

Answers to Sermon Notes

“The Test of Tomorrow”

James 4:13-17

10/30/22

- 1) We began our study by engaging James’ exhortation, “Count it all **joy**, my brothers, when you face **trials** of many kinds.”
 - a) For, this is the way that God builds, strengthens and refines our **faith**, leading us to the **crown** of life.
 - i) The only alternative to this was to follow our **sinful** desires/tendencies, which will lead to **death**.
 - ii) This led to the series title: **Choose** Faith.
- 2) We then saw that our faith needed to be placed not simply, “in **God**,” or, “in the **love/grace/power**/etc. of God,” but specifically, “in the **word** of God.”
 - a) For, through it alone God has chosen to **sufficiently** reveal himself for our **salvation**.
 - i) Both for our **entry** into faith but also for the **journey**.
 - b) Choosing **faith**, then, means choosing to **follow** what God’s word **tells** us.
 - i) Receiving with **meekness** the implanted word, which can save our souls, rather than **arguing** with it.
- 3) The **balance** of the letter of James, then, consists of a **series** of examples.
 - a) The test of **partiality**.
 - b) The test of **works**.
 - c) The **test** of the **tongue**.
 - d) The test of **wisdom**.
 - e) The test of **worldliness**.
 - f) Today we look at the test of **tomorrow**.
- 4) There are three main ways in which the **prospect** of tomorrow creates a **test** for us.
 - a) **Presuming** on the **coming** of tomorrow.
 - i) No matter how **old** we are, none of us have ever experienced a day when tomorrow **didn’t come**.
 - (1) One might think that this fact would **mitigate** some of our **guilt** regarding this test of tomorrow.
 - (a) But, James doesn’t seem to **see** it that way.
 - (b) Rather, in our presuming on tomorrow James already sees what is **going wrong** inside us.
 - ii) All right **thinking** about tomorrow begins with:
 - (1) A deep awareness of our **brevity** and (vs. 14)
 - (2) A deep awareness of our ongoing **dependence** on the **willing favor** of God. (vs. 15)
 - iii) This is an important part of the doctrine of the **Providence** of God. (**Lord’s Day 10**)
 - iv) Only when we live with a conscious recognition that every **breath** is a **gift** from God will we be careful to **use** every breath for his **purposes**. (**Psalm 90:12**)
 - v) This is why God sometimes gives us **near death** experiences.
 - b) **Pirating** the **contents** of tomorrow.
 - i) When we **presume** on the coming of tomorrow we soon begin to **claim** it for ourselves.
 - (1) Just as **pirates** enjoyed the good things of life by **taking** what did not belong to them, so too do we when we claim tomorrow for our own **plans** and **pleasures**.
 - ii) All right **planning** regarding tomorrow grows from a deep understanding that he who **dispenses** our breaths one at a time has his own **plans** for how they are **used**.

- (1) This **doesn't mean** we cannot make plans for tomorrow.
 - (2) But, it does mean that we must **preface** them with, "If the Lord **wills**, we will **live** and..."
 - (a) By prefacing our plans for **tomorrow** in this way:
 - (i) it changes the way we live **today**.
 - (ii) it serves as a **check** on the **kinds** of things we are planning.
 - (iii) it **testifies** to those **around** us.
 1. James instructs us on what we should **say**, not just how we should **think**.
 - a. "**Every breath** I am given comes one by one as a **gift** of God almighty."
 - b. "When I say that my life **belongs** to him, I mean every **moment** of it."
 - c. "Therefore, I will only **plan** what I believe he would likely **approve**."
 - d. "But, my calendar is always **written** in **pencil**."
 - iii) Choosing not to preface our plans, then, is a **demonstration** of **arrogance**.
 - (1) Whether these things don't ever **occur** to you or whether they do and you **continue** anyway.
- c) **Panting** for the **comforts** of tomorrow.
 - i) When we have claimed tomorrow for our own plans and pleasures our **hearts** become **set** on the things of earth. (Matthew 6:21)
 - (1) While it is not wrong to **desire** God's good gifts for this life (marriage, **children**, grandchildren, satisfying work, **moments** to enjoy, etc.) these too must always be prefaced with, "If the Lord **wills**, we will live and..." otherwise we begin living for the **gifts** rather than the **giver**.
 - (2) For, every plan for our **earthly** tomorrows must find its place within his great plan for our **heavenly** tomorrow.
 - (3) Rather than focusing on what we are going to do to be more **comfortable**, we need to tailor our plans toward being more **faithful**.
 - (a) Otherwise, we will be **aiming** our lives **away** from what James has already told us about how God will **lead** us to glory.
 - (i) It's not principally by giving us **comforts**, but by giving us **trials**.
- 5) What **plans** have you made, or are you making, for **tomorrow**?
 - a) Let us not **presume** on the **coming** of tomorrow.
 - i) That we might live **close** to God in each **moment** today.
 - b) Let us not **pirate** the **contents** of tomorrow.
 - i) That we might seek above all **his purposes** for each moment he gives.
 - c) Let us not **pant** for the **comforts** of tomorrow.
 - i) That our **hearts** might not be tied to the things of **this** world, but to the things of the world to **come**.
- 6) Today, James once again holds up the **mirror** of the perfect law that gives **freedom** for us, this time regarding the test of **tomorrow**.
 - a) **How** do you **look**?