



Date: 08-24-2025

Sermon Title: When the Mirror Speaks

Text: James 4:11-12, 13-17, 5:1-6

Three warnings from James

James 4:11-12 (NLT)

11 Don't speak evil against each other, dear brothers and sisters. If you criticize and judge each other, then you are criticizing and judging God's law. But your job is to obey the law, not to judge whether it applies to you. 12 God alone, who gave the law, is the Judge. He alone has the power to save or to destroy. So what right do you have to judge your neighbor?

1: Watch Your _____.

Notes:

James 4:13-17 (NLT)

13 Look here, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there a year. We will do business there and make a profit." 14 How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog--it's here a little while, then it's gone. 15 What you ought to say is, "If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that." 16 Otherwise you are boasting about your own plans, and all such boasting is evil. 17 Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it.

2: Surrender Your _____.

Notes:

James 5:1-6 (NLT)

1 Look here, you rich people: Weep and groan with anguish because of all the terrible troubles ahead of you. 2 Your wealth is rotting away, and your fine clothes are moth-eaten rags. 3 Your gold and silver have become worthless. The very wealth you were counting on will eat away your flesh like fire. This treasure you have accumulated will stand as evidence against you on the day of judgment. 4 For listen! Hear the cries of the field workers whom you have cheated of their pay. The wages you held back cry out against you. The cries of those who harvest your fields have reached the ears of the LORD of Heaven's Armies. 5 You have spent your years on earth in luxury, satisfying your every desire. You have fattened yourselves for the day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and killed innocent people, who do not resist you.

3: Steward Your _____.

Notes:

The Mirror Test

Mirror: “Every morning you stand in front of a mirror and check your reflection.”

Application: “James says God’s Word is like a mirror too. So when you look today — what do you see?”

- Do you see a mouth that speaks life, or tears down?
- Do you see hands clutching for control, or open in surrender?
- Do you see resources piled up, or poured out to bless others?

“The mirror tells the truth: **Watch your** _____. **Surrender your** _____. **Steward your** _____.”

Notes:

Expanded Notes for Deeper Study

Sermon Title: *The Mirror Test: Three Warnings from James*

Text: James 4:11–5:6

Introduction

James calls us to examine our lives in the mirror of God’s Word (James 1:22–25). In chapters 4–5, he gives three sharp warnings about how we speak, how we plan, and how we handle wealth. These warnings are not abstract — they reveal what’s really in our hearts.

1. Watch Your Mouth. (James 4:11–12)

Key Terms

- **Speak evil (katalaleite):** “to talk down,” slander, or tear someone down, even if true.
- **Judge (krinō):** To condemn as if in God’s place.
- **Law:** Likely the “royal law” (James 2:8, “love your neighbor as yourself”).

Cross-References

- Proverbs 18:21 – “The tongue can bring death or life.”
- Matthew 12:36–37 – We’ll give account for every careless word.
- Ephesians 4:29 – Speak only what builds up.

Historical Insight

Jewish communities in James’ time often suffered division through slander and gossip — sins that destroyed unity as much as persecution from outside.

Reflection Questions

Who in my life has been most shaped by my words — for better or worse?

Do my conversations build people up or tear them down?

2. Surrender Your Might. (James 4:13–17)

Key Terms

- **Mist (atmis):** vapor, smoke, breath — fragile and fleeting.
- **Boast (kauchaomai):** placing confidence in one's own abilities or plans.
- **Sin of Omission (v.17):** Not only doing wrong, but failing to do right.

Cross-References

- Proverbs 27:1 – “Do not boast about tomorrow.”
- Luke 12:16–21 – The parable of the rich fool.
- Acts 18:21 – Paul says, “I will return, if God wills.”

Historical Insight

Merchants in the Roman world often took pride in self-sufficiency, but James exposes the arrogance of ignoring God's will.

Reflection Questions

Do I live as if tomorrow is guaranteed?

How can I practically start each day by surrendering my plans to God's will?

3. Steward Your Money. (James 5:1–6)

Key Terms

- **Weep and howl (ololuzō):** Prophetic imagery of judgment.
- **Rich (plousios):** Not just those with means, but those who exploit others.
- **Treasures rusting:** Irony — wealth stored without generosity decays.

Cross-References

- Amos 4:1–3; Micah 2:1–2 – Prophets condemned wealthy oppressors.
- Luke 16:19–31 – Rich man and Lazarus.
- 1 Timothy 6:17–19 – “Command the rich to be generous and ready to share.”

Historical Insight

Wealthy landowners often withheld wages from day laborers — a direct violation of God’s law (Deut. 24:14–15). James confronts this injustice head-on.

Reflection Questions

Does my bank account reveal love for God and others, or love for self?

Where could I simplify my lifestyle in order to be more generous?

The Mirror Test (James 1:22–25)

James reminds us: God's Word is a mirror. Don't just glance at it — look carefully, remember, and obey.

- Do I see a **mouth** that speaks life, or one that tears down?
- Do I see **hands** clutching control, or open in surrender?
- Do I see **resources** piled up, or poured out to bless others?

Application Pathway

- **Head (Know):** God alone is Judge, life is fragile, and wealth is stewardship.
- **Heart (Be):** Cultivate humility, trust, and generosity.
- **Hands (Do):**
 - Bite your tongue before speaking.
 - Pray “Lord willing” before planning.
 - Redirect one purchase into generosity this week.

Quotes for Deeper Reflection

- Augustine: *“Pride is the love of one's own excellence.”*
- John Wesley: *“Earn all you can, save all you can, give all you can.”*

Notes: