Faith in Action - James

James 3:13-18
"Wisdom from above or Below?" – October 4, 2020

Introduction

We need God's wisdom in order to count it joy when we face trials of many kinds (it's not natural). We need God's wisdom if we want to even begin to tame our tongues (it's not natural). Again and again, James leaves us in *desperate* situations so we learn to rely not on self, but on God and *His* wisdom (2 Cor. 1:8-9). But what does this wisdom look like?

Pray

Before you begin, take some time to ask God to help you understand His word, to reveal what needs to change in you, and for the grace to follow Him in response. To help, use Psalm 119:33-40 as a prayer for God to open His word up to you.

Sermon Outline

I. Wisdom isn't merely what you know, it's what you show. (3:13-14)
II. The wisdom from below. (3:15-16)
III. Wisdom from above. (3:17-18)

Read & Discuss

1) Read 3:13-14

Meekness is to be unimpressed with our own self-importance. Meekness is not weakness. Meekness is power under control. Jesus is our perfect example of someone with unlimited power that was used not to exploit – but to serve (Matt. 11:28-29). Those yoked to Jesus in a relationship of love and trust will learn from Him; we'll begin to reflect His meekness to those around us. Does your life demonstrate the meekness of wisdom? Meekness reaches out in love to give, serve and unite. On the other hand, selfish ambition (canvassing for votes) and bitter jealousy (envy) are all about 'me' – my comfort, my appearance, my status, and my rights. Those who boast of being 'wise' but are controlled by jealousy and selfish ambition are lying to themselves (or are 'false to the truth'). What does your life 'show'? Is it marked or driven by envy, jealousy, selfish ambition or meekness of wisdom?

Additional Reading: Proverbs 9:10, Romans 12:16, Proverbs 3:7

2) Read 3:15-16

The origin of earthly wisdom is from below (earthly, unspiritual, demonic). Before the Fall (Genesis 3), there was zero envy, selfish ambition, rivalry or conflict. Selfish ambition became our default when Satan deceived Adam and Eve with the lie that life would be better if they put themselves *first:* before God and before others. When we live this way, our sense of value

or self is no longer rooted in God's love and His grace, but performance, comparison and competition. What happens when such pride rules our life? James says it will end in disorder: chaos, confusion, division and living for worthless things. How about your life and relationships? Are they marked by conflict, chaos, confusion, or division? Do your words promote unity or disorder?

Additional Reading: Proverbs 14:30

3) Read 3:17-18

True wisdom comes as a gift from God (Prov. 2:6). It is first pure. To be pure is to be unstained from this worldly wisdom that says, "put yourself first". However, only Jesus can remove our stains from sin for us. From being made pure and having our sin forgiven, a harvest of righteousness grows. This wisdom from above is peace-loving; we become peace makers in our relationships around us. We do so as those who are *gentle* and *open to reason*. As whose who've been shown mercy, we become *full of mercy and good fruits.* If you want a harvest of righteousness, we need to plant the right seeds, to have the right source. What informs your mind, feeds your soul, and nourishes your heart through the week? In other words, who are you listening to?

Additional Reading: Prov 2:6, Ecc 4:4, Isa 53, James 2:13, Gal. 5:16-26, James 1:21

Prayer of Response

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand, believe, desire*, or *do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at https://fbcum.org/sermons-new/

*Next week's sermon text: we turn to James 4:1-10 **"Why Quarrels and Conflict Come"**