

September 15, 2024

God's Good News Story: The Church Alive & Growing
The Book of James – Pt. 6 (James 3:13-4:12)
FAITH SUBMITS

Today we continue with our multi-year sermon series called 'God's Good News Story'. We are going through the Bible from Genesis all the way to Revelation hearing what God has to say to us and reviewing the story of how God has interacted with mankind from the very beginning to bring us and keep us in A Right Relationship of Faith with Him through Jesus Christ. Our focus has been to listen to words of this Good News Story and the Action-Packed adventures (both good and bad) with the hope of understanding more about God's plan and will for our lives. We are taking a story format because the Bible in a sense is God's Love Letter and Life Guidebook where God speaks to us in every generation with power and might. Words and Speech are a main way God conveys His will and plan to us, but it is through Jesus Christ, the True Word, that we find God's ultimate revelation. Today we are in the book of James,

In the book of James we see a portrait of

Authentic, Active, Loving, Obedient Mature Faith.

James gives us these Action Attributes to this type of faith:

FAITH PERSEVERES - FAITH OBEYS

FAITH LOVES - FAITH WORKS

FAITH SACRIFICES - FAITH RISKS

FAITH SPEAKS - FAITH SUBMITS

Today we focus on the last attribute FAITH SUBMITS. This submission can be described as a '*total, unreserved, unwavering allegiance to God rather than the world*'. (Moo 1985:144)

James gives us a key resource in our quest for a Mature Faith, which is WISDOM. You may remember that I said in an earlier sermon that some people call the Book of James, the Proverbs of the New Testament. Let's read a section from

Proverbs 2:1-14 and see how James reinforces this concept in today's passage.

Proverbs 2:1-14... *My son, if you will receive my words And treasure my commandments within you, ² Make your ear attentive to wisdom; Incline your heart to understanding. ³ For if you cry out for insight, And raise your voice for understanding; ⁴ If you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures; ⁵ Then you will understand the fear of the LORD, And discover the knowledge of God. ⁶ For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding. ⁷ He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity, ⁸ Guarding the paths of justice, And He watches over the way of His godly ones. ⁹ Then you will discern righteousness, justice and integrity, and every good path. ¹⁰ For wisdom will enter your heart, And knowledge will be delightful to your soul; ¹¹ Discretion will watch over you, Understanding will guard you, ¹² To rescue you from the way of evil, From a person who speaks perverse things; ¹³ From those who leave the paths of uprightness To walk in the ways of darkness; ¹⁴ Who delight in doing evil And rejoice in the perversity of evil;*

With that Old Testament foundation, let's see how James paints word pictures to help us offset the tongue/words that last week we discussed as something that is untamable.

Two Pictures of Wisdom

James 3:13-18...¹³ *Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.* ¹⁴ *But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.* ¹⁵ *This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.* ¹⁶ *For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.* ¹⁷ *But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peace-loving, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, free of hypocrisy.* ¹⁸ *And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.*

Just a reminder, James insists that our actions authenticate our words. We need wisdom in order to get these to match consistently. Wisdom is then, not just something I merely possess in my head, it is something that I will demonstrate in my conduct. (Material adapted from Stulac, Platt & Wiersbe)

James is reinforcing that wisdom, like faith, must be active and reflected in our thoughts, words & actions. We also see here that wisdom, like love, faith and other key “religious” words have both a negative (worldly) expression as well as a positive (Godly) expression.

| Worldly Wisdom | Godly Wisdom |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Comes from hell. | Comes from heaven. |
| Motivated by self-centered ambition. | Motivated by God-centered humility. |
| Results in disorder & evil. | Results in peace & righteousness. |

(platt)

It is imperative and sometimes painful for us as Christians to come to the awareness that our wisdom, words and decisions can be motivated by selfish/satanic/worldly influences. It is then, even more obvious why we need to wash our minds with the Word of God and let the Holy Spirit of God give us Godly wisdom to act upon. James gives us these characteristics to help us clarify this godly wisdom. It is pure, peace-loving, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, and free of hypocrisy.

Question to Ponder: When someone looks at the “portrait of your faith, words and conduct” do they see these characteristics reflected?

Two Pictures of Friendship

James 4:1-12...¹ *What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is the source not your pleasures that wage war in your body's parts?* ² *You lust and do not have, so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.* ³ *You ask and do not receive, because you ask with the wrong motives, so that you may spend what you request on your pleasures.* ⁴ *You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wants to be a FRIEND OF THE WORLD makes himself an enemy of God.* ⁵ *Or do you think that the Scripture says to no purpose, “He jealously desires the Spirit whom He has made to dwell in us”?* ⁶ *But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, “GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.”* ⁷ *Submit therefore to God. But resist the devil, and he will flee from you.* ⁸ *Come close to God and He will*

come close to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Be miserable, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

James is sharing with us the personal aspect of our relationship with God. He uses the concept of friendship and enemies. Remember James is speaking primarily to ‘believers’ here. So, we must be diligent to evaluate our relationship with God and others based on these points:

| Friendship with World | Friendship with God |
|--|--|
| Comes from sinful desires of the flesh. | Comes from a gracious desire of God. |
| Motivated by longing for earthly pleasure. | Motivated by a longing for eternal satisfaction. |
| Results in spiritual adultery against God. | Results in submission to the authority of God. |

Biblical Steps (vs. 6-10) **to An Authentic Faith Friendship With God**

- 1. Submit to God**
- 2. Resist the Devil Forcefully**
- 3. Intentionally Seek God**
- 4. Repent and Ask for Cleansing of Your Sin**
- 5. Treat Sin Seriously By Weeping & Mourning**
- 6. Humble Yourself & Trust God Completely**

Two Pictures of Speech

James 4:11,12...¹¹ *Do not speak against one another, brothers and sisters. The one who speaks against a brother or sister, or judges his brother or sister, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it.* ¹² *There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you, judging your neighbor?*

| Worldly Speech | Godly Speech |
|--|--|
| Comes from a negative, judgmental spirit. | Comes from an obedient, submissive spirit. |
| Motivated by selfish, controlling desires. | Motivated by submission to God’s Law. |
| Results in dishonor to God and discouragement to people. | Results in honor to God and encouragement to people. |

James is consistent in reminding us that our action and our words should be in harmony and reflect an authentic loving relationship with God and with One Another. ‘Out of the overflow of a submissive heart of faith we want our words and actions to glorify God and point others to the truth in Christ’. (adapted from Platt. P. 92)

The following references were utilized in preparation of this message:

...**Blue**, J. Ronald. "James." In *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*. Edited by John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck. Wheaton: Scripture Press Publications, Victor Books, 1983. P. 818

...**Burdick**, Donald W. "James." In *Hebrews-Revelation*. Vol. 12 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. 12 vols. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelein and J. D. Douglas. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981

...**Constable**, Thomas L. *Notes on James, 2014 Edition*. <http://soniclight.com/d/f/constable/notes/pdf/james.pdf>

...**Hendriksen**. *Survey of the Bible*, p. 318.

...**MacArthur**, John. Benefitting From Life's Trials. Retrieved from: <http://www.gty.org/resources/study-guides/40-5161/born->

...Platt, David. *Christ-Centered Commentary*. James.

...**Stulac**, George M. *James*. Downers Grove, Ill. and Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1993.

...**Townsend**, Jim. *New Testament Highlights*. David C. Cook., Elgin, IL.

...**Wiersbe**, Warren W. *Be Mature*. James Commentary. Wheaton: Scripture Press Publications, Victor Books, 1978.