

James 4:13-17 (Teaching)

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Preacher: Spencer Baumgardner

[0 : 00] I'll be back in the book of James again this morning. James chapter four. Bill and Francis chapter off this morning.

Passage ever going to be read and fairly short. So if we got time left over, don't be thinking of any questions, comments, everything you've had over the past four chapters that we've gone through. However you all know me and I could very well take up Sunday school time in Mortimer's short past. I know. And as he says, amen to that. But anyway, we'll just go as the Lord allows.

Last week we wrapped up the passage in James four where James says in verse 12, there's one lawgiver who was able to save and destroy who art thou that judges to another.

That was the last verse we read last week. And this was after James kind of raked the church over the coals through the previous verses that he had.

[1 : 16] And he didn't let up with this verse when he asked the question, who art thou that judges to another? You know, who are we to judge? There's only one judge is able to save and only one judge that's able to destroy it.

We all know that to be Jehovah God. So as we stated last week, though, that doesn't mean that we are not to judge.

We're supposed to judge according to scripture. I read some scripture from 1 Corinthians chapter five last week where Paul rebuked the Corinthian church for not passing judgment in matters that they should have.

And we also talked a little bit last week very briefly about how Jesus said, judge not according to the appearance, but judge rights as judgment. So we are to judge, but we're not to judge hypocritically. We're not to do that. But anyway, we'll jump in this last little section of James chapter four began at verse 13.

[2 : 18] James says, go to now, ye that say. Today or tomorrow, we will go into such a city and continue there a year and buy and sell and get gain.

Whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow for what is your life. It is even a vapor that appeared for a little time and then benefit the way.

Back to verse 13, James says, go to now, ye that say. Today or tomorrow, we will go into such a city and continue there a year and buy and sell and get gain.

I've heard this verse taught and preached both that we're not supposed to go anywhere or do anything to get gain. That's not what James is saying here at all.

Not in context, not out of context. I mean, James ain't getting anywhere close to saying that we're not to get game for ourselves. I guarantee you any of you that work for a living, as much as you might like some of your fellow employees, you wouldn't be there if you weren't getting paid for it.

[3 : 24] You wouldn't be there if you weren't getting a gain of some kind, whatever that place of work is. That's not what James is saying. We have to continue on into the next verse in the verse 14 to get away.

He says, whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow. What James is saying is we need to be careful about making future plans.

The Bible is not teaching us and James isn't teaching us, nor did Jesus ever teach us to not make plans for the future. But we don't depend on the future, folks.

We live in the now. We're living today. We're living right now on this Sunday. I believe this is September 4th, 2022. We may not be here tomorrow.

I may not be here. You may not be here. There's a pastor from Lloyd Pastor Church in Memphis, Tennessee called Robert G. Lee. He made one of the most profound statements I've ever heard of such a thing to do with this very subject.

[4 : 25] He said, oftentimes, oftentimes today is crucified between two thieves, tomorrow and yesterday.

Oftentimes, that's absolutely the case. We'll dwell on what happened yesterday, we'll be concerned about what happened. Knowing that there ain't a whole lot that we can do about it, it's in the past. It's in the past. It's already in the tables of time. Nothing that we can do about it. We're going to worry about what's going to happen tomorrow. And if we're worried about yesterday and worried about tomorrow, what are we doing with today?

What are we doing with today? And James said, that makes a statement here. As you know not what shall be on the morrow. We have no idea of what will be on the morrow.

He asked the question, for what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vatishes away. This is a popular verse. I've heard it preached at many a funeral.

[5 : 26] I've heard it preached many times just in regular services. But something that I personally believe is overlooked more often than not is that James makes this very personal.

Most people when they quote this verse they say, James says in James chapter 4 he says, what is life? No, it don't. James says, what is your life?

What is your life? It's a personal question that James is asking here. What is your life? But he gives us the answer. It is a bit of vapor. And that's all it is.

And he's saying it's fleeting. It's here for just a little while and it's gone. And he compares it to a vapor. Many times in the scripture we see people talking about the years of their life and how fast they've gone.

My goodness. You look over in Genesis chapter 47, Jacob standing there before Pharaoh. Jacob had lived 130 years and he said, few of my days been an evil.

[6 : 24] Few. After 130 years the man said that my days have been few because they had gone by so fast that it just flown by. I used to think my parents were just crazy old people when they said, the older you get the faster time will go.

And I thought, you're just an old person. You don't know what you're talking about. And the older I get the more I realize my mom and my daddy were absolutely right. It goes a lot quicker. I ain't saying a second last any less.

I ain't saying a minute has been shaved down to 58 or 57 seconds. I'm just saying that it goes a whole lot quicker. And you in here that have got some age on you, you'd probably agree with that. I remember thinking that when I was a kid my parents are just stupid old people. They don't know what they're talking about. And we all thought that about our parents. We all thought we knew more than they did. But folks, they knew what they were talking about.

James knew what he was talking about. The other people in scripture knew what they were talking about. He says it James says it is it's even a paper that appeared for a little time and then vanishes away.

[7 : 31] Jesus spoke a parable over in the gospel of Luke I believe it is. Basically it was a rich farmer. But this farmer he says look at what I've done.

Look at the crops I've yielded. Look at what I've brought in. I said my goodness I'm going to have to tear down my storehouses. I'm going to have to build bigger. I'm going to have to build better.

What does the Lord say in that parable? He calls them fools. This not my soul will be required of me. And then he asks the question then who's going to end up with you good?

Then who's going to end up with what you what you've worked so hard to attain? My goodness why did Jesus say in the sermon on the mount lay not up for yourself treasures here on earth? Lay them up in heaven because what's here on earth is temporal including your life including my life.

It's very temporal. It's very rugged. It's very fast. And it goes goes by folks. I'm telling you if if you don't have children and grandchildren.

[8 : 35] I mean you can't really compare this to my kids though. I got one there'll be 26 next month. I got one that's 21. I got a grandbaby. It's almost two. I can't believe my grandbaby's almost two.

I can't believe my oldest boy's 26. I can't believe my youngest boy's 21. It seems like literally yesterday or last week at the most I was dropping them off for their first day at kindergarten.

It goes by so fast. It's a faith. It's a hatred. So be careful. Be careful what we assume. It's not an accident that James and it's not coincidence that James says here when he said when he said in verse 13.

He says go to now in other words he's saying come now. Listen to this. Much like when the Lord says in Isaiah chapter one he says come now. Let us reason together. Sayin' you know go to now. Either say today or tomorrow we will go into such a city and continue there a year and buy and sell and get gay. Be careful with your assumptions. Be careful with this with assuming these things.

[9 : 43] Whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow for what is your life. And it is even a paper that appears for a little time and then it shoots away. For that ye ought to say verse 15.

For that ye ought to say if the Lord will we shall live and do this or that. And we just read this. We glance over it. We say well we shouldn't say well tomorrow I'm going to go to Bristol and I'm going to do this or that.

Or tomorrow I'm going to go to Greenville. Or tomorrow I'm going to sleep in. We should say if it's the Lord's will tomorrow I'm going to sleep in. And we leave it at that. That's not what James is saying here either.

That's part of what he's saying. For that ye ought to say if the Lord will we shall live and do this or do that.

First of all it's completely up to God whether I take another breath or not. Completely up to God.

The average person takes about 17,000 breaths a day.

[10 : 44] Some people might take a little more some people might take a little less. But the average is about 17,000 breaths per day. I don't know my next one might be my last and you don't know either. So if it's the Lord's will we shall live but he goes on and says and do this or do that.

Do what? What are we to do? What's the conclusion of the whole matter according to Solomon and includes the Aztecs? To obey God, to obey God to do his will.

What is the thing Surveys? What is it to do this for that there is if it's the Lord's will that we live. It's the Lord's will that we serve him. It's the Lord's will that we do for him.

It's the Lord's will that we edify the church. It's the Lord's will that we exhort the brethren. It's the Lord's will that we pray to him. It's the Lord's will that we not forsake this and live in ourselves.

It's the Lord's will that we do all of these things, that we do this or that. I believe that's exactly what James was getting at here. Because he's comparing our life with a vape or something that we can see for just a moment and then it's gone.

[11 : 59] He says, for the Eoptos saying, if the Lord will, if the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or do that. If the Lord wills it won't, it ain't gonna be something bad.

We know from James chapter 1, every good gift and every perfect gift coming down from the Father of life. If it's good, it's perfect, it came from God. If it's not, it came from below.

But if it's good and perfect, it came from above. But if it be the Lord's will that we live, I can promise you that it's the Lord's will that you do good. That you do His service, that you do for Him, that you do for Christ, that you do for you brethren, that you do for the need.

That's the this or that that we need to be concerned with. Not little things that aren't gonna matter in the future. And folks, I ain't saying lay down everything, I ain't saying sell your house.

I know Bern touched on it not too long ago, maybe last week. But how many people say they want an Acts chapter 2 church? Well, if you read towards the end of Acts chapter 2, then people will sell and everything they had to give it to the church.

[13 : 07] I don't see any of us doing that. So do we really want that or not? That's not the question. But be careful with your assumptions. Be careful with your assumptions, what you do and make sure that what you're planning on doing, what you're planning on doing is lining up with the Lord's will.

If it be the Lord's will, you're gonna live. And if it's the Lord's will that you live, the Lord's got things in mind for you in His service, for His good and for His glory.

That's what we do, folks. What we do as Christians, we bring glory to God, it's a very purpose that God saved your soul, was to bring glory unto Him.

There's all kinds of things that bring glory to God. Salvation and lost man is the pinnacle of the way for God to get glory, because we don't deserve it, we didn't merit it, we done nothing good, we done nothing good in or of ourselves to inherit it.

God did that completely and utterly by Himself through the death of the only begotten Son of the Father on Calvary's cross. And He brings glory to Himself through us in that.

[14 : 22] So, if our life is but a vapor, make sure every fleeting moment that is passing and every fleeting moment that you have planned in the future is centered on God's will for your life.

If it's His will that you live, it's His will that you bring Him glory. But now you rejoice in your boasting, verse 16, but now you rejoice in your boastings.

All such rejoicing is evil, therefore to Him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to Him it is sin. A lot of times we hear this quoted verse 17, but we read verse 16.

Now they go hand in hand, but now you rejoice in your boastings. All such rejoicing is evil, all such rejoicing in our own boastings.

And what we've done is I just said salvation, you have nothing to do with your salvation. You have zero to do with it. You weren't seeking God any more than I was seeking God when I got saved.

[15:24] And none of us were seeking God. The Bible says there's none that seeketh after righteousness, no, not one. There's none that seeketh God. There's none that look for Him.

That's why God had to come to where we were. That's why God had to come and save us. You read over in the book of Exodus when God's talking to Moses from the burning bush.

He says that God came down, it was personal with God, what the Egyptians had done with His people. It was personal to Him, what they had done with His chosen, with the apple of His eye.

God came down, it was personal to Him. And that's what makes it a personal relationship between myself and Jesus Christ or yourself and Jesus Christ. God came to you in your lowest and your darkest state and your darkest sin, knowing all about it.

God came to where you were and saved your soul. Now you're rejoicing your boasting, all such rejoicing is evil. What's a good example of this? I can think of one right off the top of my head.

[16:28] That's a man that was well known in Scripture for putting his foot in his mouth named Peter. What did Peter do? Well, when Jesus was talking about how he was going to be crucified, he said, I've got to be handed over in the hands of the simple men, over in the hands of the Gentiles.

They're going to mock me, they're going to beat me, they're going to do all these horrible things. He's telling them this just before, basically that it happened. And he says, and Jesus makes a statement, go, I'll be offended of me.

Every man will be offended of me. And Peter puffs up and says, I'll never be offended of you. I'll go with you even to the death, Lord. And that's when Jesus told him, let's not, that's what the non-mean thrives.

The Denominant Three times that was Peter rejoicing in his own boasting, saying, I'm strong enough, I can do this.

I can do it all on my own because I love you that much, Lord. We better be careful with that. We better be careful with that. I would equate that to the people that, you know, say, well, I'm going to go out to the bar and it'll be a lot for Jesus.

[17:39] I ain't saying it's impossible. I'm saying you better make sure the Lord's in it before you do that. You'll be, you'll be trotting around the bars just like the, your buddies that you went supposedly to be a witness to.

Be cautious for such things, but now rejoice, but now you're rejoicing your boastings. All such rejoicing is evil. Be careful of our boastings.

Be careful what we say, well, I've done this and I've done that. Even if it's for the church, even if it's feeding the hunger, even if it's clothing the naked, even if it's helping the needy, even if it's looking after the widows and the orphans, even these things, you know, I'm not saying we shouldn't talk about these things.

Folks, there's a point where it becomes boasting. There's a point, and I've hurt it myself. I've hurt it myself. And if that's the case, you don't rob yourself out of every blessing you ever dreamed of getting out of it.

If that's the case, if you're using it so that man will look at you and say, look what this one's doing for the Lord. You know who done that in the Scriptures? The Pharisees. The Pharisees acted that way.

[18:52] They're the ones that stood on the street corners and made the long prayers. They're the ones that sought after the high seats. They're the ones that sought after the praise of men. They're the ones that were rebuked the hardest by Jesus Christ in the Scriptures.

Be careful in your boastings. Now you're rejoicing. Your boasting is all such rejoicing as evil.

Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

Folks, this flows both ways. I said, we hear this verse quoted over and over and over. And it's true. It's very true. If we know it's a do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

If we know that we're supposed to do good and boasting in what we've done for God isn't good. But if we know that we're supposed to do good and we don't do it, then we have it as sin.

And when I said it flows both ways, this is for lost folks and for saved folks. Now keep in mind, James was writing to save folks here. He was writing to people that had professed the name of Jesus Christ all throughout this letter.

[19 : 59] This goes the same way. For lost and saved alike. If we know to do good and we do it not, to us it's sin. If we know we should be studying.

If we know we should be praying instead of doing a million other things that might be on our mind or on our agenda. If we know that we're supposed to be doing something that's going to help us spiritually, it's going to feed us spiritually, and we're doing something else.

Folks that's sin. Plain and simple. It's just as much sin for a Christian to have that attitude and to sit in their recliner or on their couch or lying in their bed or wherever they're at and be doing something else and knowing in the back of their mind and thinking in the back of their mind.

You know I could be using this time for Bible study. I could be using this time to pray that the so-and-so requests prayer for such and such this morning or a couple of days ago at church. I could be using this time for that, but I'd rather sit here and do this.

Folks that's sinful. It's sinful for us to do that. And it is just as simple for a Christian to do that as it is for a lost person to sit in the pew and reject the drawing of the Holy Ghost.

[21 : 14] They know to do good. They know that they're sinners. They know that they need a Savior. They know that they need salvation and yet they'll sit in a pew sometimes Sunday after Sunday or service after service.

Whether it be weeks in a row, whether it be months in a row. They know what to do good is and they know that they should be saved.

They know that they would like to be saved. But they sit there in their seat and you know why they do that? Because they're in love with their sin. They're in love with their sin. They don't want to give it up.

Same reason you may not have got saved the first time good Lord ever dealt with you. I know I didn't. Why was that? Because I was in love with my sin. I was in love with myself.

I was in love with my life. My life, my desires, what I wanted. And I boasted in those things. I boasted in that simple life. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and do it for not to him that is sin.

[22 : 18] A lot of people will take this verse and twist it just a little bit. Be careful with folks that do that. Because of this word knoweth here. Well if I don't know that it's sin, I don't do it.

Then is it real? Am I really held accountable for it? It depends on exactly what you think knowing and not knowing is. Is God more tolerant of ignorant sin?

Then don't know who you ask. My Bible says in the book of Acts that at one time God winked at ignorance. But now commands all men everywhere to repent.

At one time he did. But all of us, everyone has a conscience. All of us know what the difference between right and wrong. All of us know the difference between good and evil.

Therefore to the one that knows to do good and does it not to them that is sin. You know you all heard me say it before. If you've got to ask the preacher at the Sunday School, the teacher at the Deakin, is this sin?

[23 : 25] It's about a 99.9% chance it's sin. If you're trying to gain someone else's permission before you do it. Or to clean your mind, to ease your mind.

If you've got to ask about a chance it's already sin. I just leave it alone. You need to toss that out the window. You don't know what to do good and do it or not to him and his sin. I said it flows both ways.

It's saved and lost a life. We know that we're supposed to be doing something. And we don't do it instead of sin. Sometimes it's sin against your neighbor and God.

Sometimes it's just sin against God. There's no such thing as just sin against your neighbor. If you sin against your neighbor, you sin against God as well. I've heard people make the distinction between those two sin against your neighbor and sin against God.

It's bad enough to sin against one, but when you sin against two, my goodness. But there's no such thing as sinning or transgressing or trespassing against your neighbor and not doing it against God.

[24 : 34] You all be careful with people. If you ever hear somebody make that distinction, that's a very wrong distinction. Anyway, that wraps up James chapter four.