

Pt 13 James Series (Faith Made Perfect) – Life is a Vapour

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney 05-09-2018

± James 4:13-17

13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

14 Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

15 For that ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin.

As we finish out chapter 4 of our studies, it appears that James starts an entirely new thought. He is addressing issues that were facing the early Church of his day. That's not to say this isn't for us, because even after 2,000 years the Church has much to learn from that 1st Century Church.

13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

So, the problem James is addressing is boasting about future endeavors. He's not talking about prophecy in the sense of Biblical prophecy, he is talking about our everyday routines and expectations. The way James addresses this, it appears there was a problem with folks bragging about how they would do this and that and it would result in this outcome or that outcome, as if they could look ahead and know what was going to happen.

I'm not racial profiling these folks but the truth is Jews have a very good business sense. They know how to make deals and get the best bang for their buck. They like to bargain and always feel that they come out on top.

Some of the wealthiest men in the world are Jewish. I'm going to give you a list of wealthy men. Some of them you will recognize but some you will not.

1. Larry Ellison, founder of Oracle Corporation – According to Forbes Magazine, he is the wealthiest Jew in the world and the fifth wealthiest person alive. His net worth is 54.2 billion dollars.
2. Michael Bloomberg, former mayor of New York City is the 14th wealthiest person in the world with a net worth of \$35.5 billion dollars.
3. Mark Zuckerberg, creator of Facebook is the 16th wealthiest person in the world with a net worth of 33.4 billion dollars.
4. Sheldon Adelson, casino owner – 31.4 billion dollars.
5. Sergey Brin and Larry Page, co-founders of Google, 29.2 billion.
6. George Soros, an investor – worth 24.2 billion.
7. Carl Icahn, an investor – worth 23.5 billion.
8. Len Blavatnik, an investor – worth 20.2 billion.
9. Michael Dell, founder of Dell computers – worth 19.2 billion.

And we could keep going and going with wealthy Jewish business owners such as:

- Lyman Bloomingdale, founder of Bloomingdales dept. store.
- Arthur Blank, co-founder of Home Depot.
- Jefferey Brotman, co-founder of Costco
- Leonard Feinstein, founder of Bed Bath and Beyond

A majority of the big-name retail stores are founded and owned by Jews. They have a very good business sense.

So, when James mentions these Jews in the early Church bragging about going out into the city and staying for a year buying, selling, and making lots of money, he's hitting them with something they are guilty of – relying upon self.

James is warning against self-confidence. He's not teaching against good business practice, but he is teaching against leaving God out of your plans. Man thinks he is so smart. He thinks he has it all figured out. Friends, without God we wouldn't even know how to get in out of the rain.

14 Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

James reminds them that they don't know what tomorrow holds.

I was texting with my mother the other night and we were discussing a certain man that we know that just recently passed away. Neither of us had heard anything about him being bad off. I got on his Facebook page and saw he was just posting updates just three days before he died and nothing was mentioned about being sick or anything. One day he's living and enjoying life and the next his life is gone. My dad had a saying he used to say and please forgive me if this sounds bad but I think of it often. Whenever somebody died he would say, "**there's people dying that hasn't ever died before.**" It's the truth isn't it?

The fact is we know not what shall be on the morrow. The Bible says **Hebrews 9:27** And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

James goes on to say in **verse 14**; "*For what is your life?* And then he answered it; "**It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.**"

Have you ever got up on a cold morning, walked outside and breathed and saw that mist rise up and then disappear? My sisters and I used to stand at the end of the driveway on those cold fall and winter mornings waiting on the school bus and we would say "can you see your breath?" And we would breath into the air and cause it to stream up. That is a vapor. A vapor is a mist.

Back when I had time to fish, me and dad liked to get up very early in the morning while it was still dark so we could be in the boat on Douglas or Cherokee lake as the sun came up. If you've ever been there you know what I'm talking about. As that sun would start coming up there would be a mist rising up off the water. We would throw our lures out into that mist and try to catch a big bass that was hiding out underneath the water. But as that sun kept rising that mist, or vapors would just vanish away. One minute they were there and the next minute they were gone.

That's what James is trying to convey to us about our life. One minute you are a living breathing soul with life in your body and the next that life is gone just like a vapour or mist that disappears.

Over in the Book of Ephesians the Apostle Paul says this: **Ephesians 5:15-16: See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.**

One thing is for sure, this life is very brief. We don't know how long we will be here but while we are we don't need to be wasting our lives away.

If you look in the obituaries you will find people in there that had no clue earlier this week that they would be dead. I looked in there yesterday and there were people ranging from their 20s all the way up to their 90s. Many in their 40s and 50s.

Friends, we don't know what tomorrow holds. This may very well be the last time we are here together as a church body. I'm not trying to be morbid but there may be someone here tonight that the Lord has already decided to call home. It may be me. We are not guaranteed another day, another hour, another minute, or even another second.

Job understood just how short life was, he said in **Job 7:6**: *My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope.*

Then in **Job 7:9** he says: *As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more.*

You may have a family member or a friend that tonight is their last night on earth. There may be someone that you have a grudge against or hatred in your heart toward. This may be the last night you have the chance to make things right with them.

That lost person that you have been putting off talking to about Jesus, this could be their last night on earth.

15 *For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.*

James says that instead of boasting about what we are going to do tomorrow, that we should instead say, *"If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."*

This is where the saying "**Lord willing**" comes from. I'm always very aware of when I write things down about my future plans that I make sure and put in parenthesis, "**Lord willing**." I have no idea what the future holds. I'm not so arrogant to think that I can put a time table or a limitation on God. Or that I have anything in me to boast about.

16 *But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.*

It's not just good practice that we say "**Lord willing**" but it is the right thing to do. James says when we boast and leave the Lord out of our plans that it is evil. In other words, it is sinful to boast about what we are going to do as if we have any control over it.

17 *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*

Just in case we didn't get it when it called it "evil," he lets us know that since we know it's evil and we do it anyway that we are sinning.

I think we sometimes forget that sinning isn't just when we do something wrong, but it is also when we do not do what is right.

I think we can all say we've been guilty of not doing the right thing when we knew better.

In the context of our Scripture tonight I believe James is specifically meaning if we know we are not to brag about tomorrow and the things we will do but we go ahead and do it anyway then we are sinning against God.

We find this same principal being taught by the Lord Jesus over in the Gospel of **Luke 12:43-48**

43 *Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.*

44 *Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.*

45 *But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;*

46 *The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.*

47 *And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.*

48 *But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.*

Knowledge of something makes you responsible.

If we see a baby do something wrong we correct them but we do not hold them responsible for their actions because they don't know any better.

But, when you reach an age of understanding and you know better but do it anyway, then you become responsible for your actions.

Therefore if we know to do right but we don't do it then we are responsible for our own actions, or our lack of action.

I know this has been a rather short lesson tonight but I didn't want to get into Chapter 5 yet. So, Lord willing.... We will begin Chapter 5 next Wednesday and I believe we will only have 3 more studies in this sermon series in the Book of James and then we will start something else.

† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version