**Friendship with the World is Enmity with God**

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**James 4:1-4**

**Sunday Afternoon**

**July 7, 2024**

**James 4:1-4**

1 Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.

3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. 4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

**1 Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?**

Saints, the word quarrels refers to fighting without weapons, as in personal conflicts. These conflicts have nothing to do with quarrels with the pagan world; these are quarrels within the church, among believers.

**1 John 3:18-19**

18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. 19 And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.

Saints, James is describing a condition where a group has come to a state of war, with open skirmishes breaking out among people.

Sides have been chosen, positions have been dug in. In cases like this, believers have ceased being peacemakers; instead, they live in open antagonism toward one another.

**Proverbs 15:18**

“A wrathful man stirs up strife, But he who is slow to anger allays contention.”

**Proverbs 16:32**

“He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.”

Saints, the word fights refers to battles with weapons, an armed conflict. It was used figuratively to indicate the struggle between powers, both earthly and spiritual.

Obviously, disagreements will occur in every church. But when they happen, are we wise enough to understand why? Do we know their source?

When handled correctly, with godly wisdom, they can lead to growth. Sadly, however, some churches become permanent battlegrounds.

New believers find themselves in a cross fire of arguments, resentments, and power struggles that may carry a veneer of spiritual truth, but are more often simply personal conflicts between people.

In the process, innocent bystanders are sometimes deeply wounded. Many of us know people who have been alienated from the church because of a conflict that had nothing to do with the gospel.

Fights and quarrels are being caused, not by some external source, but by the people’s evil desires. When everyone seeks his or her own pleasure, only strife, hatred, and division can result.

At war within suggests a raging battle fought between the desire to do good and the desire to do evil.

**Jeremiah 17:9-10**

9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? 10 I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.

**2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.**

Saints, the craving described here becomes so strong that the people scheme and kill to get it. The word kill can be taken as a hyperbole for bitter hatred. Instead of rethinking their desires, the people being described by James resort to jealousy, fights, quarrels, and worse.

**1 John 3:13-15**

13 Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. 15 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

Yet, for all their anxious self-seeking and antagonism in getting what they want, they still can’t possess it. Why?

We learned (from getting our first tricycle or doll to driving our first new car) that fulfilled desires don’t satisfy at the level they advertise.

Sometimes we actually do get just what we wanted, only to discover that we still do not have what we really needed—the deep contentment that only comes when we are right with God.

**Romans 14:10-13**

10 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God."

12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. 13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.

Saints, trusted alone, our desires will only lead us to the things of this earth and not to the things of God. In summary, James’s message is:

The reason you don’t have what you want is that you don’t ask God for it. In other words,

“You don’t have what you desire because you don’t desire God.”

**3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.**

Saints, almost as bad as not asking is asking wrongly. If we misunderstand the correct use of prayer, we might not pray at all, or we might attempt to manipulate God.

**Psalm 66:18**

“If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear;”

**Proverbs 1:28**

"Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently but they will not find me”

**Proverbs 1:28-30**

28 "Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me. 29 Because they hated knowledge And did not choose the fear of the LORD, 30 They would have none of my counsel And despised my every rebuke.

Saints, later, James makes it clear that, when we pray, we must humble ourselves before God.

**1 Peter 5:5-8**

5 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Otherwise Saints, we will not be answered. People should not be surprised when their prayers go unanswered because often their whole motive is wrong.

They were going to spend what they received on their pleasures.

**1 Peter 3:12**

“For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

The people’s desires were so strong that they were fighting, quarreling, and then using prayer to get what they wanted. Their motives were not to help others, but to satisfy themselves.

**4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.**

Saints, the shocking word adulterers graphically describes the spiritual unfaithfulness of the people and intends to jar them into facing their true spiritual condition.

These believers were trying to love God and have an affair with the world. The fact that God would express in the strongest terms possible the importance of faithfulness ought to unsettle us.

Biblical standards of personal, marital, and spiritual behavior are under a constant attack of erosion. We are bombarded with the message to compromise.

**1 John 2:15-17**

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world.

17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Saints, from the world’s point of view, we should be flexible, tolerant of sin, and accommodating. But it won’t work, because friendship with this world makes a person an enemy of God.

For believers, the world and God are two distinct objects of affection, but they are direct opposites. The world is the system of evil under Satan’s control, all that is opposed to God. To be friendly with the world, then, is to adopt its values and desires.

**Romans 8:7-11**

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. 10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

**2 Timothy 4:9-11**

9 Be diligent to come to me quickly; 10 for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica--Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.

**1 John 2:15-17**

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Saints, these believers may indeed love God, but they are also infatuated with the benefits of this world’s system. They worship God, but they want the influence, living standards, financial security, and perhaps some of the freedom the world offers.

These pursuits will only undermine the generosity, caring, and sharing that should characterize Christians.

**What then is a believer’s proper relationship to the world?**

Saints, some have used biblical statements like this one from James as a basis for a radical withdrawal from the “world.” But withdrawal is not the answer. Although it is true that we are called to be in the world but not to belong to this world (John 17:14),

**John 17:14-17**

14 I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

**Saints as we come into a close:**

We should love the people in this world enough to give them the gospel. To do so, we need to befriend them without befriending the things of this world that are opposed to God

**1 John 3:15-17**

15 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. 16 By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

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**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.”**