

Series: James
Title: One Lawgiver
Text: James 4: 11, 12
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James 4: 11: Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of *his* brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. 12: There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

This word "judge" means to "call into question or to condemn." We are dealing with the offense of usurping God's office, and passing sentence upon, brethren.

The believers to whom James is writing were "the twelve tribes"—that is they were Jewish believers. As I pointed out to you from the beginning of this study, the Jewish brethren had been under the law of Moses and were yet zealous for the law. Their problem is the problem with all sinners by nature.

As God grows the believer in grace, he makes us to know that we are no longer under the law but under grace.

This was, and is, a great trial for those who believed they should continue in the law of Moses. These weaker brethren presented a trial to those who understood liberty in Christ. And the stronger brethren presented a trial to those who thought they were yet obligated to keep the law of Moses. So they were apt to speak harshly of each other over one another's regard for the law of Moses. Paul calls it "doubtful disputing." They called into question one another.

Romans 14: 1: Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations. 2: For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. 3: Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

James 4: 11: Speak not evil one of another, brethren.

This applies to all matters. Whether true or false, whether behind their backs or to their faces, whether in private or in public, do not speak evil one of another, brethren. If God has given us true wisdom, Solomon says:

Proverbs 31:26...in her tongue *is* the law of kindness.

I. YOU ARE BRETHREN

Would you speak evil of Christ?

James said in chapter 3 that it should never be so that with the same tongue we bless God and then curse men who are made after God's image. Here it is even worse because Christ said what you do unto the least of my saints—"you have done it unto me."

Illustration: If my children belittle each other, they belittle me, and my name.

Illustration: Aaron and Miriam spoke evil of Moses for marrying an Ethiopian woman. And the LORD said to them, "Were you not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses? (Numbers 12: 8.)

Believers are one in Christ.

Ephesians 4: 1: I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2: With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3: Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4: *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5: One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6: One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

II. IT IS TO SPEAK EVIL OF AND TO JUDGE THE LAW

James 4: 11:...He that speaketh evil of *his* brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law:

It has an opposite effect of what we may intend. Though the intent is the glory and honor of Christ Jesus, in speaking evil of brethren, we speak evil of the law. And we ourselves disobey the word of the Lord. James says, "but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge."

Here are 2 ways in which it is speaking evil of the law:

First, in every act of disobedience we are saying in our hearts that the law of God is not good.

For example, in this text, the law forbids rash judgment and speaking evil of brethren. This is the word of Christ Jesus, the law of love. He said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." But if we speak evil of our brethren anyway, we approve of that which Christ tells us not to do. We judge our Lord's word to be no good.

Satan desires to represent God as a hard taskmaster, as if God is keeping something from us.

Genesis 3:5: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

But The Lord Jesus said, "my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:30.)

Where is the real problem? Paul said, "the law of God is holy and the commandment holy, just and good. Paul said, "But I am carnal." It is me that is full of sin.

Secondly, we speak evil of the law when we count that holy which God never made holy or condemn that which God never condemned.

Illustration: Geographical laws of men

This is the same as saying the law of God is not complete without our additions or subtractions. We are not condemning the brother as much as we are the word itself.

Be sure you get the point: We must not come in our own name. We discern the word by the word or else we are guilty of judging and speaking evil of what our Lord has commanded.

III. THERE IS ONE LAWGIVER

James 4: 12: There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

Anti-christ is he "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God (2 Thessalonians 2:4.)

God the Father has committed all judgment unto the Son. Christ Jesus is the Lawgiver and Judge.

Those who opposed Christ were always fond of saying, "Moses said..." Yet, before Moses, even before Abraham, Christ said, "I AM!" The believer has but one lawgiver, Christ, and not Moses. Christ and not you or I.

John 5: 22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: 23: That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

The Righteous Judge says the believer, shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.

John 5: 24: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Christ is Able to Save or Destroy

When our Lord converts a sinner or turns us with his chastening hand he does both.

Deuteronomy 32:39: See now that I, *even I, am* he, and *there is* no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither *is there any* that can deliver out of my hand.

Christ governs his people in the heart. The letter of the law only constrains men from without. The believer is constrained by the Spirit of Christ inwardly. He takes the rule when the Holy Spirit, God our Savior, Christ the Lord alone, writes the law in the heart.

Hebrews 8:10:...I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

From then on the believer is no longer under the law of Moses but under the power of Christ.

Galatians 3: 13: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree:...24: Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25: But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

Illustration: Your head makes your fingers wiggle!

Christ is the Head and we the members. The believer is under Christ, like the members of your body are under the power of your head.

James is dealing with that fleshly lust to take a fellow believer to the law and condemn him thereby. Oh, believer remember:

Romans 6: 10: For in that [Christ] died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11: Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. [and reckon your brother to be so] 12: Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof....14: For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

What does it mean, sin shall not have dominion over you? To be under grace?

Romans 8: 1: *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2: For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

To be carnally minded is to judge after the seeing of the eye, is death--only Christ knows the heart of your brethren--you only know the carnal appearance. To be spiritually minded is to know, your brother is Christ's servant, "to his own master he standeth, to his own master he falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand."

Galatians 5: 13: For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. 14: For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 15: But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

Walking after the law of sin and death, the letter of the law, is to walk after that lust within us, to bite and devour. Now catch these next two verses.

Galatians 5: 16: *This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

You will not fulfill that lust to usurp authority, to condemn, to bite and devour, when you walk in the Spirit because here is what we know about ourselves and our brethren.

Galatians 5: 17: For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

When we walk in the Spirit, we are keenly aware that no believer can do the things perfectly as he would like. We know it about ourselves and our brethren. By convincing us of that, the Holy Spirit bridles our tongue from that condemning, evil speaking. And our Redeemer refreshes us to know this:

Galatians 5: 18: But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Illustration: Great care setting bones.

So rather than speak evil of our brethren, you who are spiritual--who walk after the Spirit, the rule of faith in Christ--take great care and tenderness with a brother like a doctor would set the broken bones which are out of joint. That is what is said here:

Galatians 6: 1: Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. 2: Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. 3: For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

Now let's answer James last question:

James 4: 12: There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another? (Romans 14)

Consider thyself. Are you without sin? Are you able to put away your own sin? Not only is Christ the Master over our brethren and able to save and destroy that which would harm us, but remember this as well:

Romans 14: 10: But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11: For it is written, *As I live*, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. 12: So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. 13: Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way. 14: I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. 15: But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. 16: Let not then your good be evil spoken of: 17: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. 18: For he that in these things serveth Christ *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men. 19: Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.