

Overcoming the Overcome

6/15/22

Question:

Does the church struggle to “set [it’s] mind on things that are above”, why or why not?

- Yes! because the people that make up the church.
- Now it is some that we address quite frequently, when we talk about the hypocrisy claim the world makes about the church.
- Our response is:
 - 1. Acknowledgement, yes, we are sinful hypocrites who struggle but we struggle together.
 - 2. Redirection, since we are hypocrites who struggle with sin we’re in the same boat as you, so you’re welcome here.
- Both are correct from a factual standpoint, and we should continue to preach them.
- However, we need to remember that the reality of our struggling with sin is NOT supposed to be an acceptance of it in our own lives.
- Rather it is supposed to be a means of safely addressing it and correcting it.

What we are covering tonight:

“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.” – Colossians 3:1

- This is the first verse of Colossians 3, where we’re I’m currently in the middle of a 2-part message on being overcome by Jesus Christ.
- This first verse serves as the thesis statement for not just this beautiful chapter of scripture but actually is the point of the whole letter in one sentence.
- Some that is of note in this verse is who the Apostle Paul is referring to here because it is the qualifier for the entire chapter.
- If “you have been raised with Christ, seeking the things that are above...”
- The Apostle Paul is telling Christ followers that we need to carefully, consciously, and continuously: seeking to live our lives in a manner in which brings glory and honor to our Lord Jesus Christ.
- It doesn’t just happen, but through our love and devotion to Jesus we need to seek it out. It takes work!

James 3: 13-18

- The book of James is an awesome letter to seek just what we are looking for tonight. It takes the idea of putting off the old self and putting on the new self, from being purely inspirational to being practically pursuable.
- It is a book about what followers of Jesus should be working towards.
 - NOT salvation, which we've already obtained through faith in Christ Jesus.
 - But rather towards deeper relationship with Jesus and likeness with Him.

V. 13 Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.

- Interesting place to start here with a question; "who is wise and understanding among you?"
- What is the significance of wisdom as it pertains to following Jesus?
- Wisdom is the gift of God which all other virtues are possible.
- To be wise in the sight of the Lord is to know Him as Lord and submit to Him. From that starting point can the things of God bring more understanding.

"For the Lord gives wisdom;

from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;

he stores up sound wisdom for the upright;

he is a shield to those who walk in integrity,

guarding the paths of justice

and watching over the way of his saints." – Proverbs 3:6-8 ESV.

- "A shield" – What does wisdom shield us from? – The Old Self.
- Watching over the way of His saints. That's you and me!
- This is key because from here James is going to make a distinction of Godly wisdom and earthly wisdom. But before we get there J.I. Packer said it like this.

"Confidence that one's impressions are God-given is no guarantee that this is really so, even when they persist and grow stronger through long seasons of prayer. Bible-based wisdom must judge them." – J.I. Packer

- Godly wisdom is not a given for Christ followers, it should be asked for and sought out. Not every perception or belief we have is rooted in the

truth of Scripture, we need to humbly seek out more understanding – that is wisdom.

- Which means it cannot be boastful. Which is why James uses the word here “meekness of wisdom”.
- Echoing the teaching of his brother our Lord. In Matthew 5:5, “blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”
- Meekness of wisdom is not:
 - Cowardice
 - Innate
 - Secretive
 - Passive
- The meekness of wisdom is to know, that you don’t know, and trust in Lord with which you do not understand.
- Which is an easier virtue to declare than it is to live by because we want to be right, and we want to be heard. Which is foolish and could actually be sinful.

V. 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth.

- If a verse could define an age I think James just nailed right where we’re at as a culture.
- (Q) in what ways has bitter jealousy and selfish ambition, manifested itself in the world?
- What would the social media for people look like if they had to read this verse before they could post or tweet something out to the public?
- (Q) In what ways can bitter jealousy or selfish ambition creep its way into the church?
- Bitterness is tough because it works out like an infected wound. When we don’t treat it right it goes bad.
- We need to be quick to snuff out the things in our live that cause bitterness and bring them to the Lord and to each other in repentance and in confession. Its how we clean the wound.

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.” – Philippians 2:3 ESV.

- This is the biggest difference in true wisdom and fake wisdom. To know what are you doing in the name of self-promotion and image, and what are you doing for the glory and name of Jesus Christ?
- We’re talking about every aspect of our lives. He wants it all.

V. 15 This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.

- What do you think James means here? In what ways is self-ambition earthly, unspiritual, and demonic?
- James is furthering making the distinction between the wisdom that scripture promotes and the wisdom that is only interested in furthering one's status and image here on earth.
- This fallacy assumes that the life lived here is ultimate and thus one should chase what this world has to offer regardless of how we violate God's Word in order our pursuit.
- But remember James here like Paul in Colossians 3 is talking to followers of Jesus, He's talking to us who make up the church.
- This is a warning not to let what is of the enemy, demonic, in here. We need to diligent to not let the corruption of the day dim our light we need to shine all the brighter now because of it.
- That means we need to be more careful of kind of wisdom we as a church are pursue and what we are letting in.

"Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil." – Ephesians 4: 25-27 ESV.

- This is not a suggestion on church policy, this an absolute command from God and we should treat it as such.

V. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.

- Is this apparent today? If so where do we see this?
- Again, this is the marks of the war between the old self which is like the world and the new self which finds its peace in the Lord.
- Chaos versus order, light vs. dark, the way of the world and the ways of God. The battleground here is in the soul.
- The victory for the war is won in Jesus' resurrection, but the battle that rages in you is still being fought and daily you get to choose.
- Fan the flames of disorder, or submit to the rule of your savior.

"There is nothing more foolish than an act of wickedness; there is no wisdom equal to that of obeying God." – Albert Barnes

- No matter what narrative around our faith the world creates this thing has stood the test of time and to root yourself in God's Word will help you navigate, even these crazy times.

V. 17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

- Okay so we have looked at what godly wisdom is not, here we have a list of wisdom is.

Purity

- what ways do you think godly wisdom is pure?
- Purity in a literal sense means that which is undefiled and I believe that is good framework for what James most likely means here.
- That wisdom that is from above is pure, because it undefiled by our bitter jealousy, and selfish ambition. It truth that is true regardless of my feelings about it.
- Pure, I am impure in my thinking I give into the old self all the time. Purity of wisdom is because of the purity of Lamb of God. Jesus is pure.

"If your Jesus is mainly shaped by your opinions, preferences, and tolerances; then, you just have an idol named Jesus. The real Jesus saves and shapes us, not vice versa." – Shane Pruitt

Peaceable, and gentle

- what do you think he means by this?
- I believe this talking about? The disposition in which the wisdom from above is stated.
- Opposite of peaceable is combative and that is not what God wants us to use our wisdom for, we aren't trying to win a debate or own anybody.
- That goes back to the previous verses we covered that's self-ambition, and making yourself look good. That is not about God's truth or making His name known or glorified.
- What about gentle? – Well it's the same as peaceable, we aren't going to win souls by joining the same charged fights the world is raging.
- The purpose of wisdom is to know God and make Him known. Not to revel in the ignorance of others.

Open to reason, this is an interesting one what do think about this one?

- This is the aspect of godly wisdom where our faith is really tested because its one thing to know how to communicate godly wisdom, its

another to accept the fact that you don't have all the wisdom and you need to learn.

- I need to learn, I need to listen, and I need to faith in God in my listening and not close myself off to truth because I am fearful, I might be wrong about something.

"Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" – Romans 11: 33-34

- You know what these verses mean? It means there is no knowledge that we are to fear as followers of Jesus. God made truth and we need to open to the fact that we don't know it all and there is still much more we need to learn.
- Now the caution here is that because Jesus is Lord and we belong to Him every claim which we open ourselves up to must be taken back to Him and His Word and deeply meditated on and prayerful considered.
- Because a lot of lies sound really sweet in the ears and we only finds truth when the giver of truth deems it true.

Full of mercy and good fruits, what about this one?

- Fruitfulness and mercy are 2 ideas that are on repeat in the bible and we talk about them often in church.
- Mercy the slowness in which we are to pass judgement and be charitable in the way with which we are to view and interact with others.
- Fruitfulness is the response in which godly wisdom is received that it changes lives and grows people up rather than tearing them down. To the glory of God.

Finally impartial and sincere.

- What do we think James means about this being wisdom from above?
- This is speaks to the messiness of life and how not everything all the time is so easily clear as what is right way to go or which path brings glory and honor to God.
- We like things to fit in the categories we make in the world. Good, bad, right, left, black, white, up, down, so on, and so forth.
- But when lines are so neatly drawn we see its fiction... or cable news.
- Life is a lot messier and when we face the messiness with out a clear path, decision, or stance to make.
- Imparital and sincere, will bring honor to God. World can call you a fence sitting weakling.

- Okay, I guess so. It would be pretty selfishly ambitious of me if I picked a team because of that.
- This is not wisdom that promotes self or makes me look good. This is wisdom that brings honor and glory to my savior.

"A wise man may look ridiculous in the company of fools." – Thomas Fuller

- These things in our world will look pretty odd given the state of things. The reason for that is because godly wisdom and earthly wisdom are seeking very different things.

V. 18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

- Peace – the domain which the church ought to be the envy of the world.
- We are the ones who have found peace with God, He has overcome us and is renewing our minds, and transforming our hearts to look like His Son Jesus.
- Who is called the Prince of Peace.
- And who said: **"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." – Matthew 5:9 ESV.**
- We are to be the people of peace, not of bitter bickering, or constant division.
- Looking: "a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace" is telling you what takes you from looking like the old self to looking more like the new self.
- Its peace, this righteousness you've been given that is not yours, it demands you live in peace and fight to make peace. It's the only way you'll know Him and grow in Him.

"Real contentment [peace] must come from within. You and I cannot change or control the world around us, but we can change and control the world within us." – Warren Wiersbe

- You see peace in this life is never just happening, war is norm, peace is possible when people fight to make it.
- This is where the process has us all right now in our transition from old self to new self we are here, seeking to share wisdom from above and trying to make peace.
- Which means we're exactly where our Savior was in His earthly life and He's here with us as we're on our way together.
- Lets pray.