

August 16, 2020
Willerup United Methodist Church
Sermon Notes
Pastor Marvin Singh
The Book of James, Lesson 6
Two Wisdoms

The Book of James

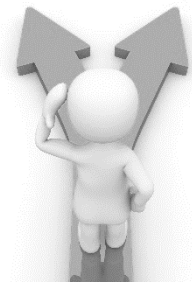
This is the sixth in our series of meditations based on the book of James for the month of July and August. James was written by the brother of our Lord Jesus, who called himself a servant of God and Jesus Christ. It was primarily written to Jewish Christians who were scattered in many nations. James talks in this book about practical religion: trials and tribulations, how to apply the Word of God in our daily life, the worldliness in the church and Christian perspective.

TWO WISDOMS

James 3:13-18

¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. ¹⁵Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. ¹⁶For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

¹⁷But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.



What is wisdom?

- “knowledge practically applied to the best ends”
- “natural sagacity; prudence, skill in affairs: piety”

Webster’s New School Dictionary

What wisdom is not – arrogant, divisive, bitter, has no envy or selfish ambition

What wisdom is – pure, peaceable, gentle, agreeable, merciful and fair to all.

Wisdom is chiefly a matter of means, not ends.

Who is a wise man?

- a. One truly religious – not who can bridle or tame other’s tongues but restrain his own
- b. Endued (with knowledge)
- c. Qualified to teach others. Genuine wisdom is accompanied with meekness and gentleness.

Adam Clark’s, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*. pg. 1294

Earthly Wisdom: to harbor bitter envy, boasting, denial of truth, nonspiritual, of the devil, divides people, and leads to every evil practice.

The secret source of strife is – the SELF

Threefold description of false wisdom – James 3:15

- a. Earthly wisdom is contrasted with God’s wisdom

Philippians 3:19

Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things.

- b. Unspiritual / sensual / animal wisdom has to do with the body in contrast to the spirit or soul

- c. Devilish, demonic wisdom leads to debate, wrangling, disputes, cursing, swearing, disputes which were marked by ferocity, egotism, boasting, and malignant cunning.

Dean Plumptre, *Preacher's Homiletic Commentary* pg. 575

Heavenly Wisdom – James 3:17

Pure, peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy, good fruit, impartial, sincere, a peacemaker (those who sow in peace harvest righteousness.)

Jesus invites and encourages people to come to him and learn because he is gentle and have humble heart.

Matthew 11:28-30

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

The importance of wisdom - practical wisdom for the ordering and guidance of life

- a. Waiting upon God and in believing prayer.
- b. Through a sanctified life.
 - i. Wisdom is seen in our speech and conversation – own management of body, soul and mind (temper, passion)
 - ii. in our character – meekness plus wisdom, modesty, receptiveness.
 - iii. In our dealing with others – sensitivity, not touchiness nor mere weakness of a nervous disposition, but to be sensitive to the clean, to the very beginning of strife.

A definition of wisdom in the Bible – wisdom is knowing the greatest goal in any situation, and the best way to achieve that goal.

From a sermon by John Piper. “The Greatest Work Of The Only Wise God,” based on Romans 16:25-27

Now to Him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him – to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Wisdom of God

1. The Wisdom of God is available to everyone

a. God does not show favoritism.

Romans 2:10-11

but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For God does not show favoritism.

b. Simply ask for it.

James 1:5

If anyone lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

c. The pre-requisite then given:

James 1:6-7

But when he asks he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord, he is a double-minded man and unstable in all he does.

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

2. The Wisdom of God is expressed in His Word

Proverbs 2:6

For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

a. The Wisdom of God is higher than ours

Isaiah 55:9-11

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and snow come down from heaven and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth ...

b. The Wisdom of God is life-altering and guides us in our situations

“The wisdom of God tells us that God will bring about the best possible results, by the best possible means, for the most possible for the longest possible time.” - Charles Ryrie, quoted by Chip Ingram in *God: As He Longs For You To See Him*, pg. 128.

But practically, when we face hard situations especially right now, we wonder how can God turn around my present situation: people are looting and shooting, people are dying and getting sick, storms are taking life and property, getting the pink slip, abuse at home, financial difficulties?

The implication from God's wisdom is that whatever your life is right now, God is wisely and sovereignly ordering your circumstances to do something in you, through you, in your marriage, in your family, in your work, in your witness, and in your worship that could not be accomplished any other way."

Lloyd Stilley, sermon "The Wisdom of God," 1/1/2014

Yes, there are circumstances that defy connection with phrases like "best possible," because they are awful, scaring, and painful. There are two things which Lloyd Stilley suggests we consider:

i. Remember that our experience of the wisdom of God comes in a fallen world. But God in His wisdom, "makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45). But one day, all will be set right. The Bible also says "Do not be deceived" (don't be fooled by the delay in the full execution of God's perfect justice so that you think that He lets the wicked off the hook): "God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man sows he will also reap" (Galatians 6:7)

ii. Remember the wisdom of God in securing your salvation.

The world thinks it is foolishness for God's son to go to the cross to die for the sins of the world.

1 Corinthians 1:21-24, "For since, in God's wisdom, the world did not know God through wisdom" (in other words, God rejected the possibility of salvation by the human intellect and wisdom. We will see why in a moment.) "For God was pleased to save those who believe through the foolishness of the message preached. For the Jews ask for signs and the Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. Yet to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is God's power and God's wisdom."

Vs. 25, "because God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength."

c. The Wisdom of God makes us wise and helps us in our daily living.

i. When we have reverential fear of the Lord.

Wise living starts with Fearing the Lord.

Proverbs 9:10

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

ii. When we honor God's Word.

Psalm 19:7

The instruction of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is trustworthy, making the inexperienced wise.

Dr. Billy Graham, Daily Devotion: The Wisdom of God

“To know the will of God is the highest of all wisdom. Living in the center of God's will rules out all falseness of religion and puts the stamp of true sincerity upon our service to God. You can be miserable with much, if you are out of His will; but you can have peace in your heart with little, if you are in the will of God. You can be wretched with wealth and fame, out of His will; but you can have joy in obscurity, if you are in the will of God. You can have agony in good health, out of His will; but you can be happy in the midst of suffering, if you are in God's will. You can be miserable and defeated in the midst of acclaim, if you are out of His will; but you can be calm and at peace in the midst of persecution, as long as you are in the will of God. The Bible reveals that God has a plan for every life, and that if we live in constant fellowship with Him, He will direct and lead us in the fulfillment of this plan.”

billygraham.org, Daily Devotions, June 12, 2020