

## REVIEW

- If you recall from last week, James is concerned with Justice and Hypocrisy [James]
  - He offers us a solution to this (or protection against) anchored in faith
- He does this by looking at the heart of judgment
  - Begins it in the idea of judging others, but then quickly expands it to the roots of our judgment. Right at the heart of our judgment: **control**.
  - We take the role of God and declaring what is right and wrong (good/evil)
  - “Why would we want to pick up the residue of the original sin”
- James lays out two practical examples of this concern - framed around money.
  - (1) Offers a solution [4:13-17] (2) Presents what the alternative looks like [5:1-6]
  - Solution: ask, “What is the lords will?”
    - ❖ To do otherwise is self-worship (**4:15-17**) >> sin of omission
  - Alternative: Today we are going to look at the alternative to the solution
    - ❖ Again, the vehicle that James uses (money) comes right out of **Unholy Trinity (money, sex, power) – rival Gods** (earlier this summer)

## Solution / Alternative

- Let’s read the examples James gives us. They both draw attention by James’ writing: “**come now**;” [age nun: “go to now”] “now look here”

### James 4:13-17

- “If the Lord wills” is James’ key to us there.
- Life is a mist – you are not in the control seat. Dial back your judgmental heart
- Seek the Lord’s will (example James uses business - your job - investments)
  - ❖ Really, this applies to all things. And I see it as the pinnacle of James practicality here
- The second ‘**come now**’ – ratchet it up a bit.

### James 5:1-6

- The alternative James puts forward here looks a lot like the Lord’s judgment.
- James’ head nod to some complex ideas – and leaves it there on the table.
  - ❖ Kind of a doozy too.
- “Day of Slaughter” (v.5b)
  - Language of OT prophets - warning
  - **Job 13:28-14:4**, But with the hope of **Isa 30:1, 18-25**, Jer 12:3, Rev 19:17 [NIV]
    - ❖ Extreme language, but also tying together the brevity evanescence of v.14 & v.2

- Temporary nature of the world: Mist, Corrosion
  - ❖ Human condition of “being” and intense Imagery of ‘becoming;’
  - ❖ The corroding of Wealth and Flesh ...
    - The result of us being gods of our life.
- This really is the answer to the age-old question of ‘why do the unrighteous prosper?’
  - ❖ It is temporary – even more so, it is slavery to the idol.
    - Not fulfilling, in a sense of true human need.
- Here is *faith in action!* But, the **opposite**. Faith in self. **Sin is a witness against faith**
  - All these practical examples root from us acting as judge (as God)
  - Not seeking God for guidance. >> Sin of omission from 4:16-17
- There right in between the brevity of wealth and the judgment day of God is James deep concern for justice.
  - See the perspective? If you only understood how temporary this world is, you would not be treating God’s most awesome creations (Imago Dei) in the way you do.
  - Crying out >> echoes of the injustice of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19)
 

**Prov 14:31** The one who oppresses the poor insults his Creator, but whoever shows favor to the needy honors him.
- Remember James draws heavily on Matthew.
- Here is it in Jesus words:
 

**Matt 6:19-24**

**19** “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, **20** but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

**22** “The **eye** is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, **23** but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

**24** “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and **money** [(G3126) mammon].
- Personification of riches
  - Frederic Watts (1885)
    - ❖ Mammon [Mammon]
  - The word ‘Money,’ even comes from a
  - *Moneta*, place for coining money; a title or surname of the Roman goddess Juno, near whose temple on the Capitoline Hill
    - ❖ Protector of the state: Mother to Mars (god of war), Daughter to Saturn (god of time)

- Worshiping an idol: No wonder the idea becomes personified as a demon
  - ❖ The point of “the eye” in this
  - ❖ Seek first the kingdom, (**Matt 6:25-34**)
  - ❖ Otherwise, everything we see is tainted, jaundice.
    - Seeing through the Eyes of God, or Eyes of Mammon
  
- Evil; sure paints an evil picture of money.
 

**1Tim 6:6-10** Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment, **7** for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. **8** But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. **9** But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. **10** For the **love of money** is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.
- *Lotto story* – prayed earnestly – does this make me evil? [Lotto]
  - Washington Post: 10% go bankrupt
  - Berkley Study: Positive and Neg. stories. Seems like it amplifies lifestyle.
    - ❖ We somehow equate it to happiness, don’t we?
    - ❖ Without scrutiny, money is recognized as the medium of exchange for everything
  
- **Philosophy** of money . . .What is money?
- **Evil?** Somewhat innocuous really. Totally inanimate. Especially now – money is nearly entirely ethereal
  - (1) a medium of exchange, (2) a unit of **account**, and (3) a store of **value**. (variability)
  - C-M-C vs. M-C-M (Marx criticism of capitalism – skews the motives, unnatural/unhealthy)
    - ❖ Anthropology suggests money was developed to **measure debt**, not exchange.
    - ❖ Written records of debts pre-dates written stories. (Epic of Gilgamesh ~2100BC)
  - **\*\*** “Everything is worth what its purchaser will pay for it” – Publiclius Syrus (100BC)
  - Problems come when it becomes the measure of worth; time, injury, life
    - ❖ And, to Marx credit, it becomes the primary motive.
    - ❖ Immanuel Kant argued actions only have moral worth if they are for moral motive
    - ❖ Adam Smith (Wealth of Nations) mutual good in exchange
    - ❖ John Wesley notes the positive nature of hard work and necessary motives
  
- Probably better seen as balance.
  - (1 Cor 10:23) all things permissible, but not beneficial (nor edifying)
  - Food is good, but can be abused. Sex is good, greatly abused. Leadership is necc. and abused. All creation was intended for good and glorification, and corrupts.
- See the brilliance of the **Year of Jubilee**
  - Every 7 years all debts are cleared.
    - ❖ A reset of value in a sense. Ground zero again. No generational baggage (grace)
    - ❖ A reminder of origins of sustenance.

- “To the secular, nothing is spiritual; and to the spiritual, nothing is secular: No servant *can* serve two Masters” – Alfred Edersheim (Jewish convert, 1820-1889)
- Here Jesus shares with us the only way to balance this dangerous tool.
  - Matt 16:23-26** And Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. **24** Again I tell you, it is easier for a **camel to go through the eye of a needle** than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” **25** When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?” **26** But Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but **with God all things are possible.**”
- Without Christ – I can do nothing. (**Jn 15:5-8**)
- The unbalance of this tool – makes his church rotten (to our chagrin and God’s sorrow).
  - It seems that it is a tool to empower, but true power comes from Christ!
  - Monetary power is a counterfeit to true human purpose and meaning.
    - ❖ Perspective: God’s eyes or Mammon’s eyes

## CHURCH and US

- Samuel Arthur Bent (*Familiar Short Sayings of Great Men*. 1887.)
- Aquinas is invited to visit Pope Innocent II. [Mid 1200 (11th C.)] Upon entering his presence, he sees a large sum of money spread out in front of him. The Pope observed, “You see, the Church is no longer in that age in which she said, ‘Silver and gold have I none.’” (Acts 3:6)
- “True, Holy Father,” replied Aquinas; “neither can she - any more - say to the lame, ‘Rise up and walk.’”
  - Innocent II, died in 1143 (Innocent V, only served in papacy 5mo.)
  - Aquinas born in 1225-1274
- “A poor Church for the poor” – **Francis Assisi** (1181-1226) [Francis]
  - Soldier, POW for a year. Released seriously ill.
  - Dedicated himself to solitude and prayer – to discern God’s will for him.
  - “Go, Francis, and repair my house which, as you see, is well-nigh in ruins.”
  - Struggles with this – now sure how to act it out.
  - Finally (**Matt 10:7-11**) starts the order of Franciscan monks (1210) – Innocent III
    - ❖ Franciscan rule: Walk in Jesus footsteps – Friars (traveling monks)
    - ❖ Stigmata (marks of Christ) – St. Bonaventure & others (paint 1230) [Stigmata]

## US \*\*

- So, what are we being told? We should all give up everything and be Friars?
  - Patriarchs were wealthy, Job was wealthy.
  - Resources – Trust – Faith (Abram believed – and it was counted to him as Righteousness)
- Ref. Parable of the dishonest manager (Lk 16:9-13) – Rival Gods

**Luke 16:8-9** The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light. **9** And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

- Shrewd: Wise (same words as Matt 10:16)
  - "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves."
- Two things: (1) Seek the Lord (**4:15**) – as if nothing else matters  
(2) Be patient ...

**James 5:7** Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains.

**8** You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

- The curse of modernity – “tyranny of the urgent”
  - ❖ Conspiracy to distract, slowly replacing our priority from serving Christ to self-agenda
  - ❖ If there is a conspiracy I buy into, it is a demonic conspiracy to distract humanity
    - General Mammon’s of Satan’s secret army
    - Clandestine agents, whispering to the heart of human kind - the false value of all the things of this world
- I can’t fight that battle, even in the simplest of form.
  - *Story about buying vehicles*
- **Matt 16:26** “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”
- Bring it back to James. Read again **James 4:11 – 5:6**
  - **Desire** for Justice
  - **Protect** yourself from be Judgmental
  - Acting out a real **Faith**
  - Trust in the Lord. Continually walking with Jesus.

**Prov 30:7-9**

**7** Two things I ask of you; deny them not to me before I die:

**8** Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, **9** lest I be full and deny you and say, “Who is the LORD?” or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God.

**PRAY**