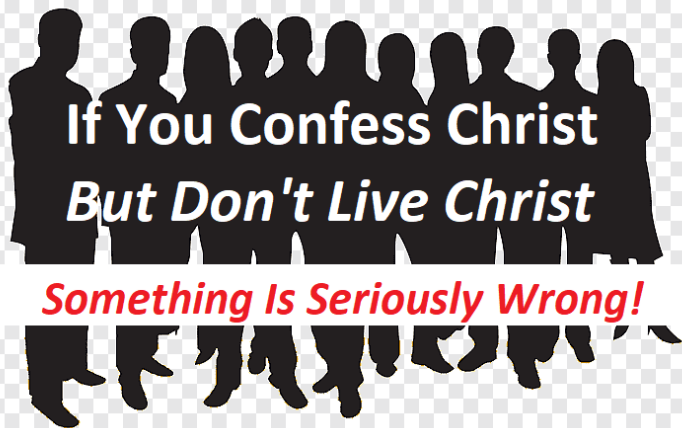


18th Sunday after Pentecost, 17th Sunday after Trinity – 2024

Saturday, 9/21 at 4:00 | Sunday, 9/22 at 9:00



Text: James 3:13 – 4:10 NAS 1995

Introduction: Dear friends: A lot of people **confess Christ** (saying they are Christians), **but they don't live Christ**. What's going on with such people? Here are two options:

- They **CLAIM** to have faith, **but they DON'T**. (Or)
- They are **very immature** in their faith (*like a growing seed that has not yet emerged from the dirt*).

I hope you are *IN CHRIST* and *IT SHOWS!*

If you are not in Christ, it is critical to repent! Don't force yourself to do good things! Instead, be open to God working a true change in you **FROM THE INSIDE OUT!**

Going to **James chapter 3**, he wrote to people who **confessed Christ but lived like the world!** Some believed, *some did not!*

1. **Do What You Know with Humility:** ¹³ **Who among you is wise** [*possessing knowledge*] **and understanding** [*skillful in using what you know*]? **Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.** // What is James

saying? Do you know something? Do you know how to use that something? Then do it with humility!

2. **Be Honest:** ¹⁴ **But if you have bitter jealousy [envy] and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.** // When we have sin in our heart **and deny it**, we “lie against the truth.” Instead, **let us ★confess our sins and ★turn from our sins!**
 - a. Understand the Source: ¹⁵ **This wisdom is not that which comes down from above [from God], but is earthly, natural, demonic.**
 - b. Understand the Results: ¹⁶ **For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.** // LORD, **please forgive us and change us!**
3. **Practice Godly Wisdom:** ¹⁷ **But the wisdom from above is first pure [w/o sin], then peaceable [promoting peace], gentle, reasonable [willing to work with others], full of mercy [compassion] and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy [genuine]. ¹⁸ **And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.** // God, through Jesus, has established peace between us and Himself 😊. Now, as the forgiven children of God, **let us be peacemakers as we ✨speak and ✨live God’s saving truth!****
4. **Avoid Sinful Pleasures:** ^{4:1} **What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures [desires] that wage war in your members? //** When the old nature controls our lives, *then we will have trouble in our lives.* James gave these explanations:
 - a. ² **You lust [have a sinful desire] and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain;**

so you fight and quarrel. // Unrestrained sin on the **inside** leads to horrible sin on the **outside!**

- b. **You do not have because you do not ask.** // That's part of the problem – *not asking*, but there is more.
- c. ³ **You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong [sinful] motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.** // Luke Timothy Johnson made this pertinent comment: “The gift-giving God is here manipulated as a kind of vending machine precisely for purposes of self-gratification” (278).¹

5. **Be Careful Who You Befriend:** ⁴ **You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.** // THINK: God gave His Son to the horrible suffering and death on a cross *for the purpose of making us His own.*

- a. What Is a Proper Response to God? **TOTAL DEVOTION TO GOD!** So, when we make friends with the sinful world, *we are committing spiritual adultery!*
- b. James Continued: ⁵ **Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: “He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us”?** // Why? Because He wants the Spirit to lead us **FROM God-opposing ways TO God-honoring ways!**

6. **Turn From Pride To Humility:** ⁶ **But He gives a greater grace [God extends grace to all; God extends even GREATER GRACE to His holy children]. Therefore it says, “GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.”** // As

¹ Luke Timothy Johnson, The Letter of James (Yale University as assignee from Doubleday, a division of Random House, Inc., 1995), 213.

greatly gifted believers, we **NEVER** want to oppose God, so *let us always* 🡞 *be humble and* 🡞 *trust in God* (see [Luke 14:11](#))!

7. **Go Forward in All these Ways:**

- a. **⁷ Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.** // Let us know God's word, AND THEN *let us do it!* THEN we can resist the devil!
- b. **⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.** **[HOW?]** **Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.** // God is calling us to **stop living a double life** – on one hand, *confessing Christ, and*, on the other hand, *living like the fallen world!* He is calling us to repent – **FROM THE INSIDE OUT!** How to get started? Dive into God's word **with an open mind and an open heart!**
- c. **⁹ Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.** // Let us be filled with proper godly sorrow – *for all the ways we are dishonoring our Great God!*
- d. **¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.**
 - i. Pride trusts in self, ***so let us trust in God!***
 - ii. Let us be humble – **no** bragging, **no** taking credit, ***but giving all the glory to God!***
 - iii. Down the road, *when the time is right*, ***God will exalt us!***

Let Us Pray: Dear Holy Spirit, ➡bring us to Christ, ➡keep us in Christ, and ➡give us proper works that glorify God!

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