

“Steadfast Part 7: Peacemakers” (3-5-23)

Review: We are called to be Steadfast (endure) which produces Maturity and Wholeness

Key Themes: Hearing & Doing, Law of Love, Living Faith, Power of our Words, A Divided Heart

Introduction:

1) We have enough Judges

James 4:11-12 (ESV)

(11) Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. (12) There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

Note: James again addresses relational problems - this time He calls out **speaking evil** against each other - which is just another form of **judging!**

This issue of how we are treating one another is very concerning to James so he returns to it regularly . . .

- Quick to anger and speak out, but slow to listen (1:19-20)
- Showing Partiality and Judging each other (2:1-13)
- Broken Speech - damaging to ourselves & others (Chapter 3)
- Quarrels & Fights - from broken & mis-placed desires (4:1-2)
- Grumbling against each other (coming up in 5:9)

Look again at what we just read from James 4:11-12 . . .

From James 4:11-12

- A. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law & judges the law.
- B. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.
- C. There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy.

James 2:8-9 (ESV)

(8) If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. (9) But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

Note: The Law he is talking about is the Law of Love - and after warning us in chapter 2 that we are breaking the law, he now goes beyond that to say we are now sitting in judgement of the law.

When we speak evil (examples: tearing each other down, judging, and gossip) we are removing ourselves from the law and sitting in judgment.

Personal Example: Abby watching the movie - “I don’t say shut up but there is a girl who does.”

We have become experts at this - finding loopholes in the law that allow us to opt out and sit in judgement. But look back at what James said (points B & C) . . .

From James 4:11-12

- A. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law & judges the law.
- B. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.
- C. There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy.

Note: There is only one Judge who can truly execute judgement - and guess what He prefers to do?

1) We need more Peacemakers

James 3:17-18 (ESV)

(17) But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. (18) And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Note: Wisdom leads us to becoming peacemakers!

A Beautiful Example - The Proverbs 31 woman . . .

Proverbs 31:26 (NKJV)

She opens her mouth with wisdom, And on her tongue is the **law of kindness**.

Note: She has a wisdom that leads to kindness - in fact its a guiding law in her life!

Proverbs 31:30 (ESV)

Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who **fears the LORD** is to be praised.

Note: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom!

- All too often we sit in judgment of each other, because we have first sat in judgment of God
- We have a generation that is holding God accountable to our own standards
- Instead of realizing that if He is God, then we are to be held to His standard!

Sitting in judgment instead of in the fear of the Lord is so easy to fall into . . .

Example: Asbury Revival

Acts 5:34, 38-39 (ESV)

(34) But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while . . . (38) So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; (39) but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!" So they took his advice

Note: Would you rather align with the wisdom of a Pharisee sitting in judgement of the church, or get in the upper room with the church - pursuing God in prayer, waiting for wisdom & empowerment from above?

Jesus shares about this Heavenly blessing when He opens the sermon on the mount . . .

Matthew 5:7-9 (ESV)

(7) "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. (8) "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (9) "Blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they shall be called **sons of God**.

Jesus then expounds on this more - how do we walk out being peacemakers . . .

Matthew 5:43-45 (ESV)

(43) "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' (44) But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, (45) so that you may be **sons of your Father** who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Note: James is telling us to love each other within the church (with our family), and Jesus is saying do this even with your enemies. Sadly all too often there is no real distinction between family, church, and enemies.

Jesus continues . . .

Matthew 5:46-47 (ESV)

(46) For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? (47) And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

Note: Everyone judges who is worthy of their time, attention, love, & respect. But we are called to a higher standard of love. It's the standard of a peacemaker.

Jesus finishes the point with this command . . .

Matthew 5:48 (ESV)

You therefore must be **perfect**, as your **heavenly Father is perfect**.

Note: It's time to grow up - into maturity and become peacemakers like our Father!

2 Corinthians 5:17-19 (ESV)

(17) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (18) All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

Note: The basis of our peacemaking is first rooted in the work Jesus did to bring us peace!

2 Corinthians 5:20-21 (ESV)

(20) Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (21) For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Note: No more judges - but ambassadors & peacemakers

Conclusion: Read James 3:18 - and pray to the Lord of the harvest!

James 3:18 (ESV)

And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Note: As Jesus said - "The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few!"

So let's pray to the Lord of the harvest to raise up laborers!