

James 4:4-10 – June 5, 2022

Pre-Rapture Prepping

J.D. Farag

All right, *James Chapter 4*. I'll ask you to stand if you're able. You can follow along as I read; if not, where you're seated is fine.

James, by the Holy Spirit writes, *verse 4*, **“You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God?**

Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us.

But [Verse 6] he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.” Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, [Sorry] and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

[You got to love James; it gets better] [Actually, it gets worse, verse 9]

Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves [Verse 10] before the Lord, and he will lift you up.”

Oh, Lord we need You now, wow, we need the Holy Spirit! Lord, You're going to have to be our teacher and teach us, and Lord, when You do, we want to be teachable so that when You speak and when You minister to us, we don't just hear Your Word but take heed to Your Word.

Lord, this is here for a reason. We need for You to show us why You inspired James to write this and why this particular passage would rise to the level of being included in the canon of scripture as inspired.

So Lord, we're going to submit to You, commit our time to You with great anticipation as You speak into our lives, as You're always so faithful to do, in Jesus' name amen and amen.

Okay, you can be seated. Thank you, so much. So I want to talk with you today about what I'm calling '*Pre-rapture Prepping*.' How's that for a title?

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And I do so because of what James writes in these verses. So this last week as I'm preparing as I always do and just reading the text, praying, seeking the Lord concerning the text, it just kind of hit me that these rapid-fire exhortations, which is kind of what they are, they actually speak to these much-needed spiritual preparations, and this especially in these last days before the 7-year tribulation.

By the way, for those of you that were with us, we talked about this in the Prophecy Update. I truly believe with all of my heart that we're on the cusp of the commencement of the 7-year tribulation, and as such the pre-tribulation rapture which can happen at any time. And I'm sorry to say this, but nobody's talking about this when this should be the number 1 thing that is talked about because of how close we are to the rapture of the church.

It's not just our blessed hope. It is our only hope. Our only hope is the rapture when Jesus comes to take us out of this world. Now what I'm not going to talk about today is physical preparations.

Certainly, there is a place for that. Even the scriptures do speak to that in the Proverbs. **“The prudent see danger ahead and take refuge, but the simple [the foolish] keep going and suffer the consequences.”**

I think that's different for everyone, depending on your situation, your temperament, your circumstances. The preparations you make financially or physically, the Lord's going to direct you in that regard. I'm not going to talk about that today.

What I'm going to talk about today are the spiritual preparations. And I found nine of them. You might find more but no less than nine, again, pre-rapture preparations that we would all do well to take heed to.

And our first one is in *verse 4*, and it's simply this: Unfriend the world.

I mean, if you're anything like me, and I suspect that you are, and of course, true to form, and we're learning to really appreciate this about the Apostle James but notice the strength with which he writes this and rightfully so, by the way. And the reason is because a friend of the world is an enemy of God. And for James to liken a Christian who is too friendly with the world to an adulterous is so apropos, and we're going to see that in the next *verse*, *in verse 5*.

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And it's that of let the Holy Spirit have all of you, all of you, not half. What James says here is that the Holy Spirit indwelling us and filling us yearns for all of us with a jealous love.

Now this is hard because in our carnality, in our humanity, when you hear that God is a jealous God, we automatically frame it in terms of this carnal jealousy that He's jealous of us. He's not jealous of us. He's jealous for us. He's jealous for all of us.

Stay with me on this because this is so important.

The problem is that we let our friendliness with the world's worldliness - I'm saying it that way for reason, hang on - we let our friendliness with the world's worldliness alienate, and as such grieve the Holy Spirit who indwells us. The Holy Spirit doesn't leave, but we just kind of push Him aside.

Why are we pushing Him aside?

Oh, because the world has taken up residence in our lives, in our hearts. We're in the world but we're not of the world. We have to be in the world. We are the salt and the light, but that's not the problem.

The problem is the world's worldliness where being in the world becomes a thing of now the world being in us. But we've got a problem because the Holy Spirit is in us.

And the Holy Spirit's like - you'll forgive the illustration - what's up with this?

It's kind of like no, I indwell, I live here. You're letting the world in, and you're pushing Me aside. It's like the Holy Spirit gets the guest bedroom now.

Is that too much?

It's this jealous love. He yearns, He indwells us, and He yearns for all of us. He wants all of us, our whole heart.

I was thinking of *2nd Chronicles 16:9*. Thursday night in Jeremiah where the prophecy is given to King Asa who really blew it, man. I mean he was a good king, but he blew it. He made this alliance, and it actually worked.

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And God sends this guy, not really even a prophet, just a prophetic message. And he says to this king, he says, Don't you know that the eyes of the Lord search to and fro throughout the earth looking for hearts fully [fully] devoted to Him so that He can be strong on their behalf?

Let me try this; I've in the past tried to illustrate this as best as I know how with the help of the Holy Spirit but see it like this.

A holy life is a whole life, whole, not half. When I'm filled with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is indwelling me. I have the Holy Spirit in me. I'm whole, wholly.

Can I say it like this?

I'm not half-ee.

[Laughter]

I think you got it, right?

Tell me you did because we've got more to get to here. So the Holy Spirit indwells us and has this yearning for all of us. And the problem is that we kind of gotten a little bit too cozy with the world. We're in the world, but now the world's in us. And we grieve the Holy Spirit.

Let me take it one step further and then we'll move on, but before we do, I think this is really important as well. When we talk about grieving the Holy Spirit, we hurt, we hurt the Holy Spirit. Have you ever thought of it like this?

This will, boy, it's going to ruin your day. It's going to ruin your whole week now, and your plans too but in a good way. Everything you watch, the Holy Spirit watches with you.

Everything you do, the Holy Spirit in you is doing that with you.

Now let's talk about this for a moment. So can you see where the Holy Spirit would like wince and "No..."? We grieve the Holy Spirit.

Um, beware when all men speak well of you. If you're a friend with the world, you're an enemy of God, but also it works both ways.

If you're a friend of God, you're an enemy of the world. Jesus said that, right?

I mean, why are you surprised that the world hates you?

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Don't take it personally. It's because of Me, because of your association with Me, your relationship with Me. The world hated Me, and that's why the world hates you.

You know you're in big trouble with a capital T and a capital B and a capital big too when the world is your friend and you're friends with the world. When you do that, you grieve the Holy Spirit.

I mean, I guess you could say that the Holy Spirit gets a little bit jealous of this relationship and now this friendship that you have with the world because the Holy Spirit wants all of you, not half of you, or three fourths of you, or a fourth of you, or a third of you.

No, a holy life is a fulfilled life. I'm so full of the Holy Spirit I want for nothing. I have no appetite for anything because I'm so satisfied, I'm so satiated. I'm so full of the Holy Spirit I have no appetite for the flesh.

Don't worry, I won't use the food illustration. You already know it well, right?

If you're full of the Spirit, you're not going to be hungry for junk food. There's no room. I'm full. Let the Holy Spirit have all of you.

Number 3, *verse 6*: Stop fighting in pride.

We're going to talk about humility at the end but this well-known verse actually it's a quote out of Proverbs about God opposing the proud. He resists the proud. He knows the proud from a far-off. He humbles the proud, but He exalts the humble.

I mean, replete throughout, particularly the Book of Proverbs, it's all about pride and pride coming before the fall, and haughtiness, and the beauty of humility. So now James is going to bring this into the discussion.

And it's a well-known verse, but I think we miss it because it carries with it the idea of not just God opposing the proud, but those who are proud actually opposing and fighting against God.

So this is an "instead" verse. I'll explain.

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It's one of those "instead" verses by virtue of how James is exhorting us to be on the receiving end of "more," or as some of your translations render it, "greater" grace than we already have from God instead of fighting with God.

I'm not fighting with God.

Yes, you are. You are in direct opposition to Him. And He's opposing you because you're opposing Him. You're an enemy of Him.

How am I fighting with God?

Because of your pride. Again, here's a picture to paint on the canvas of your mind, a scripture picture, let's call it, okay?

He knows the proud from a far off. Can you picture this?

God's like, get away from Me. Get away. You're so full of pride. Get away from Me. I resist you; I oppose you. I cannot be around you.

Why not?

Because God is humble. Pride is repulsive, and humility is attractive.

Again, we'll talk more about humility at the end. But have you ever thought about it like that? That when we're full of pride, we're actually fighting against God who is humble?

I think about Jesus when He was here in His public ministry on earth and just how meek and humble He must have been. And the reason we know that is because children were attracted to Him. There must have been something about His countenance and His appearance that was so attractive. It wasn't intimidating at all.

There's that account you're familiar with that when Jesus had to rebuke the disciples when all the kids were wanting to run to Jesus; I mean children don't run to me. They run from me, they run away from me not to me.

But what was it about Him that made children want to run to Him?

Oh, His meekness.

And never, never, never make meekness synonymous with weakness. Meekness is strength under control. There was a beauty in His humility that made Him so attractive.

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And by the way, that's why you are attracted to the humble. I mean, all of those movies that we shouldn't watch; you know why you root for the underdog?

Because of humility. I'm going to use it. I rarely do. It's okay. I'm still saved.

I'm going to refer to a movie, 'Rocky.' I'm not talking about 'Rocky 28.' I'm talking about the very first one. I mean, what was so attractive about Rocky Balboa?

Oh, I'm just so privileged to be in the same ring with Apollo Creed.

And he comes out for the big match and all the pomp and - I better not go there because that song will be stuck in your mind all afternoon like it is mine now. And then here comes Rocky Balboa, the underdog.

I want Rocky to crush Apollo Creed because he's the humble nobody.

And here is this proud somebody, the world champion, and here comes this nobody, and it's not long before the whole crowd is screaming, "Rocky, Rocky!"

Am I taking this too far?

"Adrian!"

Okay, that was the last part of it. Let me just say it like this and we'll move on.

We're never more like Jesus than when we're humble. And humility is so attractive, and pride is so ugly and repulsive. And when we're full of pride, we are in opposition to God.

Number 4, first part of *verse 7*: Submit yourself to God.

Now this is a prerequisite of sorts in the sense that when we first submit ourselves to God, what we're doing is in effect surrendering our control to God.

And this is a problem for control freaks, and you know who you are. I'll raise my hand.

We want to be in control. I don't want to submit or surrender. I want to be in control.

Well, that's a problem. I don't know if it's possible to overstate the paramount importance of, again, a prerequisite, first, submitting ourselves to God by virtue of what we see next in the second part of *verse 7*, which is to resist the devil.

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Absent first submitting ourselves to God, we have no hope of resisting the devil because see, we're still in control. And we're trying to fight the enemy in our own strength because we're still in control.

But see, if we surrender control to God, now He's in control and the devil cannot have control.

See, the devil wants to control certain areas of our lives, but if we, again, prerequisite, it is predicated upon us first submitting to God. We surrender to God, we sign it over to God, we say to God, Here, God, and God's like, Okay, watch Me now.

And now here comes the devil, and you're able to resist the devil.

How are you able to resist the devil?

Because I surrendered control to God, and the devil's like, That's okay, no thank you. I'll move on to the - you can give him another address to go to if you want, but he's going to flee.

Don't let him deceive you into thinking that he's more powerful than he is. We go to either extreme. We either overstate how powerful the devil is, or we understate how powerful the devil is.

On this side, he's this red tights, pitchfork, and by the way, spoiler alert, he doesn't look like that. There is a reference that we see when we do see him, we're going to be stunned, and that's even an understatement.

We're going to say that's who deceived the nations? That's the devil? We're going to be astonished, like where's the red tights?

[Laughter]

See, once a Christian has submitted and surrendered control to God, the devil can't control us and has to flee from us. Always put the Lord in between you and the devil. Don't deal directly with him because then you're dealing in your own strength.

The Lord rebuke you.

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When I pray, and there are times when it's full-on spiritual warfare prayer, I always pray, Lord, please...

And by the way, it's not the devil because the devil is not omnipresent. He's not all places at one time. He's a created being.

So if it's actually the devil that's attacking you, you must really be a high-valued target because he can't be in two places at one time. It's those demons, the principalities, Paul says in Ephesians 6, the wickedness in high places, different rankings, these demonic entities.

But when you're trying to resist the devil, you always put the Lord in between you and the devil because he wants nothing to do with it. In fact, sometimes just praying out loud the name of Jesus, Satan will flee. He hates the name of Jesus.

I found myself on occasion just saying Jesus, even singing Jesus, Jesus, I love you, Jesus. And he's like, I'm out of here, man. Play worship music. Read scripture aloud. But always name the name of Jesus because at the name of Jesus, the demons tremble.

Don't be generic, "God."

Oh, okay, cool, we can deal with that.

But when you say Jesus...

Always put Jesus - but you have to surrender control to Him first. You have to sign it over to Him first. Otherwise, it's hands-off.

And when you surrender control, then you can resist the devil.

Again, I can't say it enough. When I say a prerequisite, it is required first that we submit to God if we want to have any hope of resisting the devil so that he'll flee.

Number 6, again: Spiritual preparations in this the last hour of human history before the trumpet sounds.

If there was ever a time to draw near to the Lord, it's now.

First part of *verse 8*, this is what's known as a reciprocal promise, such that God promises to reciprocate in like manner to what we of our own volition choose to do first.

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God won't force us to, but when we of our own volition choose to draw near to Him, oh, He can't resist! He reciprocates. It's a reciprocal promise. You draw near to Him; He's going to draw near to you.

Boy, I tell you, getting back to how James started out, I have enough opposition; I don't need God opposing me. I need God near to me. Well, how am I going to do that?

Draw near to the Lord.

It's been said, aptly so, if God seems distant to you, guess who moved. I'll let that sink in just a little bit. And here's the thing, God desires to be near to us.

I think we were talking about this on Thursday night as well: Our hearts, the hearts of the people being far away from God. And there's this yearning, like James just got done saying, and it's like I want you to want Me.

Okay, parents, how do you feel when your kids are like this: Man, I've got to spend time with my mom and dad [Grumbling] Really?

You know what? Don't bother. You have to? Forget it. I don't want you like that.

David: **“Early in the morning will I rise up and seek You.”**

Oh, it's a get-to, not a got-to, we say. But it's like I can't wait, I want to be with You, Lord. I want to draw near to You, Lord. I want to seek You, Lord. I want to spend time with You, Lord.

I don't know if I like that word “spend.” Spend time? You haven't spent anything. I want to have that time with You, Lord, that intimacy with You, Lord.

And here's - think of it from the heart of God. He loves us so much and He wants to be with us.

And sometimes I think - and when things are going good - bear with me.

It's like when things are going good, we're so busy and we don't have any time for the Lord. I just know as an earthly, fallen, sinful father, and I love to be with my children, but they're off doing all of these things, and all busy and all that.

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I wonder sometimes if the Lord knows that the only time He's ever going to have time with us is when adversity strikes.

So adversity strikes.

He'll call Me now. He'll want to spend time with Me now. I've got him all to Myself now.

See, there are so many things I want to show you, and tell you, and do for you, and I want to have time with you. But if you don't want to, I'm not going to force you to.

So when we make that move and draw near to Him, He's all over it, and He in turn, draws near to us.

Well, this next one in the second part of *verse 8* is strong.

Can I say it like this; indulge me please. (Shouting!) Repent of your sins!

There, it sounds like that doesn't it?

Now we've got a problem here because this particular verse can be grossly misunderstood if it's seen through the lens of salvation and not sanctification. And just let me explain what I mean by that.

James is writing to Christians. These are believers. They're already saved, brothers and sisters. This is not repent and be saved. No, you're already saved. This is not about salvation. It's about sanctification.

Now again the strength of it... (Shouting!) Wash your hands, you sinners!

I don't know why it just feels good to say it like that, but it just does. (Chuckling)

And purify your hearts?

Wait a minute! So I'm already saved. What do you mean? Oh, wait a minute, I think I get it. What you're saying is that I need to take sin more seriously.

Can we talk just real quick about the word "repent?"

I think there is a misnomer and a misunderstanding about what this word means. I mean, it's taken on a life of its own. I mean, when you say the word "repent," don't shivers go up and down your spine?

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“Repent!”

Oh, I need to repent.

Repent just simply means do a 180, change of mind. And when you change your mind, that's repentance, do a 180, then God changes your heart and He purifies your heart. It's sanctification. He cleanses you. He purifies you.

But it's, again, predicated upon; it's a prerequisite. We have to take sin seriously, and God won't force it on us. We have to repent.

I'm already saved. I don't have to do anything to be saved. I'm already saved.

But I think maybe I need to repent of my sins, those sins, and you know what they are.

And the Lord's always gentle and patient, and gracious and merciful, and kind and compassionate and loving. He'll put His finger ever so softly on that sin in your life that's taken up residence, and He, just in that still, small voice says, That's got to go. You need to repent. I want to purify you, I want to clean you, I want to sanctify you.

And this is really what explains *verse 9*, which is embracing God's conviction. I mean, when you read that verse, you almost get the impression that James is advocating for Christians to be morose and joyless and change your laughing into mourning! Weep and wail!

What?

That's not what he's saying. You know what he's saying?

He's saying don't blow off, don't laugh off the conviction of the Holy Spirit, not condemnation, conviction.

So here's what that looks like. There's no repentance. And by the way, Romans 2:4, very important. It's the kindness of God that leads a man to repentance. It's not the anger of God or the wrath of God, or the judgment of God or the punishment of God.

No, it's the kindness of God that leads a man to repentance. It's when you taste from the cup of God's grace, and **“Where did sin abound there does grace much more abound.”**

And here, you sin. And what does God do?

He gives you more grace.

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You're like waiting for the other shoe to drop like... I'm in deep kimchi, right?

No.

I'm going to get it, right? I'm going to pay for that one.

No, you're not. I already paid the price in full. You're forgiven; you just need to change your mind about that sin.

And don't dismiss it.

So you come to a church service like this and you hear a sermon like this, bless your hearts. And you just kind of, the conviction of the Holy Spirit, I mean the Holy Spirit's convicting you. That's a good thing. Don't laugh it off. Stop laughing; start mourning and grieving over your sin, and repent.

It's what Paul wrote to the Corinthians about godly sorrow. That's what James is talking about. It's this godly sorrow that leads to genuine repentance.

You know there's two kinds of sorrow, right?

There the sorrow of being caught - I'm sorry.

You're not sorry. You're just sorry you got caught.

I shared this - might as well, why not.

About three Thursday nights ago my daughter and I - I'm driving home from the Bible study. You know right there - we call it Saddle Road right there in front of Kalaheo High School.

You know what the speed limit is there?

30 miles per hour, 30. Try going 30 miles an hour on that road, especially if you come off the H3.

Wait a minute, I wasn't doing 30. (Chuckling)

And you know here we are, and all of a sudden, I notice this strobe light. I didn't see blue lights. Why don't they - they should do the blue lights because I will slow down with the blue lights. You know people do that, by the way. Have you seen those at night?

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They've got blue lights in front of their house. That slows me down. And every time I drive by I'm like no way! It's not even the... anyway, never mind.

If you have a blue light in your house at night, God bless you.

[Laughter]

So pull over, pull over! So I pull over. And the police officer walks up. I roll my window down and the first words, my daughter as my witness, the first words out of my mouth was, "Officer, I'm sorry."

[Laughter]

Oh, you are?

And he proceeds to show me that I was exceeding the speed limit by 16-miles per hour. Because you were doing 46 in a 30!

I'm sorry! I'm sorry!

And then it's even worse than that.

You know, I said I'm sorry, and then it went from bad to worse.

And then he said, "And your safety is expired."

I'm like - I hate it when...

You guys do that; tell me you do that, right?

I mean, they should send out a notice to let you know... anyway...

So he says it expired in February.

I'm like, man, that's it, I'm getting the chair. I'm going down. This is how it ends!

[Laughter]

And then he says this:

[I'm going somewhere I have a profound point with this]

He says to me: Hey, I've seen you on TV.

[Laughter]

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You're that pastor, aren't you?

Oh, my gosh!

And my daughter is of no help!

Baba! (Speaking nonsense words) It's about time you pulled him over, Officer, he speeds all the time!

No, she didn't say that.

[Laughter]

She might as well have.

[Laughter]

Anyway... so I said listen, yes, I am.

I'm so sorry.

[Laughter]

That is not a godly sorrow. That is a worldly sorrow of being caught, okay?

Now, by the way, just so you know, he was so gracious.

I told the guys, I said, Would you please - they know him - I said would you please thank him.

He said, I have to because it's on the video.

I'm like, How much would it cost to get that video?

But anyway....

[Laughter]

So he just writes - I did not get a ticket. I only got a warning. He was so gracious.

Hey, where's the love, man?

[Laughter]

Where's the grace?

They're like man, you should have gotten the ticket!

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Wait a minute now. Why is it that our sin always looks so much worse on someone else than it does ourselves?

Anyway, so he just gave me a warning.

But here's the thing: It actually worked.

See, the godly sorrow that leads to repentance is a genuine sorrow that leads to change. I've changed how fast I drive on that road now.

[Laughter]

I mean maybe - I can't get to 30. I'm sorry. I just can't. I know there is a grace in there. I think I'm doing pretty good and don't judge me. I'm feeling judged right now by you guys, like 37 maybe. but I'm very - that's repentance, I've changed.

[Laughter]

Yeah, we better move on because...

[Laughter]

So where's your profound point, Pastor?

Okay, the godly sorrow that leads to genuine repentance comes by way of the conviction of the Holy Spirit. It's a godly mourning, a godly sorrow.

It's like God, I'm so sorry I grieved You. I sinned against You.

That's a godly sorrow, and it's the kindness of God. You just get off on a warning. That's grace.

And it changes you. That's what repentance is.

Don't laugh off, blow off, and dismiss the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Change that phony, fake laughter to a genuine godly sorrow and mourning.

And the last one in *verse 10*, I mean this is a firm grasp of the obvious, right? Be humble.

But, again, we have a problem. The problem when it comes to humility is that humility is the problem.

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I know that sounds like a play on words; however, unless and until we humble ourselves before the Lord, He cannot in turn lift us up. And everything in our sin nature chafes at this.

Do you know that humility comes from “humiliate?”

You know the proverb that says, “**Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord,**” which they quote, both James and Peter, as we're going to see in a moment. “**He gives grace to the humble but He opposes the proud.**” “**Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord; He will lift you up.**”

Well, I've personalized that particular proverb in the JDV. The one that goes “**Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up,**” In the JDV, it reads: “*Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord before He does it for you.*”

And that's the problem. I would much rather humble myself than be humbled. I don't want to be humbled. Because I am humiliated. That's the point. I'm brought low. And He humbles the exalted, but He exalts the humble. I know it's a paradox, but it's the truth. And it's the key.

And I'll say lastly and then we'll close with *1 Peter*, but if there was ever a time to humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord, that time is now, every single one of these. If there was ever a time - When I say that I'm preparing for today's teaching, I'm looking at these rapid-fire exhortations, and I'm just sensing and struck by how every single one of these speak to us now.

The time is now to do this. Draw near to the Lord.

Listen, let me say it like this. I don't know how any Christian; I'm talking to Christians now. I don't know how any Christian is going to be able to survive, let alone thrive in the days ahead without humbling themselves before the Lord. We already saw it and talked about it in *James Chapter 3*, right?

And it's in the Proverbs. In fact, the Book of James, did you know this? Has been affectionately referred to as the New Testament Book of Proverbs and rightfully so. And the text before us today is one of those cases.

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Humility is what brings wisdom. I need wisdom to navigate in the days ahead. Well, you ain't getting any wisdom until you humble yourself, emphasis added.

Wait, so you're saying that in the days ahead because you know that the days ahead are going to get harder, right?

And I need wisdom. Well, I better humble myself. I better draw near to the Lord. I better do every single one of these and then some, and now's the time to do it if I have and want to have any hope of surviving, let alone thriving in this last hour.

I want to close with *1 Peter Chapter 5* beginning in *verse 5*. Let me just kind of set the stage here.

This is Peter we're talking about. Now he's older.

This is the same Peter that when in that storm, realizing it was Jesus, said, **"Bid me come,"** and walked on water. And I want to leave it at that because there's so much emphasis, and I'm such as guilty as the next guy on when he took his eyes off the Lord and started sinking, and **"Lord, save me!"** and all that.

No, wait a minute, he walked on water! How about that?

That's the same Peter. It's the same Peter that took on the entire Roman guard when they arrested Jesus and cut off Malchus' ear, right thing, the wrong way, spiritual battle with carnal weaponry.

It's the same Peter when they're at Caesarea Philippi, those of you that have been to Israel with us, the most evil place you could take anyone in Israel. And Jesus took the disciples there, and He asked them the question of well, **"Who do you say that I am?"**

And Peter answered, **"You are the Christ."** You are the Savior. You are the Anointed One, Christos, the Son of God. And Jesus is like, correct answer. **"Blessed are you, Peter."** Same Peter: he was younger then. He's older now.

And he's inspired by the Holy Spirit to write this letter and listen to what he says. **"You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another [And here it is] for God is opposed to the proud, but gives**

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grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him [Verse 7]. “

I have a lot of anxiety.

Cast it on Him.

And that word “casting,” by the way, it's not just, you know, give it. Or you know...

No, throw it off and throw it on Him, all your anxiety.

I have a lot of anxiety.

Well, cast it on Him.

Why?

“Because He cares for you.”

He goes on, **“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, [Resist the devil and he will flee] firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering [And they were suffering] are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.”**

You know that saying, “misery loves company”?

There's a lot of truth to that. That's kind of what he is saying. I feel singled out if I'm the only one that's miserable. That's why I want you to be miserable too, so it's not just me. That's what he's saying.

All your brothers and sisters in Christ are also suffering tremendously, under tremendous persecution.

Listen, in the days ahead, there's the propensity for - I mean, I know you would agree that we've long overstayed our welcome in this world not our home, but it is getting more and more hostile with each passing day.

“After [Verse 10] you have suffered for little while, [I like the word “little while” in the same sentence with suffering] the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. [I'll take it; where do I sign?] To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

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Wow, that sums it up, doesn't it?

Yeah, it's all there, everything we just talked about, summed up by the Apostle Peter, echoing what James is exhorting us to do in these last days.

And I'll just say it one last time and will close.

Kapono, come on up.

If there was ever a time to get serious about the things of God, that time is now. I think the time has long passed to play around, play games, play church. The world we're living in is most unforgiving of such folly. I think the clarion call before us today is that we have to get serious about our relationship with the Lord.

Quit playing games, quit blowing it off, quit dismissing it. If there is sin, repent with a godly sorrow and draw near to the Lord and watch and see what He'll do in return. And lastly, humble yourself. Man, that's a whole other sermon unto itself.

Why don't you stand and we'll close in prayer?

Oh, man, this is good stuff, Lord. It's hard, but I know I'm convicted, but it's a good conviction, not condemnation. There is no condemnation for those that are in You, Jesus. But there is that conviction.

Lord, I thank You for the strength in which You inspired James to write this. Lord, now as we go about our day, we need for the Holy Spirit to take it from here. Lord, we do want to be numbered amongst those of whom it can be said they've humbled themselves; they've drawn near to the Lord, they've repented of their sins.

I don't want to keep preaching the sermon, but I do want to pray for anyone who might be here today or watching online. If the Lord has really spoken to your heart, you need to respond now. You need to respond just in the quietness of your own heart between you and the Lord. Maybe He put His finger on something. He loves you so much.

Lord, thank You. Thank You for how gentle You are with us, in Jesus' name, amen.