

FAITH + WORKS

JAMES 4:13-17



OPENING

- Begin by praying together. Then ask someone to read James 4:13-17 aloud.

SERMON REVIEW

- James 4:13-17 is a warning against self-confidence.
- What is boasting? Talking with excessive pride and self-satisfaction about one's achievements, possessions, or abilities. Showing off, singing one's own praises.
- We all boast! But what *should* we boast in?
- *God's Sovereignty*. Don't boast in your wisdom or your strength, but in knowing God (Jeremiah 9:23-24)! We don't know what will happen, but he does. We don't know the details, but we know him. Realize that it's him who leads us into life that is truly life.
- *God's Plans*. Regardless of our ideas or intentions, God establishes our steps (Proverbs 16:9). We must be sure that the credit goes where it is due. Too often, we beg God to help us, but take all the credit when he intervenes. It's time to choose humility; point back to him!
- *The Cross of Christ*. May we never boast unless it be in the work of Jesus Christ (Galatians 6:14). The cross changed everything. Because of it we have life, joy, and peace; we are changed, and now we live differently. So the point is not to be noticed, but to share Christ.
- Our boasting reveals where our confidence lies!

DISCUSSION

- How do you feel after realizing that you've boasted in something that wasn't worthy of your boasts? And what does it feel like to boast in Christ?
- Why does James condemn the type of planning cited in verse 13?
- Give some examples of how we tend to plan without the purposes of God in mind.
- Pastor John mentioned that "*If the Lord wills...*" shouldn't be a clause that we mindlessly attach to every statement. What's a more appropriate way to use it?
- We are compared to a vanishing mist. What does that mean? And why does James include it?
- Boasting in arrogant schemes (which is to say, taking pride in your own ability to plan and succeed) is considered evil! Why?
- What is the cause of all this misplaced boasting?
- How do you plan to stop boasting in yourself, and to begin pointing to the cross?

CHALLENGE

- Choose to put your confidence in God this week. Look for ways to give him credit!
- Invite family, friends, and colleagues to our Easter Egg Hunt (April 8) & Easter gatherings (April 16), so that they too may hear about the cross of Christ.

PLAN AHEAD

- *Faith + Works* concludes next week! Take some time to reflect on the whole series; write down the things that God has spoken to and done for your group throughout.