent to make changes in our life. We need to examine our own lives and hearts in light of God’s Word. We then need RESTORATION from God to cleanse our heart and mind. Finally we need to be TRANSFORMED. God changes our heart and mind and will to grow in grace and His Spirit.

So first we must receive the word, and have it implanted in our heart and change our heart.

Second, we need to practice the word, to do what the word says.

Third, we need to share the word—in word and deed.

We need to talk about our beliefs and also as mature believers live out our faith. Our behavior should show how we believe.

Our conduct will reveal our convictions.

One of the tests of the reality of our faith is how we live our life and treat others. What are we doing for the Kingdom of God?

James wants people to realize that there is a time to grow up and mature. Just as a baby doesn't keep drinking just milk for 3 years, the child starts eating cereal and more solid food until slowly no more baby food. They are old enough to eat adult food.

As Christians we can't always be on milk or just on baby food. We need to mature in our faith journey, to see God and our relationship from an adult view.

To mature in our walk with Christ means looking at our past and seeking reconciliation and forgiveness with people, it means growing in our relationship with those around us and growing in love for those in need. It means working on the hard areas of our lives.

It is then our faith becomes more dynamic instead of static. A dynamic faith is an obedient faith to serve with energy and excitement.

We aren't doing God's work because we have to. It is because we want to.

Then we begin to catch the wave of active faith. Just like the body needs the spirit to be alive so faith needs work to be alive.

It is our love for others that provides life, the vitality, the energy for Christian discipleship. "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

As First Corinthians 13 says, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned but have not love, it profits me nothing."

If we don't do things out of love for another it means nothing at all. Our works will not save us but when we have faith our works are done in LOVE and with JOY.

Love becomes the style of our lives. We just can't come to church each Sunday and hear a sermon—our lives need to be a sermon.

We become more mature in our faith by following Christ—trusting in His promises and by working side by side with Him.

Let us be people of action—not just hearers but doers.

There is a story about a woman that was in her second month of nursing school. She said, “our professor gave us a pop quiz. I was a conscientious student and had breezed through the questions, until I read the last one: ‘What is the first name of the woman who cleans the school?’ Surely, this was some kind of joke. I had seen the cleaning woman several times. She was tall, dark haired and in her fifties but how would I know her name? I handed in my paper, leaving the last question blank. Before class ended, one student asked if the last question would count toward our quiz grade. “Absolutely,” said the professor. “In your careers you will meet many people. All are significant. They deserve your attention and care and acknowledgment, even if all you do is smile and say ‘hello’ and call them by name. I’ve never forgotten that lesson. I also learned her name was Dorothy.

God wants us to love those we meet. To notice those around us. To mature in our faith means to reach out with God’s love to everyone.

“And now faith, hope, love abide, these three but the greatest of these is love.”

As we begin this Summer season let us all be mindful of how we can be doers of the word as we continue to mature in our walk with the Lord.

May the Lord grant us WISDOM and COURAGE to put our faith into action.