

Strife Among Christians

TEXT: James 4:1-12

INTRODUCTION:

- A. THE CHURCH IS THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM!
1. Jesus is the **Prince of Peace** (**Isa. 9:6**).
 2. We have **instruction in peace** from God (**Rom. 12:18; 14:19**).
 3. **Our expectation** in Christ is to live in peace (**Isa. 2:4; Phil. 4:6-7**).
- B. **IMAGINE THE DISMAY OF FINDING THE CHURCH EMBATTLED WITH ITSELF.**
- I. THE PREVALENCE OF STRIFE AMONG CHRISTIANS (vs. 1).**
- A. THE CHURCH DESIGNED BY GOD (**Eph. 3:10-11**) BUILT BY JESUS (**Matt. 16:18**).
IT IS A PERFECT INSTITUTION!
- B. BUT THE CHURCH IS MADE UP OF PEOPLE.
1. Those who are baptized are added to the church (**Acts 2:47**).
 2. Christians still occasionally succumb to the tempter (**Rom. 3:23; 1 John 1:8**).
 3. We are not perfect, but in a state of continual growth (**Phil. 3:12-14**).
- D. OUR HUMANITY SOMETIMES AFFECTS OUR BEHAVIOR IN THE CHURCH.
1. Seen in **James** and in **1 Corinthians** (**James 4:1; 1 Cor. 1:10-11**).
 2. *Must we be tainted by it, too?* (**James 3:10**).
- II. THE ORIGIN OF STRIFE (vs. 1-4) WORLDLINESS.**
- A. JAMES AND PAUL CORRECTLY PLACE THE BLAME (**vs. 1; 3:14-16; 1 Cor. 3:3**).
- B. WHAT LIES AT THE ROOT OF WORLDLY STRIFE IS PERSPECTIVE.
1. What does the Christian seek? (**Col. 3:1-2; 2 Cor. 4:16-18**).
 2. How does the worldly man view these things? (**1 Cor. 2:14-15**).
 3. The perception; there's not enough to go around (**Jas. 4:2**).
Unfriendly competition.
- III. THE FURTHER TRAGEDY OF STRIFE (vs. 3).**
- A. PRAYER IS TORPEDOED (**vs. 3**).
1. An example (**1 Pet. 3:7**)
 2. Imagine the contradiction (**James 3:9-10**).
- B. A GREATER ENEMY – GOD! (**vs. 4-5**).
1. Spiritual adultery – Friendship of the world (**vs. 4**).
 2. Where is our loyalty? What comes first? (**Matt. 6:24; 1 John 2:15**).
- C. STRIFE IS OPPOSITE WHAT GOD PLANNED FOR THE CHURCH (**James 4:5**).
- IV. SUBMISSION IS OUR MISSION (vs. 6-10).**
- A. GOD GIVES US STRENGTH BY GRACE TO OVERCOME (**vs. 6; 2 Cor. 12:9**).
- B. GRACE IS FOR THE HUMBLE (**vs. 6-10**).
1. Who did Jesus come to save? (**Luke 5:31-32**). Who does He invite? (**Matt. 11:28-30**).
 2. A recognition of the need for help (**1 Cor. 10:12; Prov. 16:18**).
- C. THE HUMBLE WILL SUBJECT HIMSELF TO GOD'S WILL (**vs. 7; Luke 22:42**).
1. By **resisting** the devil *anthistemi*, to stand against, oppose: (Strong). (**Eph. 6:10-13**).
 2. By **drawing near** to God (**vs. 8**). How?
 - a. By cleansing our hands (**1 John 1:6-7; Acts 8:22**). *Repent!*
 - b. By purifying our hearts (**2 Cor. 7:1**).
 - c. By mourning our sin (**vs. 9; Matt. 26:75**). *Really being Sorry!*
- D. THE RESULT? GRACE OR STRENGTH (**vs. 6**). WE WILL BE EXALTED (**vs. 10**).

V. APPLICATION – SPEAK NOT ONE AGAINST ANOTHER (vs. 11-12).

- A. NOT AN INJUNCTION AGAINST JUDGING IN THE ABSOLUTE (**John 7:24; Gal. 6:1**).
- B. REFERENCE TO THE HARSH INVECTIVES AND FALSE TESTIMONIES.
 - 1. Watch what you say (**Eph. 4:29; Eph. 4:31-32; Col. 3:8-9**).
 - 2. Be kind and forgiving (**Eph. 4:32**), Put on the New Man (**Col. 3:9**).

CONCLUSION:

- A. PEACE IS TO BE FOUND IN OUR SUBMISSION TO GOD.
- B. WILL YOU HUMBLE YOURSELF TO OBEY HIM?
- C. IF YOU WILL, HE WILL LIFT YOU UP.