

James 4 13-17

Let's PRAY

Lord, teach us from your word and help us to be obedient to it.

If you'd like to follow in your bible, please open it at James 4v 13-17.

If the corona virus has taught us anything, it should have taught us that the future is not in our control.

How many people had planned holidays, or house moves
Planned a visit to the family, or a visit to the dentist,
Planned weddings, baptisms, or even funerals.. I could go on

The future is not in our control. Prov 27 says

Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.

You might say, yes but we already know that, and yes we do, but
Do we live as if we do?

James is writing to Christians, particularly Christian traders, but there's much we can all learn from this passage.

V 13-14 of our passage says

Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." ¹⁴ Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow.

Is James condemning traveling, doing business or making money? No, and he's not saying don't make plans.

We all have to plan for the future, but we must also accept that those plans could change in an instant.

What James is condemning is making plans without reference to God.

He's condemning the arrogant attitude that we can do, what we want, when we want, with no thought of what God wants and without recognising and accepting that it's God that's in control.

James tells us in v16

**As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil.
To live relying on our selves instead of trusting God is sin.**

How many times do we hear this,

I've worked hard for what I have. I deserve to live a comfortable life.

Consider how different your life would have been if;

You had been born in a country with

No free education,

No NHS.

If you had been born to different parents.

Or if those breaks hadn't come along.

We had no control over any of this, every thing we have is from God.

How do we make our plans, do we say, I think I would be happier doing this, be better paid doing that, be more comfortable if I follow this path, or do we say, what is it that you want us to do Lord, what is your will in this situation?

James goes on to say v14 **Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.**

We all know we won't live forever but we act as though we will. Do we plan as much for eternity as we do for today? If eternity is an everlasting journey, our life on earth is only the first step.

This does not mean our lives, here on earth, are not important. The decisions we make in this life have eternal consequences. The bible tells us, that if we **believe and trust in Jesus, his death and resurrection we shall not perish but have eternal life. But if we don't we stand condemned already because we have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.**

If you've not made that decision yet, speak to one of us today.

We can't know or control the future so what should our attitude be, **v15 Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."**

This doesn't mean we should end every statement by verbally saying God willing (although that wouldn't necessarily be a bad thing), but our attitude should be to acknowledge that God alone controls the future.

How then should we live?

By Recognising that God is in control.

By Serving God to the best of our ability, in whichever place God has put us.

By Accepting that this life is not, all there is.

By Acknowledging Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour

By knowing that one-day, perhaps today, we will meet him as our judge.

Corrie ten Boom, a Christian holocaust survivor, arrested by the Nazis for hiding Jews, wrote this

Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.

We can't know the future but we can know the one who holds the future in his hands, the one who died on the cross and rose again to ensure that those who trust their future to Him will have a future with Him.

Amen