

Godly Wisdom
James 3:13-18

Psalm 37:27-40
Romans 8:22-39

James Chapter 3.

I have been enjoying this study in the book of James. It has been interesting to me to make the ties back to our previous journey through Galatians. For me it has really helped to mesh, and simplify and build upon what I believe. It struck me while studying Galatians when Paul tells them that he came to them because of his infirmity. That he stopped there, because at the time he was unable to travel further and he shared the gospel with them. And that despite his weakness they did not despise or reject him, but rather received him as an angel.

Then over in Chapter 6, talking about those who follow the law, which gives them something to boast about, and he says in verse 14 God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Following this chain of thought, if we go to Corinthians chapter 2, Paul says there.. I brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

That is what I mean by learning the simplicity of the gospel. The apostle Paul said all he knew, and taught was Christ and him crucified. Even Paul, the great apostle said he came to those in Corinth in weakness, in fear, and much trembling and in Galatians because of his physical infirmity. Despite his circumstance, he simply, preached Christ and him crucified. The gospel really is that simple, and should be the center of all preaching and teaching. All things should point to Christ, our learning should be focused on growing in understanding of Christ, and him crucified. That really is what James has been teaching, those who are Christs, will be like Christ, and their life will exhibit Christ like traits.

If we focus our hearts and minds on Christ, our life will reflect that very thing. Or as Paul said in Galatians, those who are in the spirit, walk in the spirit. This is a way that you can measure that your faith is a true faith, one that is in word and deed and not just word alone. So often we see in believers today the need for a codified law. Some list that we must follow because we are Christians and that is what we do. Some even interpret this book of James that way, as a guide to follow to increase in holiness.

But really, what we are seeing here is not a guide of how to be holy, but what the life of a person declared holy by Christ, and him crucified looks like. IT really is that simple, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, repent of your sin and rebellion and be saved from the wrath of God, and be freed from the yoke of bondage of sin.

Christ says that all those who love him will keep his commandments in John chapter 14:15, and again later that chapter in verse 21. HE who has my commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves me, and he who loves me will be loved by my father and I will love him and manifest myself to him. Judas, not Iscariot said to him Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world? Jesus answered and said, if anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him, This is the person that James is talking

about, this is a person who has Christ flowing out of their lives. Some want to make this a demand for a new law to those under the new covenant, but really it is the effect that Christ and the indwelling holy spirit has on the life of the believer. Christ says, to obey his commands, and we as believers can do nothing else but to follow the words of Christ, As he says, anyone who loves me, he WILL keep my word.

We do not need to keep God's commands in the same way that the Jews were required to keep the Mosaic Law. God's commands are not a new law to us, but is a guide, and instruction through which we grow in our Christian walk. Unlike the Mosaic law, which the Jews tried to keep for their justification, we have been justified by Christ, and him Crucified, and we follow his commands, not out of duty, but out of our love for our savior. That is the difference between the old covenant, and the new covenant. We have been given the holy spirit, and those of us who are in the spirit, walk in the spirit, and against such there is no law according to the apostle Paul.

James has really been pounding this home, that a person with true faith, a person with the spirit, who is imbued with righteousness and love will live out a life in peace, love, mercy, and truth. Counting our trials joy, knowing that ultimately we have been delivered from the bondage of Sin and are free in Christ, who showers us with every good gift from above, granting us wisdom if we ask in faith without doubting. We should be swift to listen, and slow to wrath for wrath does not produce the righteousness of God, laying aside all filthiness and wickedness and receive humbly, and meekly God's word that we should act upon, not just hear, but to do. Not thinking ourselves righteous, yet through our actions prove otherwise we are to love our neighbors as our self, not being partial, only loving or helping, or teaching those who we think deserve it, but rather to all those who are around us.

Our faith, will act, our faith will produce good works, our faith will not be just empty idle words, but action, and if there is no action, that faith is dead. We will be a people who bridle our tongue, we should be seeking to edify and to build up, not gossip and tear down. If the love of Christ truly is ruling in our life then these things ought to be so.

As I am sure you all know, Last week Sunday there was another mass shooting reported. At a church, in Texas. 26, of the 50 members of that church were killed, and I believe 22 others were wounded. This has been on my mind all week. It is a great tragedy, that sadly is just one of many that seems to be becoming almost normal in our country. And yesterday I read a blog post from Wil Wheaton, who if you don't know, is an actor, and has quite a following of fans. Bear with me here, I think that this is very relevant to what we have been studying.

So apparently Wil had made some comments about this latest shooting that was taken out of context, and was twisted to mean something that he never meant it to mean. He said. "I am so sick and angry that this keeps happening. America is the only first world country where we do nothing while our fellow humans are slaughtered by entirely preventable gun violence every day. Our Politicians can write and pass laws that can address this epidemic of gun violence, which should be considered a public health crisis, but instead, they offer up "thoughts and prayers" as a shield for their inaction.

Now I don't want to get into the politics of this, but in his blog post, he said that his anger toward politicians who offer no help, no answer, and seem to not really care always say that their thoughts and prayers are with the people. Someone took his quote, and started reporting that he was mocking Christianity. To which he replied he was not, he said...I am not attacking you or your faith and I sincerely apologize to anyone who I offended or hurt, I am angry at those who are quick to offer up

thoughts and prayers after mass murder, but refuse to do anything to stop it.

And this is the part I want to take note of, Wil went on to say, I did not mean to mock anyone's faith, except for those who hide behind empty words about thoughts and prayers, exploiting the real sincere beliefs held by people of faith. These politicians offer words without deeds over and over again and I am sick and tired of it. That is what I am attacking, and what I am angry about.

As I read this I instantly thought that is exactly what we have been studying.. this is exactly it! Empty words, faith without action, So James also says, that every good thing comes from God...and I asked myself what good thing came from this? What good came from 26 people being shot and killed in this little church in Texas. Then I read this post by Wil Wheaton and I thought...that, right there. What this country saw in the aftermath of this horrible event, was people praying, people worshiping God, people exercising their faith. They did not blame God, they did not become angry at God they did not seek justice, or revenge. they approached God for a comfort that only he can provide. And even people like Wil Wheaton, who is an atheist recognized this faith being different from the politicians. What was meant for evil, God turns for good.

This is exactly what the book of James is talking about. A tangible faith, a real faith, that even when trials and tribulations, even unto death arise...it is unshaken. James continues making this argument throughout this book, and he just keeps building upon each point. In the passage today he says Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. BUT, if you have bitter envy, and self seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth, this wisdom does not ascend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic, For where envy and self seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.

Just as there is a stark difference between a true believing faith, and one who is claiming faith, one who's faith is empty like the example James put forth of the brother who says, go be warmed and be filled and does nothing, or the one that Wil Wheaton calls out, who says he will offers thoughts and prayers and yet does nothing. It is the same with wisdom. Wisdom that comes from God, brings with it the fruits of the spirit, kindness, meekness, and the wisdom of the world produces envy, and is self-seeking, James says do not lie against the truth. Do not fool yourself into thinking that this kind of wisdom comes from God, it is earthly, and demonic.

Wisdom is mentioned throughout all of scripture, Proverbs 3:13-18 says, Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding. For her proceeds ear better than the profits of silver, and her gain then fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things you may desire cannot compare with her. Length of days is in her right hand, in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who retain her. Or if we turn over just one page, to Proverbs 4:7 says,

Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding. Exalt her, and she will promote you, she will bring you honor, when you embrace her. She will place on your head an ornament of grace, a crown of glory she will deliver to you. In Ephesians we are told that we should walk in wisdom. Chapter 5:15. See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise. Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

James here is comparing and putting the 2 different types of wisdom side by side. The wisdom of the world, he says is corrupt, sensual, and demonic full envy, and self interest .

The wisdom that the world offers does nothing but promote itself, It's focus is on power, control, and selfish desires. That is why James says that this kind of wisdom is confusion, and every evil thing is there.

Reversely, God's people have a wisdom from above which he says first, is pure, and peaceable, it is gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and hypocrisy. We see that in the verse's we read in proverbs when he says to seek wisdom, get understanding be wise and understand the what? The will of the Lord. That is Godly wisdom, to seek and understand the will of the Lord.

This wisdom brings with it humility, unlike the wisdom of the world, it is not self seeking, self promoting, but rather seeks after the will of God, producing the fruit of the spirit, the attributes of a true follower of Christ. Love, Peace, Joy, Because we know, through all things it is Christ who first loved us, it is only Christ who can give us peace through trials, and temptations, which is why the first response of the people in that little Texas church was to cry out to God. and it is by this wisdom of God, and understanding these things that we can have Joy no matter our circumstance because Christ died for us, making our adoption into the family of God secure. Nothing else can bring peace and joy like that knowledge and resting in Christ our savior.

Godly wisdom also creates peace, and gentleness. We should be loving when we are debating brothers and sisters in Christ over doctrine, and not resort to the tactics of the world of name calling, and acting in anger and frustration. We should seek to be peaceable, meek, and loving in all of our conduct.

So how do these 2 different forms of wisdom show themselves? Those who have earthly wisdom, will boast of their wisdom. They make it known to everyone around them how wise they are, how smart they are, it is prideful, and they seek glory for themselves. Wisdom from God is shown by our conduct, as James says in verse 13, Who is wise and understanding let him show by good conduct that his words are done in meekness of wisdom.

So how do we get this wisdom from above that James and proverbs are talking about? James answers that right in the first chapter verse 5. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask or God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach and it will be given to him. Also we gain wisdom through reading our bibles, learning about Christ, growing in grace. I think we can apply the same type of principle that Paul is using in Romans talking about being a witness. Chapter 10:14 he says How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? The same is true with wisdom, how shall we gain wisdom if we do not read God's word for it is by his word that he speaks to us.

This is why the way we live out our lives in our Christian walk is so important. Why it is so important to be in the word, to be a people of prayer, to be faithful, merciful, meek, kind, and gentle people. There are people on the outside who see, and even people who do not believe, see a difference between those who truly do, and those who are faking it. Our faith is not a mystical faith, it is not just words, it is not empty, it contains substance. Our lives will show forth, and flow out of what is inside. Seek wisdom, get understanding bearing the fruit of righteousness sown in peace.