



WEDNESDAY EVENING

AT BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH

Title: Right and Wrong Ways to Deal With the Future

Passage: James 4:13-17

Speaker: Pastor Dan Preston

Introduction: Humanity has always been obsessed with knowing the future. From horoscopes to psychics, people crave certainty, guarantees, and control—and Christians are not immune. Dwight Pentecost observed that prophecy drew crowds, while holiness and daily obedience did not, yet nearly every New Testament passage on Christ's return ends with the same call: be ready, live holy, walk with God. James addresses this very issue—not outspoken atheism, but practical atheism: planning and living as if God were irrelevant. The problem is not planning for tomorrow, but planning without God, and James shows us both the wrong and the right way to face the future.

I. The Wrong Way to Deal With the Future (Verses 13-14,17)

Three mistakes many believers make, often without ever realizing it:

A. Planning Without God

It is possible for a person to acknowledge God with their lips and ignore God with their life.

We say grace over our meals but never seek His grace for our plans. We ask God to bless our choices, but we rarely ask Him to guide our choices.

Planning is good, but planning without God is practical atheism.

B. Presuming to Know the Future



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The person who keeps saying “I will” to God often ends up never doing.

Three failures feed this presumption:

1. A Failure to Understand the Purpose of Life

- Life is a gift

Every heartbeat, every breath, every sunrise is given by God. It is not owed to us. When we forget that life is a gift, we grow ungrateful and careless.

- Life is an opportunity

God gives us life not merely to exist, but to honor Him—to know Him, love Him, serve Him, and point others to Him.

- Life is a stewardship

Life is not yours to squander; it is God’s to use. Your time, your influence, your health, your money, your relationships—all of it belongs to Him.

2. A Failure to Understand the Complexity of Life

“Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.” (Proverbs 27:1)

Every tomorrow carries a thousand variables that are completely outside our control.

The wise Christian learns to hold every plan with an open hand and a surrendered heart.

3. A Failure to Understand the Uncertainty of Life

Life is short; therefore, we cannot afford to merely spend it, we certainly dare not waste it, but we must invest it.



C. Delaying What You Should Do Today

The sin of omission is not by the wrong we do, but rather the right we refuse to do.

We sin less by doing wrong and more by refusing to do what we know is right.

II. The Right Way to Deal With the Future (Verses 15-16)

Acknowledge God's will in everything.

"A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps." (Proverbs 16:9)

How "If the Lord Will" Changes Daily Living:

- It changes how you plan your day.

Many believers would worry far less if they prayed before they planned.

- It changes how you respond to interruptions.

The Christian who lives "If the Lord will" doesn't see interruptions as obstacles, but as opportunities designed by a sovereign God.

- It changes how you make big decisions.

Instead of asking how it can benefit you, ask what would God have you to do.

- It changes how you view success.

Even if your plans fall apart—if you honored God, you succeeded.

- It changes how you face uncertainty.

When you live surrendered to the will of God, the unknown no longer intimidates you.



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You cannot control, predict, or guarantee tomorrow, but you can entrust tomorrow to the God who already stands in it.

Conclusion: Put God back where He belongs—over every plan, every priority, and every tomorrow. When the world asks, “*What will tomorrow bring?*” the Christian asks, “*What does God want today?*” That is living proof of true Christianity.



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