



## ST. ANDREW'S IN THE PINES EPISCOPAL CHURCH

SERMON  
8-30-15

“What you do speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say.” That is a quote credited to a couple different statesmen – including in interpretation – the writer of the book of James.

In the past couple of weeks we have been reminded of one of the great “Doers” of God’s word – former president Jimmy Carter. You may have seen news reports of his brain cancer or seen or heard some of the interview he gave announcing the detection of the melanoma and the planned course of medical treatment.

I am thinking that James Carter must be a direct descendant of the James who wrote the New Testament book of that name which we will have readings from for the next five weeks. The book of James is a marvelous, short, wise, book of instructions for living with the “implanted word” guiding our lives and taking care that our tongue does not get control of us. I would strongly recommend reading it in your Bible and then listening carefully as we hear further readings from James for the next four Sundays. James is first known to us in the New Testament as one of the brothers of Jesus and one of the early church leaders that dealt with the welcoming of gentiles into fellowship with the Jewish followers of Christ’s teachings. His writings are considered wisdom writings. His book in the Bible is writing grounded in grace and celebrating the life we may experience as we participate in God’s work of reclaiming the world. It is about faith and it is about works. Today he speaks to us about the power and importance of being doers of the word rather than people who give way to words that reflect anger, or sordidness or rank growth of wickedness. We are asked to live with meekness, with humility, and to care for widows and orphans- to be doers.

Not sure how many of you remember President Jimmy Carter? He lost the 1980 presidential election in a humiliating landslide loss. Retiring from political life at age 55, Jimmy Carter went on to spend the next 35 years living as one of our great humanitarians. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002 after years of untiring effort to find peaceful solutions in international conflicts. He has been an active part of Habitat for Humanity building homes in his native Georgia and all over the United States. He founded a center to promote human rights and alleviate suffering across the globe. He especially has worked to develop community-based health care systems in Africa and Latin America.

In the interview he gave a couple of weeks ago he spoke once again, as he has done often in his life of his foundation in God's word. He continues to teach Sunday School at his church. He credits his 69 year marriage to Rosalyn as his best decision ever. He told how he and Rosalyn talked together when he turned 70 about slowing down and agreed to revisit the idea at 80 years of age. Then they revisited the idea at 90 years of age and now nearly 91, he says there are a few more things he hopes to accomplish before his death. – He says he'd like for the last guinea worm to die before he does.

With gentleness and humility Carter talked about the many blessings and privileges he has experienced in his life and while he says being president of the United States was an incredible experience, his marriage, his faith, and his work caring for others are what have mattered the most. His years after the presidency have been the richest and most meaningful. His life has been filled being a doer of God's word.

I am touched to hear his story and touched to think how he wisely realized that the power of his position, the power of his words were dirty rags compared to the work of sheltering and feeding and bringing health care to the poor and needy all over the globe.

Jimmy Carter and James are both telling us that our lives are to be lived as first fruits – as an offering, as a sacrifice to God's creation. Our lives have perfect freedom and liberty in them when we allow with meekness God's word to be our power. We will be blessed in our doing – not in our speaking.

Enough said.

Thanks be to God.