

James 4 - Temptation

Introduction:

- A. Remember the fall (Genesis 3)
 - 1. Satan in the guise of a serpent entered God's paradise deceived Eve
 - a. tempted Adam
 - b. Whereas there had once been peace and harmony in the garden, there was now shame and fear, so much so that when Adam and Eve "heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day," they hid themselves from Him (Gen 3.8)."
 - c. unbroken fellowship with God now ruined
 - 2. when God quizzed them - Adam blamed wife and God (v 12)
 - a. audacious to blame Creator, especially after Gn, 2:23
 - b. blaming God for his precious gift
- B. No wisdom on that and James wants to make this clear!

I. Wisdom to Remain Steadfast

- A. Begins with twin themes (1:2-4) trial and steadfastness
 - 1. Wisdom will cause the sufferer to understand that there is an up side to undergoing trials, because tests of faith produce steadfastness, which is a step toward spiritual wholeness. In verse 12 James picks up these threads again and continues his discussion of the advantages of steadfastness."
 - a. crown of life to those who endure (1 Cor 9:25; 2 Tim 4:8)

Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2 Timothy 4:8)

- b. this is a stephanos- or victors crown - but imperishable!
 - 2. God promises this to those who "love him". A glorious crown! He doesn't lead us to sin! Promises victory to those who endure
- B. Don't Even think about it! (Vs. 13-18)
 - 1. steadfastness includes enduring trials without turning on God
 - a. Hard when they last for long periods of time - where is God? Goodness?
 - b. thus, the trials become temptations - thus God caused it all!
 - c. handy way to escape! (2 Cor. 4:8 - perplexed).
 - d. Read Job 3:20-26; Psalm 42:9; 43:2
 - e. many things discourage us, disease, loss of family , money, or conduct of others, vexed by the behavior of the world
 - 2. God does allow negative circumstances to come into our lives
 - a. but, does not tempt us, uses trials to strengthen us
 - b. If they become something other than that, it isn't God's fault, and we shouldn't try to pin the blame on Him. Why? Because it isn't in God's nature to tempt us. "God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one" (v 13)."
 - c. God gives us good things (vs. 16-18) -not going to try to destroy us spiritually
 - d. God does not operate in the arena of evil

II. The Source of Temptation

- A. Satan or the devil
 - 1. obvious James believes the devil to be the source (Js. 4:7)
 - 2. but, not mentioned in this context - why? To stress personal responsibility
 - a. Satan is the enemy

For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain. (1 Thessalonians 3:5)

You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. (John 8:44)

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

- 3.
 - b. “adversary”- is the meaning of Satan in Greek - don’t blame God!
 - so. Vs. 14,15 - outlines the temptation process - look at the words
- B. First, lured and enticed by our own desires
 - 1. desires not necessarily sinful, but may satisfy in ways that are
 - a. sexual - adultery, fornication
 - b. The language James uses (“lured and enticed”) sounds like someone going fishing, only in this case we provide the bait that lures us toward our own destruction. It’s a striking image: fish who lure themselves into being caught!”
 - 2. when we have entertained the desire it may give birth to sin
 - a. may involve thoughts, places, associates
 - b. linger long it leads to trouble - exposed
 - c. left unchecked - sin becomes full-grown - dominates
 - d. permanence - thus, death!
 - e. example: Matt. 5:27-30; “be careful little eyes” heart starts
 - f. Mat. 5:21,22; Matt 15:19,20
 - 3. thus, the need for wisdom
 - a. We should be wise enough to avoid people and situations which tempt us and wise enough to keep our desires in check, realizing that the failure to do so leads inevitably to spiritual death.
 - b. Not to do so is like riding a motorcycle going the wrong way down a busy highway while blindfolded; the results are inevitable.”
 - c. wisdom from Solomon: Prov. 5:8; Prov. 7:22-‘Ox going to slaughter, fools to correction in the shackles”

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

III. God, the Giver of Good

- A. God’s goodness (vs. 16)
 - 1. every good gift - not be deceived!
 - a. vs. 17 - The Bible calls God “the Father of lights” only here, but it is most likely a reflection of the Genesis account of creation, which began with God decreeing, “Let there be light.” - the sun, moon, stars
 - b. he desires only our good only good gifts

If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:11-13)

- c. "no variation" (defined as a "mutation) - (vs.17) - he is not moody- had a bad day - thus,

He is always the same, at all seasons of the year, and in all ages; there is no change in his character, his mode of being, his purposes and plans. What he was millions of ages before the worlds were made, he is now; what he is now, he will be countless millions of ages hence. We may be sure that whatever changes there may be in human affairs; whatever reverses we may undergo; whatever oceans we may cross, or whatever mountains we may climb, or in whatever worlds we may hereafter take up our abode, God is the same.

- d. his constancy is fundamental to our relationship - solid, an immovable rock-
- 2. Further, he brought us forth (vs. 18)
 - a. with the word of truth - gospel - we learn about Christ
 - b. having heard, we believe, obey - "brought us forth" - born (Jn. 3:5)
 - c. 2 Tim 1:8-10 - his greatest gift is not life itself, but the promise of immortality! eternal glory, honor, and immortality (Rm. 2:7)!
 - c. contrast: sin brings forth death - God brings us forth by the word
 - d. it was his will! - not by our goodness or works
 - e. "first fruits - ie. We are a priority to God - see NLT

He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession. (James 1:18). NLT

- f. God wants the best (Gn. 3:15; Jer. 2:3; Is. 42:6)

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)

- B. God only wants what is best for us!

IV. A Plan Wise Endurance

- A. When we may question God's goodness what do?
- B. First, remember God has a blessing in store for you
 - 1. end of trials a crown of life
 - 2. to all who love him
- C. Second, don't entertain the possibility that God wants to bring you down
 - 1. this is contrary to his nature
 - 2. these are opportunities to grow - allow them to strengthen you
 - 3. Heb. 11:32-40 - and we think we have it hard!
- D. Third, accept full responsibility for being "lured and enticed"
 - 1. Satan will use your desires - be aware of your weaknesses
 - 2. you can set in motion the dreadful process that leads to death - only you can prevent this!

- E. Fourth, acknowledge God as the giver of every good gift
 - 1. he is not going to bring you down -lift you up
 - 2. he begotten you
- F. Fifth, be confident every day that God never changes - his good is constant
- G. Sixth, thank God for saving you by his truth - live accordingly
- H. Seventh, recognize the honor of being a kind of first fruits - be devoted to his glory

Conclusion: remember his desire to bless you (vs. 12)