

### **The Root of Trouble (James 4:1-3)**

- Someone once said, the heart of the matter is a matter of the heart- he was so right
- James deals with the heart issue of humanity and he tells us where it really begins
- It's not circumstances, lack of education, bad examples, it is our sinful passions
- The presence and perpetuation of strife and war is a testimony to our brokenness
- Our deep need of redemption is clearly illustrated when we consider man's strife

#### **I. Diagnosis of the Problem (vs. 1)**

- The problem is global, universal, that pervades all humanity through every age
- The Diaspora (Jewish Christians) were struggling with strife in their congregation
- They were experiencing class conflicts between the rich and the poor
- They were praising God in the congregation and then cursing each other (3:9,10)
- James begins with a question, from where do these fights and quarrels come?
- Surprising grace, God uses imperfect instruments if we strive to work together

#### **II. The Root Cause of the Problem (vs.1)**

- The root cause of our problems is surprisingly clear: "your passions are at war"
- 1) Our desire after pleasure ('your desires') the pleasures of this life choke out grace
  - 2) These desires are persistent: they don't take no for an answer 'passions at war'
  - 3) This war is personal: note these passions are at war 'within you'
  - 4) This conflict is penetrating: every part is affected

#### **III. Our Passions Become Destructive (4:2-3)**

- These words grow in tension, with each phrase building to its terrible climax
- 1) You desire something...you don't have'
- Jesus said it well, if a man looks at a woman lustfully he has committed adultery
- 2) 'You covet and cannot obtain it'
- James is dealing with evil desire, which persistently puts self before God
- 3) 'You murder...you quarrel...you fight'

#### **IV. Our Prayers Become Defective (4:3)**

- 1) Our prayers become defective in their content: They are selfish in their focus
- 2) Prayers are hindered by the consequence of sin, 'you ask but you don't receive
- 3) Prayers are driven with the wrong motives
- 4) Our prayers are defective in their true concern