

Review / Summary:

The sermon explored the nature of biblical wisdom from James 3:13-18, examining what wisdom truly is, where it comes from, and how it shows itself in the life of a believer. Rather than settling for the world's definition of wisdom as mere knowledge, experience, or good judgment, we were challenged to see that true wisdom is inseparable from humility, rooted in Jesus Christ himself, and visibly expressed through our daily conduct.

Key Takeaways:

- 1. Wisdom is proven, not proclaimed.** James makes clear that genuine wisdom is demonstrated through conduct and works done in humility. Anyone can claim to be wise, just as anyone can claim to have faith. The evidence of both is found in how a person actually lives.
- 2. There are two kinds of wisdom.** James draws a sharp contrast between wisdom that originates from below – described as earthly, unspiritual, and demonic – and wisdom that comes from above, which is characterized by purity, peace, and God-centered humility. These two kinds of wisdom produce entirely different outcomes in a person's life.
- 3. Meekness is not weakness.** The wisdom that comes from God is marked by meekness. In the culture of James's day, meekness was considered a flaw. James reframes it entirely. Biblical meekness reflects the very character of Jesus himself, as seen in Matthew 11:29 and Matthew 5:5.
- 4. Wisdom is found in a person, not a principle.** The central insight of the sermon is that the right question is not "What is wisdom?" but "Who is wisdom?" Jesus Christ is wisdom personified. As 1 Corinthians 1:30 makes clear, Christ became to us wisdom from God.
- 5. Wisdom is received through four key means.** Conversion, Scripture, prayer, and reverence for God are the four pathways the pastor identified for growing in biblical wisdom. These are not steps to earn wisdom but means through which God graciously grants it.

Practical Applications: What This Means For You (Choose One or Two to Try This Week)

- 1. Examine your conduct.** Take an honest inventory of one area of your life – a relationship, a workplace situation, a recurring conflict – and ask yourself whether your behavior reflects wisdom from above or wisdom from below. Bring what you find before God in prayer.
- 2. Ask the right question.** The next time you face a decision or a difficult situation, resist the instinct to simply gather more information or rely on past experience. Instead, begin by asking "Who is wisdom?" and take that question to Scripture and to prayer before doing anything else.
- 3. Pray specifically for wisdom.** Set aside time each day this week to pray specifically for wisdom – not for better circumstances, not for favorable outcomes, but for the kind of God-given wisdom that James describes in chapter 3. Keep it simple and keep it honest.

4. **Have a conversation.** Identify someone in your life who consistently displays the qualities of wisdom from above – someone marked by humility, gentleness, and a peace that seems rooted in something deeper than circumstances. Reach out to them this week, tell them what you see in them, and ask them what has shaped that in their life.

Questions to Help Go Deeper:

1. Read James 3:13. James asks, "Who is wise and understanding among you?" Why do you think he follows that question with a call to show wisdom through conduct rather than simply affirming it with words? What does that tell us about the nature of wisdom?

2. Look at James 3:14-16. James describes earthly wisdom as being rooted in jealousy and selfish ambition. Where do you most commonly see this kind of wisdom at work in everyday life? Where do you see it at work in yourself?

Personal Reflection:

3. Pastor Tony made the statement that "the question isn't what is wisdom, the question is who is wisdom." What difference does it make practically to frame wisdom as a person rather than a quality or skill set?

4. The four pathways to wisdom discussed in the sermon were conversion, Scripture, prayer, and reverence. Which of these do you feel most confident in? Which do you feel most underdeveloped in, and what might that look like to address?

Memory Verse: 1 Corinthians 1:30

"And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

Closing Reflection & Prayer:

~ Ask God to grant you the kind of wisdom that James describes – pure, peaceable, gentle, and full of mercy.

~ Pray for our church to grow together in unity and wisdom.

~ Pray for your relationships; your marriage, your relationship with your children, grandchildren, close friends, etc.

~ Read over the Fruits of the Spirit in the book of Galatians. Pray each one of those over yourself this week.