

Unpacking the Preach

Date: 26th April 2020
Sermon Title: The Character of God's Family: wisdom
Bible Passage: James 3: 13 - 18

Introduction:

- What are your goals, your priorities, what is really important to you at the moment?
- In what ways have these changed since the outbreak of COVID19?
- Describe in your own words, what you think the goal of the Christian life is? What Bible passages inform this?

Recapping the preach:

Take time to read the passage again, perhaps read it a few times from different versions:

- How would you summarise the key message of the passage?
- Is there anything in this passage that surprised you?
- Was there anything you would like to know more about?
- Was there anything in the passage or preach that you found yourself resisting, pulling away from or wrestling with what is being said?

Stu introduced the passage by asking if our goals, priorities and what is really important to us, includes love: loving God, neighbour and ourselves. If James were listening in he would conclude that if learning to love well is our goal, then we will need wisdom. The passage reveals that for James, there was a direct connection between wisdom and love.

- What do you think wisdom is and how would you describe it?
- Read Proverbs 8 (all or portions): what does this tell us about wisdom?
- What other Bible passages do you know that speak about wisdom?
- Would you agree that there is a connection between wisdom and love? Why?

In the church James was writing to, some teachers were behaving with bitter envy and selfish ambition and so James gives them a 'feedback sandwich' offering a positive statement about a wise person's life (vs.13), some stark warnings about earthly wisdom (vs.14-16) and a positive description of heavenly wisdom (vs.17).

- do you know any people whose life is an example of vs.13 (they live good life, marked by good deeds done in meekness)?
- What are some of the ways you actively demonstrate humility in your life?
- James used the metaphor of harbouring bitter envy and selfish ambition. What are some of the things you harbour? What are some of the things, with God's help, you have 'kicked out' the harbour of your heart?
- Read James 3:17 alongside 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 and see if you can match up the 8 adverbs in James with the 16 descriptions of love in 1 Corinthians 13.
- When you look at the life of Jesus portrayed in the gospels, where do you see examples of the 8 adverbs (vs.17) James uses in Jesus' life?
- It will change from time to time but which of these 8 adverbs (vs.17) are you working on or need to work on, at the moment in this COVID19 season?

Stu finished with three practical applications for us, in order to grow in wisdom. They were: grow in a knowledge of God, seek Him and ask for wisdom (James 1:5).

- How can you apply these three steps to your life?
- In what way are you applying these steps to your life?

Response

- In what way did the Lord speak to you through the passage and preach?
- What did you take away from the preach which will impact your discipleship?

Prayer pointers

- Share your prayer requests and pray for one another.
- Pray for one another and ask God to help you grow in wisdom that you may learn to love well.
- Pray for wisdom for our nation's leaders at this time.
- Pray for a great turning to God, that people will seek Him and His ways.

Additional resources:

If you need some additional resources the below websites are useful:

- <https://www.gotquestions.org>
- <https://enduringword.com>
- <https://www.biblica.com>
- <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/>