

SCATTERED

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

Message Series // SCATTERED - Prayer (James 4:13-17)

Message Date // October 18, 2020 (Cory Bragg)

BIG IDEA

During this season of life in 2020, most of us can use the word “scattered” to describe how we feel. Schedules have been scattered, along with finances, jobs, emotions, living situations, and more. We can feel disorganized, alone, and messy. As we lean into this time of looking through the biblical letter of James, we will know that we aren’t alone in feeling scattered. James, the half-brother of Jesus and pastor of the Jerusalem church in this time, is writing to all the Christians that have been scattered out from Jerusalem because of persecution. He writes with a heart to remind them, in the midst of all the unknowns, to live out their faith in a real and practical way. These same words, written almost 2,000 years ago, can also help ground us today as we seek to live out the ways of Jesus in the midst of feeling scattered.

Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.” As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them. - James 4:13-17

DISCUSSION

If there is anything we have learned through this covid-19 pandemic, it’s that life is uncertain, short and sacred. James highlights these three big ideas in this passage. Often times we think we are ultimately in control of our lives and so we make plans that we believe will bring fulfillment and happiness. “The problem is not in the planning. The problem is not involving God in the planning.” When making plans motives will always play a role. Therefore, our motives need to be right and aligned with the heart of God because ultimately His Son Jesus came to give us an abundant life. (*John 10:10*) When we pursue obedience, humility and grace, chances are pretty good that this promised “abundant life” will follow.

NEXT STEPS

We all have dreams and plans that go unfulfilled. Can you now see where God was in control all the time? Can you identify a motive or motives that may have been missing when you made that plan. Garth Brooks sings a song called Unanswered Prayers and in it he highlights his thankfulness for those prayers that go unanswered. In other words, life doesn’t always go the way we have planned it to go and thankfully God is in control and ultimately knows what will bring fulfillment. What prayer or plan can you look back on and be thankful that God didn’t answer it the way you had asked Him to? What prayer or plan do you have for your future, what is your motive or motives and how are they aligned with God’s will?