

FRIDAY 02 September 2022 "Two Wisdoms?"

(James 3:13-18)

Good morning my "Walking with Jesus" friends,

I wonder who the people are in your life whom you consider WISE? They are the people you call when you need someone to listen to you and speak wisdom into your life to help you. Perhaps they are the people that sometimes when they speak, you reach for a pen to write down the wisdom of what they just said!

*In every generation, in every place in our world, WISDOM is one of the greatest needs we have as human beings, because we all face many decisions every day and the consequences of those choices often affect many people. Also, I've mentioned to you before, **it is our choices which write the story of our lives!***

So, we each need wisdom every day, don't we? For that reason, let's rejoin James as he is writing a powerful letter of encouragement and wisdom to Jewish Christians scattered all over the Roman Empire world about 20 years after that famous Passover/Easter weekend of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. I imagine James speaking every word as he writes, making sure he's hearing correctly from the Holy Spirit who is guiding his writing, so let's listen in and watch James as he writes.

"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth."

*(James 3:13, 14) James puts down his stylus and leans back in his chair to think, so let's reflect with him. Who are the wise people or people of great understanding in life that you turn to when you need help? *Where did they gain that wisdom? What is the difference between knowledge and understanding and wisdom?* May I suggest this: **"Knowledge"** is knowing information. **"Understanding"** is exactly what it says... the ability to understand what the information means. But **"Wisdom"** *is the application of understanding and knowledge to life in a practical and beneficial and morally right way.**

There's a big difference between having a conversation with a person who has lots of knowledge or information or even good understanding of the information and the person who has wisdom regarding how to best use that information and understanding for God honoring purposes! Now think about that and let's ask ourselves one question: *am I a person who has and lives wisdom in my life?*

But do you see James explains that wisdom is not simply speaking wise words that provide help to people in their time of need, wisdom is best seen in the behavior, the good deeds of a person who is living their life in a way that practically proves the wisdom in their heart and mind?

A wise person handles money very carefully and their financial decisions are solid and result in good benefit to all who are touched by those financial decisions. A wise person is very careful to nurture all their relationships to the mutual benefit of everyone their life touches. *A wise person is consistently building a personal reputation and legacy which is 'above reproach'*. Do you see, my friends, that once again James calls us to consider that wise words are validated by wise behavior! Is that seen in your life and mine?

But do you also see the warning from James? **"But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth."** Wisdom flows from a pure heart, a clear and God honoring mind, and the Scripture is filled with God statements about that. But when we harbor or hold in our hearts and mind unforgiveness or bitterness or envy or selfish ambition or lust or anger or any emotion that gives the devil a foothold in our emotions or our thinking, *then don't be surprised if what comes out of our mouths is not wisdom but is deceitful or destructive*. A question I urge us to learn to ask ourselves many times every day is this: "How is my heart... honestly?"

James picked up his stylus again so let's listen: **"Such wisdom does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic! For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice."** (James 3:15,16) We hear the contrast don't we, my friends? *Heavenly rooted wisdom as compared to earthly, evil, even demonic rooted wisdom! Could the contrast be any greater?* God sent wisdom vs. the devil sent wisdom! May I ask how you can tell the difference? It's really quite simple... **wisdom that originates with God will ALWAYS be God honoring, always helpful to nurturing people in living in a growing relationship with God and will always be ultimately helpful to the people touched by this wisdom.**

'Wisdom' which originates with the devil will always draw people away from God, will always be self-serving, and it will ultimately be destructive, sometimes self-destructive! Now ponder that contrast for a moment and think about what ideas, attitudes and world view which usually shapes your choices, your words and your behavior. What do you see?

James is excited now as he writes, let's listen: **"But the wisdom which comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness!"** (James 3:17,18) Oh my what a wonderful description of wisdom that is really helpful to the human race, and constructive in building up individuals, families, cities and nations! Just ponder those descriptive words a moment... PURE; Peace Loving; Considerate; Submissive to God; full of mercy; good fruit; impartial and sincere! It should not be difficult to make a contrasting list of words that describe exactly the opposite, and that would of course describe the wisdom which comes from the dark kingdom.

Now here's the point my friends... **WISDOM is both spoken and lived, right?** *It's both words and behavior, so what is the wisdom heard when you and I speak, and what wisdom is seen in our behavior??*

I think James sets down his stylus again and goes over to the window simply to listen and watch as life is happening in busy Jerusalem outside his window. I think what James sees and hears is quite typical of any street in any town, anywhere in the world. Why? Because people are people. Humanity is fairly consistent in words and behavior in every generation, every part of the world.

So may I leave you today pondering this thought... what if you and I carried a counter, one in each hand today, as we went through our normal day. And as you and I listen to words spoken and watch behavior with all the people you and I will encounter today, what if every time we heard or saw something that was 'heavenly rooted' wisdom, we'd click the counter in our right hand, and every time we heard or saw something that was 'dark kingdom rooted wisdom', we'd clicked the counter in our left hand, when we reach the end of today which counter would have a higher number, do you suppose?

Now, we can't control the words or behavior of anyone else, but we can control our own words and our behavior, right? *So, what would happen if you and I became very, very aware of the purity or perversion of the wisdom reflected in our lives?* I think I'm going to ponder that a while and I invite you to do the same and here's a worship song to help us understand James 3:13-18 more fully, my friends.

Today's Scripture is James 3:13-18.