



James

How to Live the Christian Life!

Living in Humility

James 4:1-10

Message #8 of 12 – S665

Sermon given on November 29, 2015



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

Living in Humility

James 4:1-10

Opening Comments

- Turn to **James 4**
- Today, we continue our series through the letter from James **How to Live the Christian Life**
- Before we start this morning, would like you to think about something
- If you could ask God for just one thing, what would it be?
- Take a moment and think about that
- If you are able and willing to do so, please stand as we read today's text as a sign of reverence for God's Word
- Read **James 4:1-10**
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Living in Humility**
- When I asked you to think about what you wanted from God, I am guessing that most of you didn't think of grace
- Grace is the unmerited favor of God
- In this message we are going to see three things about grace
- First, what happens when it is absent from the lives of believers
- Second, what our attitude should be toward the grace of God
- Third, how we appropriate the grace of God
- By the end of this message, I am hoping to change the way you think about what you ask God for
- Let's get into our text
- Our first point – **The Absence of Grace**
- **James 4:1a**
- Remember, James is writing to the church – these are Christians he is writing to
- 'wars and fights' – going on in the church
- In the last chapter, told us that they had a problem with their tongue

- And then there was question as to the source of their wisdom
- Whatever was going on in this church, it was not good
- James tells them what the problem is
- **James 4:1b**
- The problem is that there was a war going on in their members
- He is not saying there was a war in the church membership
- But each person had a war going on within themselves
- And because it was going on inside them, it was coming out in their relationships with others
- There is a problem with conflicting desires **Galatians 5:16-17**
Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.
- When that internal conflict is coming out, it is a sign that the flesh is winning
- Where the Spirit is in control there is peace inside, that then comes out for others to see
- James describes the symptoms
- **James 4:2**
- This is the paradox of sin – it is the flesh crying out for more, but it is never enough
- In 1960, the movie Little Shop of Horrors, not the Rick Moranis version, included a flesh eating plant constantly said, ‘Feed me!’
- Once you start feeding your flesh sin, it will never be satisfied
- ‘do not have’ – what will satisfy you – ‘because you do not ask’ – God
- One of the greatest problems of our prayer life is that we do not pray!
- But even when we do, we do it wrong
- **James 4:3**
- Our pleasure is not an acceptable motive for prayer
- My dream car is a silver 1963 split-window, stingray Corvette
- I don’t ask God to give me one
- If I had one, it would be solely for my pleasure
- Some might say, if you don’t ask for it, you won’t get it
- Really? My God knows my heart **Psalm 84:11**

For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield; the LORD will give grace and glory; no good *thing* will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.

- If you are asking for the wrong thing, God won't give it to you
- When our praying is wrong, our whole Christian life is wrong
- What we need is more grace
- Second point – **Getting more Grace**
- **James 4:4-5**
- James is using very strong language here to identify what the problem is in the church
- The people in the church loved the world more than they loved God
- This was showing up as selfish desires for pleasure that caused conflicts with other people in the church
- By using the sin of adultery as his illustration, James is reminding them of their relationship to God
- The church is betrothed to God
- Loving the world is an act of unfaithfulness – it is cheating on God
- Don't miss this because it is absolutely crucial
- If you as a Christian, are unfaithful to God, and love the world, you have made yourself an enemy of God, and in this life He will treat you as an enemy
- You might still make it to heaven, but you're not going to enjoy the trip
- The Spirit inside you 'yearns jealously' = intolerant of unfaithfulness
- This jealousy is motivated by a pure love for us
- I am jealous for my wife's love and affections – I will jealously guard them and be grieved if she were to be unfaithful
- People fall in love with the world because they believe it will give them the 'more' that they are desperate for
- But the world only disappoints – But God promises a 'more' that never disappoints
- **James 4:6a**
- We don't need more of what the world offers, we need more grace
- Grace = the unmerited favor of God **R. Kent Hughes**
God's gracious supply to live as we ought in a fallen world.

- God gives us what we need, when we need it, so that we can live in this messed up world
 - God's grace is given to overcome our personal weaknesses
 - God has an endless supply of more grace
 - If you are stubborn – love to argue – more grace
 - Hard-headed – listen to no one – more grace
 - Harboring bitterness or cherished hatreds, dining at the devil's table – more grace
 - Facing insurmountable obstacles – terminal illness, chronic pain, death, divorce, or failure – more grace
 - Dealing with the impossible – staying in a difficult marriage, dealing with rebellious children, struggles at work – more grace
 - There is always more grace
 - But, there is a condition to getting more grace
 - **James 4:6b**
 - The problem with the people described in verses 1 to 5 was pride
 - Selfish desires is a sign of pride – God resists the proud
 - 'but gives grace to the humble' – the key to getting more grace is humility
 - Point three – **The Gravity of Grace**
 - If I take this bottle of water and pour it out, which way will the water flow? Down, right? Why? Gravity
 - God's grace is like a river, it flows down, it seeks the lowest point possible – it seeks the humble
 - James in the next few verses gives us several keys to humility
 - We only have time to touch on them, though each of them deserves a study of its own
 - **James 4:7**
 - First – 'submit to God' – to grow in humility, we must be willing to yield our will to God's – call Jesus Lord and mean it
 - Second – 'Resist the devil...'
 - Because of the Holy Spirit within us, we have the power in the name of Christ to put Satan and his armies to flight **Ephesians 6:10-12**
- Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the**

devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

- Paul goes on in that text to describe the armor
- Submit to God, resist the devil – next three
- **James 4:8**
- Third – ‘Draw near to God...’ this is a call to believing prayer and faith-filled worship
- No matter how far we might feel from God, He is always right there
- If you make any effort to draw near to Him, which you can only do with the grace He has already given you, He will draw near and give you more grace
- Fourth – ‘cleanse your hands...’ – stop sinning, stop acting out your selfish desires
- Fifth – ‘purify your hearts’ – this is dealing with the inner person
- ‘double-minded’ – dual allegiance – to God and to the world
- **James 4:9**
- Sixth - This is a call to true repentance – not just being bothered because you got caught
- But broken because you sinned against the God who loves you
- Last one
- **James 4:10**
- James through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit exhorts us to ‘humble yourselves’
- Not going to ask for a show of hands, guessing many have prayed and asked for God to humble to them
- That might be a wrong prayer = ‘God, I am unwilling to obey your command to humble myself, you need to send some pain and suffering into my life, to break me and make me humble’
- Better prayer, ‘God, give me more grace so that I can be more humble’
- Humility is saying to God, and meaning it, ‘Whatever you want, wherever you want, whenever you want, and however you want, in all areas of your life’
- One last image I want to leave you with

- God's grace flows like a river, it flows down to the humble
- Your relation to the flow of the river of God's grace will determine how much 'more grace' you experience
- Stand on fireplace – not in river – no grace – except what is splashed on you – living your own life – enemy of God
- Stick a toe in, receive Christ, feels nice – still living your way
- Sit down on edge – back to the world, but still connected to it – holding back parts of your life from God
- Stand in the flow – God's grace moving around you, but you are still doing it your way
- Humble yourself – lay down in the flow of God's grace
- Let it take you where God wants you to go
- Only then are you living the Christian life the way it is supposed to be lived
- James says, if you humble yourself – God will lift you up
- Up into His blessings, to happiness, fulfillment, joy, peace, hope
- The goodness of God is experienced most fully as we humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord
- We don't need the 'more' that the world offers, what we need is 'more grace'
- Started saying if you could ask for God for one thing – the one thing that gives you the most is 'more grace' – ask for 'more grace'
- Amen
- **Pray**

May the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever.

Amen. Hebrews 13:20-21

He giveth more grace – Annie Flint

1. He giveth more grace as our burdens grow greater,
He sendeth more strength as our labors increase;
To added afflictions He addeth His mercy,
To multiplied trials He multiplies peace.
2. When we have exhausted our store of endurance,
When our strength has failed ere the day is half done,

11/29/2015

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6

When we reach the end of our hoarded resources
Our Father's full giving is only begun.

3. Fear not that thy need shall exceed His provision,
Our God ever yearns His resources to share;
Lean hard on the arm everlasting, availing;
The Father both thee and thy load will upbear.
4. His love has no limits, His grace has no measure,
His power no boundary known unto men;
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.