

Two Kinds of Wisdom: Part 2
James 3:17-18
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March 12th, 2023

Discussion Questions:

1. Can you think of a priority or goal in your life? What decisions do you make to achieve it? How is it going? (Is it godly or godless? Share if you would like.)
2. Who is the “wisest” person you know, why do you think that? How do they measure up with the list from James?
3. Can you think of a time where finding common ground helped or could have helped you in a situation?
4. Can you think of times where Jesus had “open hands” either from what we shared or what you can think of?
5. Relook at 3:17-18. What is one area of the 10 points that you could focus on? Why did you pick that one?

Teaching Notes

This morning we will finish up chapter 3 in our second part of...

... **Two kinds of wisdom.**

...**Godly wisdom and godless wisdom.**

BUT...Let's start with this big idea:

The quality of your wisdom is measured by...

...the achievement of your goals.

If your goal is to be employee of the month...

Are you going to be attentive to your customer or show up late for your shift and talk to your friends?

If your goal is to have a strong relationship with your kids...

Should you regularly be gone at work and miss most games?

Or make it a priority to be home and attend most games?

If our goal is to have financial freedom?

Should you buy a cool car you can't afford?

Or save your money and buy a car you can afford with cash?

If your goal is for your family to know Christ...

Should you spend all of your time at sports or ballet or make your spiritual life a priority?

John the Baptist preached repentance and lived an ascetic life.

Jesus ate and drank with tax collectors and sinners.

Jesus said, “Wisdom is justified by her children.”

Wisdom is shown to be good and right by what it produces.

Jesus came to seek and save the lost...

...so He spent time with the lost.

John called people to repent in the desert...

...But John and Jesus both followed the wisdom of God.

Purpose was fulfilled, lives were changed, God was glorified.

Righteousness was a result.

In contrast is the wisdom of the Jews.

They were not ok with John's life or Jesus' life.

The religious Jews' wisdom was related to prestige and power.

They didn't care about God's purpose as much as their prestige.

They didn't care about God's plan as much as their own power.

The wisdom of the Pharisee was...

...based on self seeking and envy

They asked Jesus questions to trap Him not to learn.

They watched Jesus to accuse Him not follow Him.

The religious Jews made choices according to their goals...

...but it left them lost, guilty, and separated from God.

"Confusion and every evil thing" is a great description for them.

The Jews' wisdom brought division, hate, and murder.

We can't follow earthly, sensual, demonic wisdom and...

...think we will be aligned with and blessed by God.

God's wisdom is not short term, based on feelings, or our self.

Let's join James in a deep dive of godly wisdom...

3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. **18** Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Godly wisdom is from above- it comes from God.

God is eternal, God is holy, God is love...

His wisdom has these attributes and the rest James's list.

1. GW contains God's character.

This wisdom comes from God...BUT...

...you can gain wisdom outside of God's revelation.

Godly wisdom has God's character and is a gift from God.

You may learn something, you may see something...
...you may understand something...

The Lord gives you this wisdom and it has His character.

Then James says, “First Pure”

Not only is pure first on his list...
...but it is also first in significance and importance.

Pure is actually two words...

“Indeed or Truly” and “clear, clean, immaculate, spotless, chaste.”

2. GW is truly without spot.

It is not colored by sin or stained by selfishness.
It has a purity of purpose and a purity in its purpose.
It desires good for others and is good for others.

It is not clouded by politics or people pleasing.
It is not marked by manipulation or self seeking.

Jesus motives for coming to earth were pure.

He was without sin and without selfish motives.
He didn't exalt Himself or take advantage even when He could.

The Pharisees were constantly impure.

They were always trying to exalt themselves.
They lied, they bribed, they played politics.

What's this look like for us?

You have a choice that could make **you** look good but it is not great for the organization or...

... you have a problem you can solve with a little dishonesty.

Godly wisdom will solve the problem in a way that is...

...not self seeking and does not include dishonesty.

NEXT...

Peaceable: having quietness, rest, and harmony.

It is the absence of rage and havoc.

3. GW brings harmony.

Jesus is a great example because he didn't just capitulate.

Being peaceable doesn't mean peace at any cost.
Jesus brought truth that disrupted people.

Being peaceable brings different people together to see differently and find common ground...that's harmony.

The Jews threw a woman caught in adultery before Jesus.
The Jew's threw her down for no other reason that to trap Jesus.
He didn't yell at them or berate her.
He said whoever is without sin cast the first stone and then He just knelt down and played in the dirt waiting.

This godly wisdom led them to see that they had no place to condemn her sin because they were condemned sinners too.

A couple examples for us:

People are divided... instead of choosing a side...

...you try to help them to find common ground.

Someone is trying to start a fight with you, but you stay calm and ask them questions to understand their point of view.

When we navigate an issue that creates harmony not havoc...

...when we bring two sides together...that's godly wisdom.

**When you want to find a good place to work together...
...find common ground.**

NEXT....

Godly wisdom is gentle.

The ability to **control your emotions** because you care.

4. GW doesn't freak out.

It is gentle and thoughtful.

Jesus was gentle when He taught and healed people.

He didn't freak out with the lepers or prostitutes.

He was not overwhelmed by their lack of understanding.

He didn't overreact to their needs or pain or sin.

He gently cared for them all.

The religious Jews didn't care and were not gentle.

They accused and used people, they marked and avoided.

Examples for us:

If you have a disagreement, you are listening not yelling.

...You are not harsh or mean spirited.

We are not freaking out because someone spilled the milk or got a speeding ticket or blew the deal.

We use kind words and have a tone that is controlled and fair.

There may be times to be more animated or upset, but it happens sparingly and is rare.

Gentleness understands and cares for people and their feelings.

People talk about when Jesus tossed the temple tables as justification for their anger.

First... Jesus was perfect.

He has perfect motives and actions.

Second, if in the span of three years, you get angry twice, fine.

Maybe that's not too bad.

Lastly, anger is usually a cover for something else.

There are times where anger boils up...

...but what is under the surface is often something else entirely.

Jesus was angry because He loved the people and wanted them to be able to worship not be ripped off.

The next aspect of godly wisdom is "Willing to yield."

This is one that I have struggled with.

Does this mean that I have to give up or compromise?

Does this mean that if I am right, I need to be wrong?

5. GW has open hands.

Notice it says "**willing**" to yield.

This is about an attitude and a posture.

As a human I am open to the fact that I have more to learn.

I may be wrong.

I may have an incomplete picture or understanding.

I should never be so arrogant to think I am infallible.

Choose carefully the hills you are willing to die on because you can only die once.

...The rest of the hills, we can live and let live.

When Jesus died on a hill, it was for the benefit of others.

Jesus sat in the garden of gethsemane and yielded to the Father.

Jesus yielded to the Jews who arrested Him.

He yielded to the Romans who crucified Him.

The Pharisees would yield to no one.

Their hands were clenched and their jaws were set.

For us...

You have strong feelings about a nap schedule or curfew?
You have strong feelings about a business deal or process?
You have strong feelings about a college or marriage or food?
You have an uncompromising view on some aspect of theology?

Are you open to being wrong or hearing someone else's view?

An immovable position can be a lonely spot because it doesn't leave room for anyone else.

The very fact that we learn and grow means there are things we are going to be wrong about or learn more about.

Keep open handed, let people live their lives AND trust God.

Being willing to yield takes faith.

I trust that God will fight this battle.

I trust that God will show the way.

I trust that God will change a heart.

I can be willing to yield because I am yielding to Him.

NEXT...Full of mercy *and* good fruit.

Mercy: "kindness or good will towards the miserable and the afflicted, joined with a desire to help them"

Good fruit is the result of helping them.

6. GW desires and brings goodness.

Jesus was full of mercy and good fruit.

Turning water into wine when the family ran out.

Healing a man lowered through the roof when he was a sinner.

The Pharisees didn't care for anyone else or do anything for anyone else...they showed no mercy and had no good fruit.

For us...

She deserves to be fired, but you give them another chance and they turn things around and become a great asset.

He deserves a ticket and you give them a warning, and he is grateful and learns a lesson.

Someone has misspoken, but in mercy you allow them to explain themselves further and come to a good conclusion.

Jesus showed mercy and His ministry was full of good fruit.

Lives were saved. Disciples followed. The world was changed.

NEXT...Without partiality

7. GW doesn't play favorites.

We don't lean one way because we like someone or don't.

We don't give them better because of our personal feelings.

It doesn't mean everyone gets the same everyone is not the same

It means I don't treat people based on my feelings of who they are, but on who God says they are!

They are loved and valued and worthy of Christ's life.

Partiality is injustice.

Jesus showed no partiality even though He treated different people differently.

Sinner or saint, He loved them all, He healed them all.

He spoke to Judas just like He spoke to the rest.

The Pharisees didn't like Jesus. They didn't like what He did.

So they ganged up on Him, lied about Him, unjustly had Him arrested and killed.

For us...

Someone may get a bigger portion because they are a bigger person, but not because they are my favorite.

Someone may get a raise because they do a better job, not because we are friends.
Someone may

NEXT...

The last description is "without hypocrisy"

Godly wisdom has nothing to hide or cover up.

8. GW is transparent.

There is no mask, no act to impress someone.

Jesus was not an actor. He spoke truth. He held to His integrity.

He didn't play a role to manipulate people.

He didn't set someone up to gain an advantage.

The Pharisees were liars and hid their lies.

The Pharisees acted holy but they were full of sin and death.

And for us...

Being transparent is more than telling the truth...

...it is not hiding the truth.

It takes courage. It means being vulnerable.
I don't put on an act to keep up appearances.
I am honest about struggles in my life group.
I am real about my fears and open with my

And lastly...

NLT: And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.

9. GW results in right living.

If your goal is right living, if you believe God's way is right.
If you want peace at work, at home and in relationship.
Plant the seeds.

The planting metaphor is actually important.

Because wisdom takes time to grow and bear fruit.

10. GW is an investment.

You can walk in godly wisdom for a while and not see the results you hope for, but **eventually**, if you keep at it...

...you will find peace and righteousness.

Jesus made peace and planted seeds of peace and it resulted in righteousness.