

Series Title: Evidence of Genuine Faith: Faith That Works

Message Title: Why Are We Fighting?

Text: James 4:1-12

Why do we fight with each other?

- Belief does not match behavior
- Doing does not match the saying
- Audio does not match the video

If we are honest... their struggle is our struggle

James 4:1-12

¹ What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? ² You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. ⁴ You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵ Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? ⁶ But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." ⁷ Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

¹¹ Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. ¹² There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

Question: **What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you?**

- Why are you arguing?
- What are you arguing about?

- Why are we arguing?
- What are we arguing about?

A better question is...

- Why am I arguing?
- What am I arguing about?

Answer: We are at war

Three types of war:

I. War with Others

- From the beginning in the Bible – war between people
 - Cain Abel, Abram and lot, disciples. Paul and Barnabas, Paul and John Mark, Paul and Peter, Paul and Paul (Rom. 7)
- James on war with People
 - Rich and Poor
 - Torah Jews and Messianic Jews
 - Praising and cursing – the use of the time
 - Gossip, Arguing, Criticizing, and Judging others
- Correcting others
 - Judge not...
 - Condemn not lest you be condemned.
 - We are to be discerning and authority to speak into each other's lives.
 - We are to gently restore with love –
- Not how it affects me... but how it impacts you.
 - Find an off-ramp.

1 Peter 4:8

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

- Why are we warring with others?
 - Because of what is our hearts.
- We don't get what we want so we try to make others not get what they want.
 - We deny, destroy, discourage.
 - Treat the cause, not the symptom.
 - We try to stop this and that...but we have to get to the cause of the behavior.

II. War with Ourselves

Selfishness leads to sin.

- Satan's sin was selfish exaltation.
- When we sin we are worshipping ourselves.
- We think our desires and design are the best way.
 - We do not look at God's desires and His design.

Self-Centered People are at war with themselves and are unhappy

- Focused on what they do not have
- Looking at what they do not have and neglect seeing what we have been given
- A lack of contentment

1 Tim. 6:6

But godliness with contentment is great gain...

Self-focused people are speck-finders rather than log removers

Matt. 7:3 – *Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?*

- We want to point out what is wrong with others...
- It helps us deflect from what we need to be dealing with.

Self –focused people are not functioning in God’s will

- The prayer of asking is unanswered.
- The prayer is asked wrongly.
- We are not in line with God’s will.

James 4:1b-2

^{1b} Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? ² You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.

The Trouble is Our Passions

- *That your passions are at war within you?*
 - The internal battle – You Lose

The Trouble is Our Desires

- *You desire and do not have, so you murder.*
 - Your external behavior – They Lose

The Trouble is Our Envy

- *You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.*
 - Your way is not achieved - Everyone Loses

QUESTION: Why can’t we hear one another?

We wonder why we cannot gain understanding or that others cannot hear what we feel or have to say.

James tells us:

James 4:2-3

² You do not have, because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

Answer: We are not asking...we are telling

- **What is James suggesting you don’t have?**
 - Control - Your way?
 - Capitulation – Their way? Surrendered for peace?
 - Communication - The way? Clarity (insight, wisdom)
- **What you do not have is wisdom, understanding or peace**
 - Ask – do not tell – gain understanding

We do Not Ask the Other

- There is a lot of telling going on in conversation.

- My point – your point, and back and forth
- “You are not listening!”
- Ask more questions

We Do Not Ask of God

- The reason these destructive desires exist among Christians is because they do not seek God for their needs (you do not ask).
- James reminds us here of the great power of prayer, and why one may live unnecessarily as a spiritual pauper, simply because they do not pray, or do not ask when they pray.

III. War with God

James 4:4

You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

- The root of every war (internal or external) is our rebellion against God
- Written to believers/
 - Every day you are choosing friendship with the world or friendship with God

We declare war with God in three ways

Eph. 2:1-3

¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

We are Friends of the world

- Friendship with the world is adultery (spiritual adultery)
- The system and ways and inclinations of the world
- Influenced by the world, views, behavior
- The way of the world will not give us what we want
- Wherever in the world we go, whatever we do anywhere, God is with us

Friendship with the World / Friendship With God

Illustration: tug of war

- Feels like being tugged and being a victim
- But actually we are pulling away from God
 - Still...the truth is that God is giving a lifeline and is not going to let us go
 - When we draw to Him...he is closer to us

We are choosing the flesh

- The Old Nature that is prone to sin
- Our desires

Romans 8:6-8

For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

We have given over control to the devil

- i. Our own pride
- ii. Depend on ourselves not God
- iii. We are to resist the devil and draw near to God

Question: **What do you think the Spirit of God is doing?**

- James is talking to believers
- The Spirit is in you
- Wherever in the world we go, whatever we do anywhere, God is with us
 - The Holy Spirit dwells (Tabernacle) in us.
 - Not the world's court, ladies court, the men's court, the priest's court...the HOLY place where no person can dwell.
 - Only in Christ and in Christ are we able to be in that dwelling of the glory of God. The HOLY of HOLIES

James 4:5 *Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"?*

- No OT verse
- Referring to Scripture as a whole
 - Think ye that the scripture speaks in vain? Does the Spirit which has taken his abode in us desire enviously? (Darby)
 - Do you think what the scriptures have to say about this is a mere formality? Or do you imagine that this spirit of passionate jealousy is the Spirit he has caused to live in us? (Phillips)
 - The western Church Father (Venerable) Bede maintains that this is not the correct rendering. He states that the second clause must be read as a question in itself: **Does the spirit that dwells in you have a desire for envy?**

Answer: The Spirit is Teaching us Grace

This is the key to this passage

But he gives more grace.

- Given by God
- Revealed through humility
- **Grace is needed in all conversations**
 - Grace is what we desire most when our guilt is exposed
 - Grace is something that you know that you do not deserve it
 - Grace is what we are hesitant to give when others guilt is exposed.
- It is the solution for almost everything
 - Undeserved
 - Unearned

- We can't recognize or receive grace for what it is until we are convinced that we do not deserve it
 - Purely relational
 - Needed when the ledger is on the negative side. You are in trouble. They are in trouble
 - Personal – our connection to God – he showed up and offered grace

Our response to Grace is humility

James 4:6-10

Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

- *Submit yourselves therefore to God.*
- *Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*
- *Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.*
- *Cleanse your hands, you sinners,*
- *Purify your hearts, you double-minded.*
- *Be wretched and mourn and weep.*
- *Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.*
- *Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.*

Our response to others is to offer Grace

James 4: 11 -12 *Do not speak evil against one another, brothers.*

- *The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law.*
- *But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.*
- *There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?*

1 Peter 4:10

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace...