

Lessons From James

The War

(Ja 4:1-12)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Morning
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of "Lessons From James."
 - a. We looked last week at "Heavenly Wisdom."
 - b. Today we look at "The War."
3. Keeping the perspective.
 - a. Context:
 - i. Jewish Christians that were living outside of Palestine.
 - b. Content:
 - i. They were very immature Christians in need of someone telling them how to mature spiritually.
4. James once again is very "to the point."
 - a. Right after explaining the dangers of being a teacher he moves into teaching about the war that was causing so many issues with the brethren here.
5. Let us examine the issues caused by "The War."

I. The War With Others

- A. You would think this would be absurd
 1. Christians are not to be warring with each other!!!
 - i. **Ps 133:1** "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity!"¹
 - ii. **Ro 12:10** "Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor." (ESV)
 - iii. **He 13:1** "Let brotherly love continue."
 2. Though this is exactly what was going on.
 - i. **Ja 4:1a** "What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you..." (ESV)
- B. Though absurd it obviously still happens but why
 1. The lusts that are within us.
 - i. **Ja 4:1b** "...Is it not this, that your passions/lusts are at war within you?" (ESV)
 - ii. There is no doubt that there is a war that wages within us, to do right and to do wrong.
 - a. **Ro 7:19** "For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want." (NASB95)
 - b. **II Co 10:3** "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh."
 - iii. It is our job to control that struggle with Christ.
 - a. **Ph 4:13** "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

¹ All Scriptures are in the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

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- b. **Ro 8:1-2** "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."
- 2. These lusts manifest themselves as murder.
 - i. This is not literal murder it would appear but rather hatred.
 - a. **I Jn 3:15** "Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him."
 - ii. How sad is this, brethren hating one another.
 - a. It is nothing new but very sad indeed.
 - iii. All because one wanted what the other had...jealousy.
 - a. **Pr 6:34** "For jealousy makes a man furious, and he will not spare when he takes revenge." (ESV)
- 3. These lusts manifest themselves in quarreling and fighting.
 - i. Once again how sad a reality.
 - a. There is nothing more worrisome than seeing others fight.
 - ii. Covetousness will always lead to quarreling and fighting.
 - a. **Ep 5:3** "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints"
- 4. These lust manifest themselves in judging brethren.
 - i. Here is where we must be careful as Christians.
 - a. We are not to be "Brotherhood Watchdogs."
 - b. We are not to judge/sentence anyone to heaven or hell.
 - 1. Remember "judging" in the Bible is sentencing or condemning to hell, it is not pointing out sin in ones life.
 - i. **Mt 7:1, 5, 15** "Judge not, that you be not judged...5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to **remove the speck from your brother's eye**...15 Beware of **false prophets**, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves." (emphasis mine)
 - 2. How do you remove the speck or know someone is a false teacher if we cannot judge sin in someone as wrong?
 - c. Our responsibility is to help brethren get to heaven whether by reproving, rebuking, or exhorting not sentencing.

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- C. We need to be a people of unity
 - 1. We have enough things in this world to worry about we don't need to be fighting amongst ourselves.
 - i. **II Ti 2:14-16** "Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers... 16 But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness."
 - 2. Let us be united.
 - i. **Ep 4:1-3** "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

II. The War Within

- A. This is why we war with others.
 - 1. "It is the "war in the heart" that causes the wars in the church and elsewhere! Our desire for things to satisfy our pleasures (like power, possessions, etc.) is what makes us fight with others. Putting it simply, the key problem is "SELFISHNESS"" (How To End Wars Sermon by Copeland, Mark <http://goo.gl/3LhL2>)
- B. Our selfish lusts lead to many things
 - 1. Just mentioned the war with others.
 - i. See above.
 - 2. It leads to wrong prayers.
 - i. **Ja 4:2-3** "...You do not have, because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions." (ESV)
 - ii. Our prayers can be hindered by many things but having the wrong motives is surly at the top.
 - a. There is nothing wrong with asking for things you desire just not what you lust after.
 - 1. Lust & desire are the same word. When we lust we want sinfully but when we desire we want righteously.
 - 2. Example: Man lusting after a girlfriend, husband desiring his wife. Same word different outcome.
 - b. Thus there is nothing wrong for desiring material things and asking for them as long as they are kept in perspective to this life and the afterlife.
 - 1. If that perspective is not met it will cause problems every time.
- C. The war within is powerful but we must overcome it
 - 1. Our relationships and communication with God depend on it.

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III. The War With God

- A. Materialism is worldly not heavenly
 - 1. **Lk 12:15-21** "And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." 16 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. 17 And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' 18 So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'" 20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' 21 "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.'"
- B. Materialism or friendship with the world leads to enmity of us to God.
 - 1. Enmity means hatred or in opposition to and is completely opposite of agape.
 - i. Being friends with the world puts us in direct opposition to God. We are not to be of this world because we were set apart from it.
 - a. **Jn 17:14-15** "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."
 - b. **I Pt 1:15** "but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct"
 - ii. Enmity with God means we are adulterers.
 - i. I personally know no one that wants to be called an adulterer. Yet when we are friends with the world rather than with God we are at war with Him and adulterers.
 - ii. Why adulterers, because we are the bride of Christ who has fornicated with the world.
 - a. Let it not be said of us that we are in direct contrast to God's "agape" toward us.
- C. Materialism will only separate us from our great Creator
 - 1. Let us not be at war with God.

IV. Ending The War

- A. What the war within caused...
 - 1. It causes fighting with brethren.
 - 2. It causes fighting with ourselves.
 - 3. It causes fighting with God.
- B. The great news is that we can end the war within
 - 1. **Ja 4:7-10** "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up."

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2. All we have to do is...
 - i. First, submit to God.
 - a. **Ro 6:17-18** "But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."
 - ii. Second, resist the devil.
 - a. **Ep 4:27** "...do not give the devil a foothold." (NIV84)
 - b. **I Pt 5:6-9** "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. 8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world."
 - iii. Third, draw near to God.
 - a. We draw near to God through Christ.
 1. **He 7:25** "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."
 - b. We draw near to God through prayers.
 1. **I Pt 5:7** "casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you."
 - c. We draw near to God through His Word.
 1. **He 11:6** "And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." (ESV)
 2. **Ro 10:17** "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
 - iv. Fourth, cleanse our hands.
 - a. Repentance is key.
 1. **I Jn 1:9** "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - v. Fifth, purify our hearts.
 - a. Remove all evil from within.
 1. **Is 1:16** "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil"
 - vi. Sixth, lament, mourn, weep.
 - a. We should have a heavy heart when we sin and recognize it.
 1. **He 6:6** "if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame."
 - b. This is why Jesus said the mourners are blessed – **Mt 5:4**

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vii. Seventh, humble ourselves.

- a. **Lk 17:10** "So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'"

CONCLUSION

1. We are in a spiritual war, war that needs our complete attention. Let us put on the full armor to fight in this war to obtain that righteous goal.
 - a. We are in a fight, let us fight the good fight of faith.
2. Question: Am I winning the war?
 - a. If so great!!! Continue to fight and teach others to do the same.
 - b. If not, as we have seen fix it, pull up your boot straps and get in there and fight for God.
3. Invitation²
 - a. God's Plan of Salvation
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Believe Jesus Is The Christ **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**

² Mark Copeland's sermon outline "How To End Wars" was of great help in the development of this sermon.