



Sunday, May 9, 2010: Epistle of James - "The Real Holy War"

Scripture: James 4:1-10

Speaker: Joe Boot

Sermon Notes:

1. James forces us to consider the whole counsel of God.
2. James has discussed a way of thinking that is of the world (e.g. envy).
3. Verses 1-3 talk about the origin of conflict. In verses 4-10, James gives a plea to come before God in humility.
4. In our day, the social/economic/educational environment is blamed for conflicts and wars. But James says conflict and wars originate from our sinful beings.
5. People also like to point to conspiracies as the cause of wars and factions.
6. Rivalries in the church arise from people's self-serving desires.
7. In verse 2, "kill" is hyperbole for hatred.
8. Covetousness is normally thought of as just a wrong desire. But the 10th commandment indicates that covetousness also includes action (e.g. defrauding someone).
9. Communism, socialism, etc. justifies seizing your neighbour's property. This leads to moral breakdown in other areas.
10. It's impossible to avoid special privilege. Special privilege exists in every society, even egalitarian ones (c.f. Matt. 20:1-16).
11. We are the bride of Christ. As such we must be faithful.
12. You can't serve both God and the world. The world is opposed to God. The world's way of thinking is enmity to God.
13. God expresses good jealousy. It's not out of selfishness; it's so that we may know Him.
14. V6: God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. God gives us grace greater than the rigours of His demands.
15. Contrary to the Greek philosophy which claims that the material world is evil, the Bible tells us that this is God's world, His creation (Psalm 24:1).

16. We don't have to resort to self-flagellation to try to keep ourselves humble. We need to rely on God's grace, not our strength.
17. God will not hear a proud and conceited generation, an adulterous generation.
18. V7: Submit to God. Resist the devil and the world's way of thinking.
19. We need to oppose the culture of victimization. We are not victims, even in the midst of our difficulties.
20. One needs to be under authority in order to have authority.
21. To be a slave of Christ is true freedom. Today, there is increasing enslavement to statism.
22. The devil can fight, but he can't conquer.
23. V8: Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. That's a promise.
24. A holy war is underway in our lives and we are either on one side or another. We are either aiding and abetting the enemy, or God.

Application Questions:

1. Am I demanding my rights and privileges from society, or am I striving for the privilege that comes from being a servant of God?
2. Are my prayers in accordance with God's will and service?
3. According to James, where do conflicts and wars originate from? Where does our society say conflicts arise from? What is wrong with society's explanation? How does it conflict with what the Bible teaches?
4. What subtle crime do political philosophies such as communism and socialism justify? What other moral breakdowns does this lead to? (Give examples)
5. Do I rely on my own strength or God's grace to meet the challenges of my day-to-day Christian life?