

This War of Mine.
James 4:7

Romans 7
Galatians 5:13-26

JAMES 4.

The passage that we are looking at this week follows directly from last week. This week we will be looking at the solution to the problem that James posted in the beginning of this chapter. Why are you fighting among each other, and why are your prayers not being answered. Last week we looked at these 2 questions and James' answer. Members are fighting because they are seeking their own pleasures and desires, and their prayers are not being answered because they are not asking for Godly wisdom but rather asking that their selfish and prideful desires be met.

James then chastises them, warning them that conducting yourself in the same way that the world conducts themselves is opposite of God. He says that a friend of the world is an enemy of God. As I said last week, I really think that this is the focus and reason why James wrote this letter. It was to call back to repentance those who have gone astray. Those who are playing the harlot, those who are in the brotherhood of believers, yet have not set aside their selfishness and pride. Wanting to have their cake and eat it too, claiming Christ, yet instead of seeking Christ, and godly wisdom they set their sights on material things, seeking their own desires and pleasures.

I think far too often we can get caught up in this very same mindset. I know that I can. We look at situations that arise in our life and we are seeking a specific outcome that would be the best for us, or so we think. As we pray, sometimes we pray selfishly seeking our own comfort, or desire with little thought of pursuing, or setting our hearts on seeking God's will. This was my very experience when I would pray that God would bring us a pastor. Afterward my thoughts would turn to maybe I should just step up and start but that wasn't what I wanted...that wasn't my desire, it wasn't the answer that I was seeking. So I would pray, selfishly, because I didn't want to do it so God please bring someone else! As we can see, that prayer didn't get answered, and I think it goes right along with what James is saying here about praying rightly. We don't get the answer we seek because we are seeking our own desires and pleasures, our own will instead of asking God to reveal his will to us.

James calls this type of desire a war within our members. Paul spoke of this very thing in Romans having a war within himself. Romans 7:18. For I know that in my that is in my flesh nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man, but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

This was my very experience, what I knew I should do I did not want to do, It wasn't until God revealed to me this very thing, he was pressing on my heart to step up and fill this role but in my selfishness I kept suppressing it until God convicted me of as Paul put it, the law in my members warring against the law in my mind. Sometimes that is how God works, every door you try to take is slammed in your face until the only door left is the one that God is holding open, which has been holding open the entire time, calling, and urging you toward him but we think we know better, Oh if we would only learn to trust God, seek his will, and put aside ourselves.

Thank God for his grace, his love, and his patience, as we like little children stumble, struggle, and fight to have our way while God through the holy spirit convicts and guides us to where we should go. James says in verse 8, Submit to God, Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.

These brothers that James was writing to here were dealing with this very thing, and they were losing the war allowing the sin in their members rule and control them. That is why James calls them Adulterers and Adulteresses, they are living their lives in a way opposite of what they really are. That is why James spent the first 3 chapters explaining that it does matter what you do, your actions, and your words, do matter. You can not divorce faith, from works. The work of Christ is life giving, and that work of Christ is life changing! If you are claiming Christ, yet living like the world it seems there are 2 possibilities that James has set forth. You either have a false faith and have fooled yourself, or you are playing the harlot and you must submit to God and flee the devil because if you love this world, you have become an enemy of God.

And that is where we pick up today. What is the solution and answer to these problems. You are warring within yourself, which is causing war and fights among the brotherhood and your prayers are not being answered. It is because of sin, as Paul says, warning in your members so that which you will to do you do not do, and that which you will not to do you do. So how do we overcome this war?

Verse 7, Submit to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Have you ever drawn near to God? Has there ever been a time that when you look at your life you see how God has laid it all out, how this little thing lead to this other thing and all the moving pieces that have come together to bring you to where you are? When I look back at how God has orchestrated everything to bring me here today it brings absolute amazement at God's sovereignty and my heart rejoices in his love and grace toward me.

In loss, or times of trial, or temptation have you sought after God and felt relief in your soul that only he can bring? When we come near to God, when we are broken, humble, and beaten and we come to our father he gives us a peace, and a joy beyond understanding, beyond what the world can comprehend. It is only through Christ that we can have joys in various trials as James said in chapter 1. Knowing that our faith produces patience and let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete lacking nothing. When we come to that place, we realize as Job did, though he slay me, I will still trust in him. This is what James is calling for these brethren to do, to examine themselves, so that they see what they are doing is sinning against God and that need to turn and submit to God, and lay aside their pride and selfish desires.

Repent, cleanse your hands, you sinners and purify your hearts you double minded. Flee the devil, and run to God the author and finisher of our faith. That is the solution to the war within our members, That is the solution to our flesh, and our spirit warring against each other, draw close to God, cry out as Paul did, O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God-through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Submit to God, Draw near to God, Lament, mourn and weep! As we read this morning, Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted, and it is better to go to the house of mourning than the house of feasting. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning. James is calling them to action, Lament, weep and mourn let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and he will lift you up.

Douglas Moo says that James here is reinforcing the need to take sin seriously. A carefree, "devil

may care” attitude is typical of those who are friends of the world, they live the hedonist philosophy of eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die. This is a world view that ignores the terrifying reality of God's judgment and even the committed christian can slip into a casual attitude toward sin, perhaps presuming too much on God's forgiving and merciful nature. James words are directly countering such an attitude. He wants us to see sin for what it is, a serious breach in our relationship with a loving heavenly father and breach that if not healed, can lead to both temporal, and spiritual disaster.

God constantly uses marriage language to describe his relationship with his church, and with his followers. He loves us, as a groom love his bride, and when we in our rebellion and sin do not set our hearts upon him, do not love him as we ought, and we seek our own will, our own selfish desire, our own pleasure and comfort, we are like adulterers. Christ sacrificed all for us, his bride and we are constantly ungrateful, unloving, toward him, and each other. We owe Christ our all, and as Paul says again, Oh wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death and rebellion! Thank God for our loving husband, who despite our adulterous nature patiently loves us, drawing us ever closer to himself.

So how should we respond to this? Well we should be seeking Godly wisdom, and his will and desire for our lives. focusing our heart and mind upon him on Sunday...no, not just Sunday, not just daily, not just hourly, by constantly. That is the only way we can have victory over this war between the flesh and spirit within ourselves, it is only through Christ. The more that we are in the word, reading, studying and learning about Christ. The more that we are in prayer, talking with our father, the closer we will be to God, and the easier it will be to resist the devil.

James continues on in verse 11. Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

James seems to have turned his focus back from calling his brothers and sisters to repent from their sin, back to instructing them and exhorting them to right behavior. The first thing that he goes back to instructing his reader about is the last thing he was instructing them in chapter 3. It is speech. IN chapter 3 he said that we need to guard ourselves that our speech should be seasoned with wisdom from heaven, that is pure and peaceable. Here he is warning us that we should avoid slander.

Since I am sure Diana is curious and wants to know, the Greek word James uses is Katalaleo, which means literally to speak against. This word appears multiple times in the bible, both in the old and new testament. It has been used when questioning authority, or in case of incorrect accusations, or slandering someone in secret. There is no way to know exactly what was going on with the people to whom James was writing to at the time but in any case either of these 3 different uses of this word Katalaleo would wreck havoc and does wreck havoc in any assembly of people.

So many churches have been torn apart by slander and false accusations. This is one of the things that causes wars and fights among god's family. It goes back again, to what are we seeking, are we seeking God's will, or our own. Slander is something that should not exist within the church, but it seems that is where it is most prevalent. James says that he who does so speaks evil of the law and become judges of that law.

I do not think that he is talking about the mosaic law here, as some might understand it to be. But I

think rather he is talking about the very same law he mentioned earlier in his writing. The royal law, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. If we are slandering, backbiting, we are not living as we should, we are not loving as we should. God's word says that we should love our neighbors as ourselves, and in doing so we fulfill the whole law. We who are of the spirit, should walk in the spirit and against such there is no condemnation. IF we are to love our neighbors, how much more so our brothers and sisters in Christ?

If we are loving, then we will not be slandering, if we are seeking after God's will and not our own, we will be seeking to build each other up not tear each other down. This is such a central part of the christian walk, and yet it seems can be the hardest to do for our flesh wars against our spirit. We are not always guarding our tongue, and out of our mouth comes both blessings and cursing. Oh wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death!

Let us not be like these people in the book of James. Let us not be seeking our own selfish desires, pleasure, and comfort but rather in all things seek God, submit to him, draw near to him, humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he will lift us up.