

First Southern Baptist Church - July 21, 2021
War - James 4:1-10

Train of Thought

From Peace in 3:18 to War in 4:1f
 War to lust
 Lust to have
 Have not because you ask not
 Lusts/ pleasures (4-5) are of world
 Proud/ Envious put together at 6-7
 Humble yourself in this way (7-10)

Subjects of Relevance

War/ peace - pacifists?
 Lust/ ambition/ competition/ prayer...
 Their problem was strife and envy - see 3:13-18
 Human nature in a raw form

Verse 1- Wars

1. The most obvious feature of human life is war
 Human nature's natural aim is pleasure
2. Two Rhetorical Questions
 - A. From where do wars come?
 - B. Do they not come from among us?
3. Words used:
 - "Fights" - refers to a continual state of war - not just a small conflict
 - "Quarrels" - a word used for individual battles
4. The passion for gratification - pleasure (lusts)
 - A. This is the cause of wars (1-2)
 - B. It changes prayer (3)
 - C. It is at odds with God (4-6)
 - D. Demands repentance (7-10)
5. Where do these wars take place?
 - A. Who had not seen one faction drawn up against another at the church?
 - B. "Among you"
 "In your members"
 - C. Is "among you" literally applied. Or, does he mean among people in general?
 - D. An unhappy church member is trouble for the whole church.
 - E. "Spirit" in you (verse 5) is within individuals
6. "Lusts"
 In the soul -covetousness, thirst for honor, rivalry, malice, boastfulness
 In the body -gluttony, wanton sexual pleasures

Verses 2-3 - Describes the Conflict

1. Here's what happens:

- you lust and have not
- so, you kill and desire to have and can't get it
- Cain killed Abel - why?
- so, you fight and war
- all this because you ask not
- and... when you do ask it is to consume it on your own lusts (verse 3)
- 2. Evaluate your own passions
- 3. Prayer and lusts
 - says with sarcasm - "you pray for what you have not been able to get"
 - your desire to have is frustrated by your failure to pray properly
 - *lusts affects even our prayer lives
- 4. "Amiss:"
 - wrongly, with the wrong motives. Possible that the requests be legitimate but the motive not.
 - as long as you allow your life to be driven by pleasures and lusts, real satisfaction and peace will be out of your reach.
 - prayer is distorted by an intent to seek pleasure
 - they prayed to further their own interest and not to accomplish the will of God, so they wound up fighting
 - how important is right motive to prayer?
- 5. God could've given them what they truly desired, if they'd only asked.
 - see David and Bathsheba and God's rebuke of David, through Nathan - 2 Sam. 12:1-8
- 6. Why don't we ask? - a big reason is pride... addresses later in this very passage.

Verse 4 - Origin of the Feuds

1. Self-seeking - friendship with the world
2. "Adultery" image
 - The church is the bride of Christ, so being friendly with the world is being unfaithful to Christ
 - "Friendship" we'd call flirtation
3. Surely these are not overtly rejecting God, but through passions (1-3) they were making friends with the world
4. "Friend" and "friendship" are words that are very close to a Greek word for "love"

Verse 5 - Quotes the Scripture

1. "Scripture" used in the New Testament to refer to the Old Testament - generally
 - but, in 2 Pet. 3:16 "scriptures" s inclusive of all Paul's writings
 - it does not say what it says "emptily" or "vainly"
2. A comment about our "spirit" (within us)
 - it desires, lusts to envy
 - as a result of the fall our spirits are intensely envious (the last of the ten commandments)
 - there is an implied contrast in the Spirit of God (verse 5) and the spirit within us (verse 6)

Verse 6 - God Resists the Proud

1. "More grace" - in this context to defeat the spirit of envy
2. His requirement from us to make this grace effective is humility
3. Just do it - humble yourself
4. It was through pride that Satan sought to tempt Jesus - make yourself a king
5. Compare this verse with verse 10

Verses 7-10 - How to Humble Yourself

A. Ten Commands

1. **Submit** (7) - the Christian is exhorted to submit often in scripture
 - all of us to all of us Eph. 5:21
 - wives to husbands at Eph. 5:22
 - servants to masters - 1 Peter 2:18
 - citizens to magistrates - Rom. 13:1f
 - wives to husbands - 2 Peter 3:1
 - to elders - 1 Peter 5:5
 - children to parents - Eph. 6:1-4
 - to ordinances of man - 1 Peter 2:13
 Here, the idea is a military image - each is to be subordinated to the commander
2. **Resist** (7) - the spirit of pride within us, that causes and drives the envy
3. **Draw nigh** (8) - priestly imagery, as he draws nigh to God in service
4. **Cleanse your hands** (8) - the Old Testament priests were to wash their hands to make them fitted to be used (Ex. 30:20)
 - having clean hands they were taught the holiness of God - Ps. 24 - "who... he that hath clean hands and a pure heart"
5. **Purify your hearts** (8) - external (hands) and now internal (hearts) yields the idea of deed and disposition
6. **Be afflicted and mourn** (8)
7. **Mourn/ grieve** (9) - deeply repentant state of mind
 - sober and earnest
 - sin should bother us, it should weigh heavily on us
 - to compromise with sin is a sure sign that the gravity of it has vanished
8. **Weep** (9) - Jesus wept twice (John 11:33 and Lk. 19:41)
9. **Laughter turned to mourning/ gloom** (9) - voluntarily abandon laughter
10. **Humble yourselves** (10)

B. "Sinners" - James sees Christians as still "sinners" who need cleansing

- a very casual attitude about sin today
- here is a radical thoroughgoing repentance - "only such repentance will produce joy"
- these verses give:
 - the remedy
 - the problem (it's sin)
 - the enemy (resist the devil)

C. Returns to the thought of verses 6-7.

Here's the idea, "blessed are they that mourn, but they shall be comforted"

Conclusion: 1 Peter 5:5-6

To humble yourself

1. Realize you can't do it by yourself
2. Realize your character - your nature
3. He really cares
4. He will meet our needs
5. He is in control - he works within his own time schedule (6)