

Sermon Notes - 5/12/2019

- A 2007 study done by Lifeway Research and Ministry Development found that 70% of graduates who attended church regularly in high school, stop going to church by the time they turn 23.
 - #1 reason for leaving (27%) : “I simply wanted a break from church”
- If you are a person who is “looking for a break from church”, I’m not likely to say anything that that will change your mind.
 - Please don’t doubt God’s Word, don’t trade your walk with Jesus for the allure of the world, and don’t settle for a life of happiness over a life of faithful obedience.
- It’s not uncommon to hear parents say, “I just want my kids to be happy.”
 - This really comes down to needs and wants
 - My kids are happy when they have what they WANT
 - But they don’t necessarily have what they NEED
 - The difference is that something bad happens if you don’t have what you need
- My prayer is not that these young people will “just be happy”
 - That’s shallow and a disservice to them
 - Eternity lasts a long time, and the way we live in this life determines what life will be like for us in eternity.
 - **[1 Corinthians 9:24-27 ESV] [24] Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. [25] Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. [26] So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. [27] But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.**
 - He is talking about running the race in this life to earn a prize in the next one
 - You look at Paul’s life and find a man who is driven, not by happiness, but to be obedient to his calling with every moment that the Lord has given him.
 - Look at v27
 - The way he lives determines whether or not he is disqualified from the prize. (Not about salvation)
 - There is something bad that happens if he doesn’t attain it
 - He misses out on an ETERNAL reward
- So my prayer for these seniors is that they will find no peace or happiness outside of a right and thriving relationship with God.
 - When we get to heaven, there will be people there who spent their 80 years of this life accumulating treasures that they had to leave behind, and they will be “as one escaping the flames”, for eternity.
 - It will be no comfort for them to say, “at least you were happy”
- James chapter 4 background:
 - Early Christians had been scattered because of persecution that came after Stephen was stoned to death
 - The immediate threat had calmed down
 - Now, they were starting to fight within the church. James was writing to address these believers
- **[James 4:1-3 ESV] [1] What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?**
 - These scattered Christians have forgotten who they are and they are tearing away at one another.

- Then he puts his finger on the root of the problem... “their passions, which are at war within them.”
 - These people are distracted by their own passions.
 - They are being selfish, and are focused on satisfying their own desires.
 - They are driven by the things that they think will make them happy
- **[2] You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. [3] You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.**
 - It is highly doubtful that these believers were literally murdering one another.
 - **[1 John 3:15 ESV] [15] Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.**
 - They were jealous of one another, so hate crept in and this is where the fighting came from
 - James is illustrating the folly of trying to satisfy ourselves with the passions of this world
 - They don't get what they want, so they develop hate for one another
 - They want what each other has, so they fight
 - They don't consider turning to the Lord to be their provider
 - When they do turn to the Lord, they are treating him like Santa.
 - “You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions”
 - This indictment is on these people because of their way that they have made their faith all about them.
 - These are Christians, who James is talking to. This is all about self. All about striving to make themselves happy.
- **[James 4:4-5 ESV] [4] You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.**
 - You adulterous people
 - Let that idea sink in.
 - These people are a new creation in Christ who died as their substitute
 - And they are so attracted to the passions of this world that they are damaging the church. (fighting)
 - They are the bride of Christ, but are flirting and even chasing after what the world has to offer
 - Friendship with the world is enmity with God
 - Enmity = hostility (active opposition)
 - Does the idea of being an enemy of God scare you? It should
 - You and I, as saved people are enemies of God when we choose to befriend the world.
- **[5] Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"?**
 - He's given us His own Spirit to live within us, and still our passions lust after what the world has to offer.
 - As humans, we are inherently selfish.
 - **[Genesis 3:6 ESV] [6] So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.**
 - God had provided for every last one of her and Adam's needs

- They lacked no good thing
 - But yet, she and Adam felt that God was holding out
 - They thought there was more to life outside of God, and it cost them everything
- **[James 4:6 ESV] [6] But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."**
 - Believers who proudly insist on their satisfying their own passions will continue to be opposed by God - We still have the nerve to ask him to bless our selfish endeavors.
 - Doesn't the Bible say that God will give you the desires of your heart?
 - **[Psalm 37:4 ESV] [4] Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.**
 - The condition is that your delight be in HIM. If your delight is in Him, then the desires of your heart are put there by him.
 - Yes, he will give you those, but not the desires of a prideful heart.
 - Though we cheat on God, he gives more grace.
 - The grace comes when we humble ourselves before the Lord.
- **[James 4:7 ESV] [7] Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**
 - Submit = "put in subjection", "to arrange under"
 - Being humble means placing ourselves back under the rightful authority of God.
 - It means yielding to Him.
 - Rather than feeding our passions and lusts for the things of the world, it means recognizing that those come from the enemy.
 - Being humble means remembering who you are and to whom you belong and putting up a fight with the temptation comes
 - Pride says, "I'm saved and God will forgive me"
 - Humility says, "I've sinned against the living God and I don't want to do it anymore"
 - Humility means recognizing that we can't fight the devil, but believing God when He says:
 - "Resist the devil and he WILL flee from you."
 - The enemy has no choice. If a child of God resists the devil, he MUST flee.
 - He only succeeds when we don't resist him!
 - God has guaranteed it:
 - **[1 Corinthians 10:13 ESV] [13] No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.**
 - Remember this from last week?
 - God will never ever let us be put in a situation where we are unable to resist the devil.
 - When we do... he WILL flee.
 - **[James 4:8 ESV] [8] Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.**
 - Not only has God promised that we can resist the devil and he will flee from us
 - He also promises that if you draw near to God, that he will draw near to you
 - This is illustrated in the story of the prodigal son:
 - **[Luke 15:12-14 ESV] [12] And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. [13] Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and**

took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. [14] And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need.

- Young man just wants to be happy, so he went off to do that, and spent all of his inheritance, and got into a pretty tight spot.

- **[Luke 15:17 ESV] [17] "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger!**

- He decided to return to his father

- **[Luke 15:20-24 ESV] [20] And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. [21] And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' [22] But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. [23] And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. [24] For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.'** And they began to celebrate.

- Look carefully at vs. 20
 - The son “came to his father”
 - But “while still a long way off” his father saw him, felt compassion and RAN to embrace him

- Reading our verse in James again:

- **[James 4:8 ESV] [8] Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.**

- This promise is so incredible

- When we draw near to God, he comes running
- HE IS THE ONE WHO CLOSES THE GAP

- This verse is about repentance

- “Cleanse your hands, you sinners”
- “Purify your hearts, you double-minded”

- The next verse takes it a step further:

- **[James 4:9 ESV] [9] Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.**

- True repentance means seeing our sin the way that God sees it.

- Repentance isn't intended for the lost in order to be saved

- It is intended for the saved to come into a right relationship with God

- The prodigal son was a son the entire time

- **[James 4:10 ESV] [10] Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.**

- You and I can never exalt ourselves higher than God can exalt us

- If you do, I pray that you never forget the fact that at ANY TIME:

- You can resist the devil and he will flee from you

- And when you draw near to God, He will draw near to you

- **[1 John 1:9 ESV] [9] If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

- You can start new at any time