

HOPE WHEN LIFE HURTS

FRIDAY: August 6, 2020

Read: James 4:1-6

Scripture Verse: *“You are not faithful to God. Don’t you know that to be a friend of the world is to hate God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.”* [\[1\]](#)
4:4 James

Today’s Thought:

Blame Me Not

You call me Master and obey me not,
You call me Light and see me not;
You call me the Way and walk not;
You call me Life and desire me not;
You call me Wise and follow me not;
You call me Fair and love me not;
You call me Rich and ask me not;
You call me Eternal and seek me not;
You call me Gracious and trust me not;
You call me Noble and serve me not;
You call me Mighty and honor me not;
You call me Just and fear me not;
If I condemn you BLAME ME not!

—Unknown [\[2\]](#)

As I read this poem and thought about all that it has to say, it really helped me to understand what James was telling his readers. You can definitely see the contrast in the faith life between those whose wisdom comes from the world and those whose wisdom comes from God. The contrast we see goes a long way to explaining why we have the issues we have in our world and in our churches. We are supposed to believe all these things and put them into practice as followers of Christ. But yet, as we look at the modern-day church, we have to admit that many of those who call themselves followers of Jesus don’t seem to be in agreement with the “supposed to’s” of practical Christianity. James has been teaching us throughout his entire book, that there is way more to our “faith” than just believing, it must be coupled with action. He continues that teaching here in chapter four.

As James opens chapter four, we gain immediate insight into the problems that are happening in the church due to the lack of Godly wisdom being lived out. There is strife in the church. The root of that strife is the manifestation of the evil inclinations of pride, jealousy, and envy. Evangelist and author, Perry Stone calls these inclinations the “trouble-making triplets”,

that motivate carnal and sensual members into action against spiritual authority in the body of Christ. James is clear in his warning to the church that we are to avoid such evil indulgences. The sad fact is or at least it seems that many in our churches today appear to be working against the very things we are supposed to value and hold dear. James saw the “trouble-making triplet” phenomenon holding back his readers and points them out in the text.

1. James saw a divided church due to the quarreling of its members.

There is nothing worse than a church that is constantly quarreling with itself. The church is to be united in love for God and each other. The church is to be united on the foundation of God’s truth. It is to be united in worship and service. How can this be if it is always arguing? We see the picture of a divided church. This is what was going on in the church then and it is that way in many of our churches today. The reason for the arguing? Selfishness! People were going to church for the wrong reasons. They weren’t there to advance the church they were there to advance themselves. A church filled with anger and strife refutes its own message. It says to unbelievers, ‘Come to Christ, and he will change your life.’ And the unbelievers all around laugh and say, ‘Why is it that he hasn’t changed you?’^[4] The conclusion the world gets from this: “these people are not disciples of Christ!”

2. James saw a church that did not pray.

The people in the church needed their ‘wants’ fixed. They were wanting the wrong things as they came to church. They were wanting their own desires gratified. Now, there is nothing wrong with wanting things if the things we want are good and right. And if they are good and right, there is a way for us to get what we want—and that is through prayer!^[4] James is very clear at the end of verse two about this. He says, “you don’t have what you want, because you don’t ask God.” Here’s the deal. If we come to church seeking what we can get for ourselves, we will pound on each other. But if we come to church with hearts seeking to glorify the Lord and seeking to edify our fellow believers, we will pray for one another instead of fight.

The correct way for Christians to have their legitimate needs met is by asking God. One reason as believers we do not receive what we ask for is that we ask with wrong motives.^[5] When we pray and ask God for things that are for our selfish gain and that are outside His will for us, the answer is always going to be no. God cannot contradict himself. When we pray for what we need in accordance with God’s will the answer will always be yes! God is the giver of all good things and he wants to give us the best, but we have to ask with the right motive. There is nothing more important for the kingdom of God than prayer but are we making it a priority?

3. James saw a church that was more concerned with ‘worldliness’ than Godliness.

There are pastors today who are more terrified by their people or by Caesar, than of God. They often don’t preach about things they feel will offend their congregations or their community. James didn’t concern himself with that. He calls them ‘adulterers and adulteresses’!^[6] Ouch! He was affirming that those churches were giving to someone else the love and devotion that belonged ONLY to God! Who was this rival lover they were chasing after? James called it the ‘world.’ These people were more in love with their world than they were with God. Unfortunately, many churches are guilty of the same today.

The 'world' is James's term for life that is lived as if this present world were all that there is. It is life that is lived without regard to God. It is life that is lived according to the values, desires and aspirations of this temporal realm. Worldliness is thinking like the world, talking like the world, acting like the world, and dressing like the world. We too, are living in a day of 'worldly Christians'. But if we are truly followers of Christ, we cannot be continually worldly. Yes, we can and do slip into worldly behavior from time to time. But that is a far cry from habitual worldliness. If the pattern of our lives is worldliness, we have plain evidence that we are deceived about our relationship with God.^[7]

God has placed His (Ruach HaKodesh) Holy Spirit in us. It is by the grace he gives that we can overcome through the power of the Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) in us which is greater than the spirit of the world. James has been clear from the start that we cannot as loyal followers of Jesus Christ also be friends with the world. We have to choose one or the other it can never be both! It is the Holy Spirit placed in us when we accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior that causes us only to have a desire for Him. It is our call to shun arguments, selfishness, prayerlessness, and pride and to humbly accept God's authority in our lives. James states the only cure for this conflict in us and in the church is to have a humble spirit which has been rewarded to us by God's unmerited favor. Think of the good we could do freed from the enemies of the world!

- **Which of the "trouble-making triplets" has the firmest grip on our life?**
- **What can you do to break that grip?**
- **Do you belong to a small group of believers that can help you and pray for you?**

Further Reading: Proverbs 4

Spend some time in prayer:

A=adoration

C=confession

T=thanksgiving

S=supplication

Prayerfully Seeking Him,

Pastor Randy