

James 4:1-10, “More Grace”

Sunday 29th October 2023

James takes us into his doctor’s practice to diagnose a serious illness. We may not have it, but we need to know the symptoms so we know what to do in the future, and so we can help others.



Symptoms

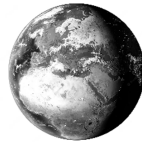
Quarrels

Unanswered prayer

Both happen when people are driven by the pursuit of pleasure.

Sickness

Friendship with the world. “The world”, not planet earth, but human society in rebellion, without reference to God and his priorities.

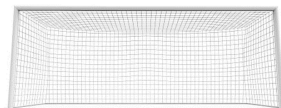


Spiritual adultery – the background is in the OT. In OT and NT the people of God are likened to his bride. OT prophets likened unfaithfulness to God to being unfaithful in our marriage to God.

We live out these split loyalties in two ways. (i) We compartmentalise, devoted to God while we’re at church and pursuing our own interests at other times. (ii) We present two versions of ourselves – one to the Christians we know, and another “me” to those who know us elsewhere.

Two effects on our relationship with God

Enmity. Being a traitor is worse than being on the other team.



Jealousy. Often a bad quality, but not if you’re protecting something precious. God’s Spirit longs for your loyalty and devotion.

Solution

“More grace”

Being a Christian is not something we get one shot at, then if we make big mistakes we’re out. Grace is followed by “more grace”. We cannot exhaust the reservoir of God’s grace.

There is a cure for this sickness. We just need to take it.

Steps to Take

Weep (verse 9).

Christians often told to be joyful. But there are seasons when something different is required.

[Note: There is another perspective in Nehemiah 8:9-12. It needs wisdom to consider when we’re in Nehemiah 8 territory and when we’re in James 4 territory. But our modern culture is flippant and prizes happiness, so we’re more likely to assume wrongly that genuine sorrow is out of place.]

We need to re-learn real sorrow for our sins. Actual tears may not be out of place.



Wash (verses 7-8).

Hands (behaviour) – still grace, changes the way we live

Hearts (attitudes / priorities) – behaviour is just on the surface

As we wash, two things happen

The devil flees

God draws near (instinct is to suspect he’ll stay at a distance).

In context, precious promises for compromised Christians.

Prognosis

The cure has a 100% success rate. Verse 10.

⇒ For the first time, or coming back, we all need God’s grace.



100

James 4:1-10

29/10/23

Describing split bytwee. G + world. J + bit on side

How does one out. Key is J's word: double-minded.

- Compartmentalise. Church. Me time.

- Two versions of me. Church me. Me "his notes see."

Tend think flitting w. life of pleasure minor. Isn't.

2 effects on relp with G

(i) **Enmity** Set ourselves against. Tender worse than other.

Football. own goal worse than goal for other team.

But imagine deliberate own goal for goalie.

Occupied France. Hated G. occupier. Really hated Follabe.

(ii) **Jealousy**. Bad if want what's yours.

Good if protective what's yours - good in marriage!

G's sp. longs for your loyalty + devotion.

3. Solution

V.6 More grace.

Tend think: One shot @ being tions.

(3)

James 4:1-10

29/10/23

Many medics in church.

Today → J's Dr Surgery as diagnoses serious illness.

[J's doctors prob builder. But body showing Dr's skill]

Note: "V tions have this sickness. But V need know about

know symptoms heart attack → call 999 immediately.

Important to know, whether not having h.a. while explained.

Parents - know symptoms childhood illnesses, like meningitis
→ get help.

Need hear J says → recognise in us in future

→ look after brother + sister

→ hear for us (some of us)

1. Symptoms

- Quarrels. **v.1-2b**. Church marked bitter squabbles.

Fight + Grapple. Not literal murder! But bitterness → murder.

- Unanswered Prayer. **v.2c-3** 2 reasons (i) "I pray
(can't bothered / know G not pleased w. requests). (ii) Wrong
motive - driven by (1) desire personal pleasure

James 4:1-10

29/10/23

Need to re-learn genuine sorrow for our sin.

+ if really serious, actual tears + out of place

(iii) Wash

v.7-8.

Apply washing in 2 places

⊖ Hands (Behaviour).

"earn G's restoration. (All ask "more grace")

But "seeking that grace needs such what's gone wrong

⊖ Hearts (Attitude / Priorities)

"Behaviour is just on surface. Heart problem underlies

Then double washing has impact in 2 directions.

→ Devil Flees **v.7b**

Like J in Wilderness - say NO to D's value + priorities

→ G Draws Near **v.8a**

Close near to G. May expect him to turn his back

But promise is there - he will come near to you

(5)

- 2 symptoms connected
- Both fueled by people living for pleasure / enjoyment

2. Sickness

Described in 2 ways **V.4-5**

(i) Friendship w. World

- World, ≠ planet earth (beautiful ~ **Attenborough**)
- ≠ all people
- = human society, rebelling against G
- Either spit & try overthrow him
- or live as tho G not there - priorities "matter"
- Friendship, ≠ "having friends with 'in"
- = siding with / aligning. = "I'm with them"
- "They're my tribe".

(ii) Spiritual Adultery **V.4a**

- Second big shock - murder, adultery!
- Backgd in OT: Relp G + ppl ~ marriage
- Get NT - Chvd = bride of Christ
- OT prophets - when ppl run after gods ≡ adultery.
- (Hosea - marry prostitute as visual aid)

Become tins - grace → forgiveness. Clean slate

Small mistakes - get forgiven

Blurt big time → out!

No! **He gives vs more grace.**

Just G of grace. G of more grace

Speak especially → feel done something unforgivable since become tins...

Can never exhaust reservoir of G's grace

☞ Cure for this sickness. Just need to take it. →

4. Steps to Take

☞ 2 steps - Weep Wash

(i) Weep

V.9.

Tins commanded to be joyful

Never get Lee for I: "Be said in L always. Say again - sad."

But ☞ seasons something diff required. This is one of them

Some ppl, never serious abt anything, joke everything off

(4) → Time to sober up

Both directions get taken out Context.

general Command to say 'No' to devil tho'll run

invites Gne near G in prayer / worship.

In context, Wonderful promises

two-timing, compromised tins, can know

devil take flight + G draw near, if weep + wash

Prognosis?

Or: What's success rate for this treatment?

100%. **V.10.**

Conc?

Hope enjoyed our trip → Dr J Consulting room.

↑ tins: 1. Don't hold off becoming tins: fee not ready to make it work. tins fail. Grace you start with those for effects

2. How you start is same way we Gne back

(i) Invitation of grace (ii) weep (iii) wash (iv) be lifted up

↑ tins: Store this up. Who knows when you might need this.

Or when this allows you lovingly help b or s if they go here

Maybe for some - this is for you, today. You are compromised

Our J's diagnosis. **(G) Then V.10**