

**Presbyterian Church of Henderson**  
Worship Service 10:00 AM  
July 24, 2022  
*Living as God's People - Epistle of James*

**Ringing of the Bell**

**Welcome and Announcements**

- **NURSERY/PRESCHOOLERS** Many thanks to the ladies that came to help clean and organize the corner classroom and nursery this week after the new flooring was put in. It was summer cleaning time and required much effort! The children now have a wonderful environment to build relationships with their friends and to learn and grow in Christ. We praise God for all your efforts! Thank you!
- **WEDNESDAY NIGHT SUPPER** Come join us for our first Wednesday of the month potluck supper, August 3rd at 6:00 pm. Our featured speaker will be David Garber. He will be speaking to us on the topic "Insights to Volunteer Firefighting."
- **EVANSVILLE OTTERS** Join us for the 2022 Evansville Otters Picnic game on Saturday, July 30th. The Otters will play the Tri-City ValleyCats with the first pitch at 6:35 pm (gates open at 4:00). The cost for the picnic is \$25 which includes game ticket, all-you-can-eat hamburgers, hot dogs, beans, chips, soda and water. The food is set up at 6:00 pm. If we don't have 20 people (which we need for the catered picnic) then we will get either field box seating for \$9 per person or grandstand seating for \$4 per person and everyone will get their own concessions. If you have any questions, please contact Mark Hardy or the church office. Hope to see you at the game!
- **CHURCH SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM** A decision regarding scholarship awarding will be made by Thursday, July 28th. Recipients will be notified by phone.
- **ZOOM STUDY** Join us for our study on The Bible Jesus Read on Monday evenings at 7:00 pm. Meeting ID: 984 3627 7403, Passcode: 500727
- August is coming up! We need volunteers for usher/greeter, and counters.
- **HCCO** The requested need for July is lotion.

**Organ Prelude**

Kristin Jones, Director of Music

**\*Call to Worship**

Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.

**The Lord will speak peace to the faithful, to those who turn to God in their hearts.**

Surely salvation is at hand for those who fear the Lord,  
**and God's glory will dwell in our land.**

**\*Opening Prayer**

Holy God, you are our faithful lover, our generous parent, our patient teacher, our constant friend. We live by the hope of your promises, seek to follow your way, and rely on the gift of your Spirit, by whose power we breathe, and move, and pray. Amen.

**\*Hymn** PH 288 "I Sing the Mighty Power of God"

1 I sing the mighty power of God  
That made the mountains rise;  
That spread the flowing seas abroad  
And built the lofty skies.  
I sing the wisdom that ordained  
The sun to rule the day;  
The moon shines full at God's command,  
And all the stars obey.

2 I sing the goodness of the Lord  
That filled the earth with food;

God formed the creatures with a word  
And then pronounced them good.  
Lord, how Thy wonders are displayed,  
Where'er I turn my eyes;  
If I survey the ground I tread,  
Or gaze upon the skies!

3 There's not a plant or flower below  
But makes Thy glories known;  
And clouds arise, and tempests blow,  
By order from Thy throne;  
While all that borrows life from Thee  
Is ever in Thy care,  
And everywhere that we can be,  
Thou, God, art present there.

### **\*Call to Confession**

The truth about us is this: we all sin and fall short of the glory of God. Yet God promises to pour out grace upon us, giving us confidence to show ourselves as we are and be freed from shame. Trusting in God's mercy, let us confess our sin before God and one another.

### **\*Prayer of Confession** (unison)

**Ever-faithful God, how often we turn away from you, yet you remain constant to us. We run from you, but you call us back. In our words and our deeds we dishonor you, yet you still profess your love for us. We cut ourselves off from you and from others, but you will not let us go. Forgive our faithless and fickle ways and increase our gratitude, that we might grow in faithfulness to you, for the sake of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.**

### **\*Assurance of Pardon**

When you were buried with Christ in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God. By that power we are made clean and set free to live in gratitude and love with zeal. As you have received Christ Jesus, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and abounding in thanksgiving.

### **\*Gloria Patri** (PH 579)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

### **\*Passing the Peace**

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you!

**And also with you!**

Let us share with one another a sign of Christ's Peace.

Please turn and bow to someone out of respect and love— "The peace of Christ be with you"

### **Prayer for Illumination**

God of Wisdom, you promise to give your Spirit to those who ask. Overwhelm us with your Word, that we may know you more fully, love you more passionately, and follow you more closely; in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**First Reading** Colossians 2:6-15

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority. In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.

**Special Music** Wayne Jones, soloist

**Second Reading** James 3:13-18

Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

**Children's Sermon** Pastor Eric

- Ever told a story about yourself that was sort of true.
- EX: Coming back from a fishing trip and telling everyone that you caught the biggest fish.
- It was so big that I needed help to bring my fish onto the boat.
- But the problem is when that was not true.
- The fish you caught was the smallest fish, and no one helped you bring the fish onto the boat, in fact, you caught nothing and the little one got away.
- James has something to say about this.
- James 3:14 "Do not be boastful and false to the truth"
- Don't do it.
- If you caught the smallest fish, don't create stories that you did better.
- Be careful about the things you say.

**SERMON** "Choosing the Way of Righteousness"

James 3:13-18

Living as God's People - Epistle of James

July 24, 2022

- I remember when my son was playing soccer.
- We are going to a tournament in Elizabethtown.
- I cannot remember what GPS we were using, but we came to fork in the road, and the GPS did not tell us which way to go.
- Am I supposed to go right or go left?
- Since this all occurs in a matter of micro-seconds, I just decided to stay left.
- Well little did I know turning left at the Y intersection led us down the Bluegrass Parkway where it wasn't until another 25 miles until I could turn around.

- Sometimes certain paths take us so deep away from where you want to go that it takes a long time to get back to where you started.
- In our section of text this morning, James is describing an intersection of two different paths.
- He is saying we are all faced with this intersection where we need to choose either the way of:
  - self-sacrifice or the way of self-promotion
  - the path of righteousness and the path of wickedness
  - the way of peace or the way of turmoil and strife;
  - the way of Jesus or the way of the world.
- His argument to us today is to always choose the Way of Jesus.

## Characteristics of the Way of Jesus

### 1. THEY WALK THE TALK

#### 13 *Who is wise and understanding among you?*

- The phrase "wise and understanding" is a person who has the moral insight and skill in the practical issues of life.
- James is probably addressing those who would like to become teachers.
- But he is calling them out because he does not want to set up the precedent that the Pharisees did
- They assumed that they were wise and understanding and demanded everyone to give them their respect to their title and position.
- This what James wanted to prevent.
- Leadership is not a matter of the position and status of those speaking, but it is the wisdom and understanding [of God] inculcated into the life of the person
- James is saying that the distinction is that wise and understanding person **demonstrates** their wisdom with their lives.
- Wisdom is not all head knowledge, but it must affect how a person lives their lives.
- EX: I have this secret desire to learn how to draw. My father was an excellent artist, and after he died, I wondered if I have those same genes. I read books on how to sketch and draw. I looked at videos, and take online courses. BUT guess what, I have never picked up a pencil and began drawing!!! Isn't that crazy? Am I considered an artist?
- No, because much of being an artist is translating the image seen and onto paper or whatever medium desired.
- In the same way, James is saying is that people that have wisdom moves beyond mere head knowledge, and demonstrates that wisdom into everyday life.

#### **Show by your good life** that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom.

- James is saying, the good life [that everyone desires] is proven by what a person does.
- J. Ron Blue - "Wisdom is not measured by degrees but by deeds."
- What he mean by a "good life?"
- This is a person living a way of life that is "good" according to the word, hands, and feet of Jesus.
- This is the Christian call to being like Christ...to walk in holiness and righteousness knowing that all wisdom and understanding comes from God in Christ.
- This is the source of true wisdom!!!!
- See the word gentleness?
- This word could also be translated "meekness" or "humility"
- The idea refers to a submissive spirit opposed to a spirit that is arrogant and/or self-seeking.
- During this time, non-Christian Greeks felt this type of humility or meekness was a weakness of character.
- However Jesus taught the direct opposite and turned it into a virtue.
- Matthew 5:5 "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."

- One of the problems in the churches was that teachers were attacking one another and being aggressively defensive.
- Gentleness is the opposite of this aggression.
- The lack of need for self-defense and to fight back is James' example of a person full of wisdom.
- James then reinforces his argument with negative examples as he shows us the characteristics of the Way of the World.

### **Characteristics of the Way of the World**

#### 1. TELLS LIES AGAINST THE TRUTH (v. 14)

*14 But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth.*

- The words we say has a clear connection to the condition of our hearts.
- Our hearts reveal everything.
- If our hearts have bitter envy and selfish ambition, it shows a part of our lives where we need to allow God to come in and do some housekeeping.
- Instead of being marked by a holy lifestyle, meekness, and good deeds, the Christian that James is addressing is marked by a heart that harbors "bitter envy and selfish ambition"
- The word "bitter" describes a harsh stance of demanding to be recognized as wise, and the word for "envy" is where we get our word zealous.
- A person with "bitter envy" is an angry person who is fast with the tongue ready to fight for their rights.
- Have you encountered a person like that?
- Their sharpness of the tongue is usually over concern for their own position, dignity, or rights.
- This is the path of false wisdom because they are telling lies against the truth.
- They fabricate lies so that they protect themselves.
- Connected with "selfish ambition," there is a sharpness of self-interest that easily leads to the formation of parties and cliques.
- This person becomes willing to use divisive means to promote a personal viewpoint.
- Bitter rivalries develop out of these practices.
- Please notice, this is in direct opposition to the idea of **humility**.
- Because the true humble person admits to their lack/need for wisdom and relies upon God for the wisdom that one lacks.
- James confronts these people who have no humility by saying..."Stop being boastful and distorting the truth!"
- They have a heart problem that only the Great Physician could repair.

### **The Way of the World:**

#### 2. RELIES ON HUMAN WISDOM (v. 15)

*15 Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish.*

- This shows the direct contrast between a person who has teaching as a gift from God compared to someone who does not.
- The jealous person has a wisdom that is not inspired by God's spirit, but their inspiration is their own natural selves.
- Such "wisdom" evaluates everything by worldly standards and makes personal gain life's highest goal.
- It views life from the limited viewpoint of this world rather than from heaven's vantage point.
- This was a problem of the many false teachers.
- James also calls this wisdom "unspiritual"
- This is affirmed in Paul's writings when he says this:
- 1 Corinthians 2:14-15 *Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them*

*because they are spiritually discerned. Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny.*

- The word "unspiritual" is contrasted with "spiritual."
- The "spiritual" person has received the Spirit of God.
- *1 Corinthians 2:12* Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.
- But the "unspiritual" person does not have the Spirit.
- Thus "wisdom" that is "unspiritual" characterizes a human nature that does not come from God.
- In fact, James calls it "of the devil."

1. Tells Lies Against the Truth
2. Relies on Human Wisdom
3. BREEDS DISORDER (v. 16)

*16 For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind.*

- The word for "disorder" is a common word for anarchy and political turmoil
  - James is speaking of disturbance and turmoil in the church.
  - We often see this in churches that split over certain issues.
  - We have all seen this in churches that have split over the years.
  - Our disagreements become so personal that community is broken because of selfish ambition.
  - The person that speaks the loudest and calls for separation is exactly what James is addressing here.
  - These people enjoy gathering others around them in the name of their cause. What happens?
  - Disorder is the result of these disruptions.
  - Notice the outcome of envy and selfish ambition is disorder rather than the fruit of the spirit.
  - People tend to get into these modes where and think only of themselves rather than building up the body of Christ.
  - The "wickedness" refers specifically to worthless activity, to deeds that are evil which no good could come and cannot produce any real benefit.
  - Selfish zeal and ambition, then, always tend to destroy spiritual life and work of a local church.
  - EX: When I worked for the denomination, I used to work with churches who going through a discernment process about leaving the church. Whenever I had those conversations, I could not help but smell the selfish nature of the arguments used to get out of the denomination. The result is always dissension and disorder.
  - James needed this behavior to stop.
- Now, James goes back to his main argument with characteristics of the Way of Jesus

Characteristics of the Way of Jesus

1. THEY WALK THE TALK
2. **SEEK WISDOM FROM GOD** (vv. 17-18)

*17 But the wisdom from above is first **pure**, then **peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits**, without a trace of **partiality or hypocrisy**. 18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.*

- The only true protection against this false wisdom and the evil in the local church is God's wisdom.
- The true wisdom from a Spirit-filled leader whom God has granted the gift of teaching comes "from above" or from God in heaven.
- To emphasize this fact, James gives these virtues that can easily be compared to Paul's fruit of the Spirit.

- First of all **Pure** - which means that the person is wholly and sincerely committed to following God's moral directives; there are no crooked or unjust motives behind their holiness.
  - **Peaceable** - refers not to inner peace but community peace. What that means is the peaceable person works towards a self-controlled temperament, harmony, community, and no strife.
  - **Gentle** - Other translations use the word considerate. It is a person who is mild, patient, and reasonable.
  - **Willing to Yield** - Is often translated as submissive. This person is open to suggestions and willing to accept admonitions or corrections, and always ready to listen to the opinions of others.
  - **Full of mercy and good fruits** - These attributes involve the wise person in reaching out to people around him. The person filled with wisdom from above that puts the word of Jesus into practice: "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy"
  - Without partiality or hypocrisy=**Impartial and sincere** - This is a characteristic of wisdom of a the person who does not take sides in a dispute when serving as arbitrator. They listen carefully and objectively to the arguments presented and then renders judgment that is first impartial and then sincere.
  - In the last verse "**a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace**" - The peacemakers create an outcome in the local community of faith of a harvest of righteousness.
  - Righteousness will be fostered only in a climate of peace.
- At many intersections of life, we are forced to make a decision.
  - Do we power up and go down the path of the world?
  - Or do we follow the way of Jesus that promotes righteousness and peace.
  - I hope and pray we have the courage to go down the correct path.

**\*Hymn** PH 326 "Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart"

1 Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;  
Wean it from earth, through all its pulses move;  
Stoop to my weakness, mighty as Thou art,  
And make me love Thee as I ought to love.

2 Hast Thou not bid us love Thee, God and King;  
All, all Thine own: soul, heart, and strength and mind?  
I see Thy cross; there teach my heart to cling.  
O let me seek Thee, and O let me find!

3 Teach me to feel that Thou art always nigh;  
Teach me the struggles of the soul to bear,  
To check the rising doubt, the rebel sigh;  
Teach me the patience of unanswered prayer.

4 Teach me to love Thee as Thine angels love,  
One holy passion filling all my frame;  
The baptism of the heaven-descended Dove,  
My heart an altar, and Thy love the flame.

**Offering**

As we wait for the coming of God's good reign, we answer the invitation to take part in God's work, bringing our tithes and offerings with joyful gratitude.

**\*Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessing flow. Praise Him all creatures here below.

Praise him above the heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

**\*Prayer of Dedication**

Lord, you are the giver of every good gift. Accept these offerings we pray, that through them we may do justice, and love kindness, and walk humbly with you, our Sovereign and our God.

**\*Affirmation of Faith** (Apostle's Creed)

*Minister:*

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, what do you believe?

*All:*

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

**Prayers of the People**

God knows us better than we know ourselves. Relying on the Spirit, let us pray for the needs of the world, saying, God of mercy, hear our prayer.

For your whole, hurting, hating world: [silence] Lead us in the ways of peace, especially in places where tyrants reign and people eat the bread of conflict every day.

For your church, whose body is strong in some places, and frail in others: [silence] Nourish your church in the world, O Lord, that those who are flourishing might proclaim your word with power, and those who are weak might be strengthened to do your work.

For those who suffer because of disease or injury, the addicted, the abused, the feeble, and the ill: [silence] Soothe our suffering and heal our wounds. Protect us from evil and calm our anxious hearts. Make us whole in you.

For those who are dying and the ones who care for them: [silence] Receive them into your arms of mercy and welcome them into the company of the saints in light. God of mercy, hear our prayer. For all those whose burdens we carry in our hearts, and those known only to you: [silence] Bestow your good gifts as you see fit, supplying every need by the power of your Spirit. Accept all these prayers we offer in faith, even as you continue to teach us to pray by saying:

**Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever. Amen.

**\*Hymn** PH 361 "How Firm a Foundation"

1 How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in God's excellent Word!  
What more can be said than to you God hath said,  
To you, who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

2 "Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,  
For I am thy God and will still give thee aid;  
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,  
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.

3 "When through the deep waters I call thee to go,  
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;  
For I will be near thee, thy troubles to bless,  
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

4 "When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,  
My grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply;  
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design  
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

5 "The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,  
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,  
I'll never, no never, no never forsake."

**\*Benediction**

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace both now and evermore.

**\*Organ Postlude**      (please be seated for the postlude)