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A just weight
and balance

are the
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

James 4:13 (20th cNT)

**Listen to me, you who say
'To-day or to-morrow
we will go to such
and such a town,
spend a year there,
and trade,
and make money,'**

James 4:14

**And yet you do not know
what your life
will be like to-morrow!
For you are but a mist
appearing for a little
while and then
disappearing.**

James 4:15

You ought,
rather, to say
'If the Lord wills,
we shall live
and
do this or that.'

- Today James is beginning a new admonition.
 - In Chapter 4 he dealt with humility to resolve conflicts and have harmonious relationships.

- He continues in **Chapter 5.**
 - with the **subject of humility** with regard **to the future.**
 - He is confronting **an arrogant spirit** that he had observed among the churches.
(**James 4:16**)

- Although these people are Christians , they were living with a worldly attitude.
- John calls this attitude “the boastful pride of life” (1 John 2:16).

- They were making plans without taking into account **their own mortality** and **God's sovereignty.**
- Have you ever done that?
 - **Let's see!!!**

- Have you ever thought about "***What difference would it make in my life as to whether I believe my life is a vapor or not?***"
- **Do I stop planning, because my life may be short or uncertain?"**
- **No, you don't stop planning.**
You don't drop out of society.
You don't become a hermit,
waiting for your
little vapor of life to disappear."

- **So what is the point?**
 - It matters whether
you have
a true view of life.
- Your **mindset** matters.

- **So he says in verse 14,**
in all your planning,
keep this in mind
- ***"You are a vapor that appears
for a little while
and then vanishes away."***
- You have no guarantee on life.
 - You are as fragile as
mist and **vapor**.
 - And like the "mist"
you too will vanish away.
- **And life will go on without you.**

- It not only matters that you have a **right view of life** when you make your plans.
- But that you have a **right view of God** as you make your plans.

- So what is the right view of God that James teaches us to have in verse 15?

- James tells us two very important things about God.

- # 1

"If the Lord wills,

- we will live."

- # 2

"If the Lord wills,

- we will . . . do this or that."

- It is not that
God is the
puppet master
and
we the puppet.

- **You have heard it said:**
 - Everything happens **for a reason.**
 - And the reason being:
you
weren't paying attention.

- Life is a vapor which means three things:
- 1. LIFE IS LIKE A VAPOR.
- 2. LIFE IS SHORT.
- 3. DEATH IS CERTAIN.

- # 1. Life is a vapor.

- You do not know what your life will be like tomorrow.

- Or ten minutes from now,
let alone

tomorrow

or

next year!

- These businessmen were arrogantly assuming that they would wake up tomorrow,
 - That they would safely get to the city.
 - That their business would be successful.
 - They were presuming all of these things about an unknown future that they had no control of and no guarantees about!

- We may not like thinking about death.
 - It may be morbid and depressing.
 - But it is a fact of life.
- I'm not suggesting that you obsess on these things.

- But if you don't ever think about them, you will not live in proper dependence upon God.
- You will proudly make plans and go on about life as if you will be forever young and healthy.
 - James says (4:16) that “*all such boasting is evil.*”

- **2. LIFE IS SHORT.**

- A vapor is **short-lived.**

- You see the mist at one moment and **a few minutes later it's gone.**

- You see the steam coming out of your coffee cup and in just a second, **it disappears into the air.**

- **Life is like that.**

- Psalm 90

laments the brevity of life.

- “*As for the days of our life,
they contain seventy years,
or if due to strength,
eighty years,
yet their pride is
but labor and sorrow;
for soon it is gone
and we fly away.”
(**Psalm 90:10**)*

- Even if you live to be a hundred,
how quickly life flies by!

- That's why **Psalm 90:12**

warns us to:

“So teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom.”

- **To live with dying thoughts** is to keep you on the **straight** and **narrow**.

- **3. DEATH IS CERTAIN.**

- And that it can happen at any minute,

- **And then comes Judgment.**

- **(Hebrews 9:27)**

- You would think everyone would be desperate

- **to get right with God.**

- But, strangely,

- **people put it out of mind,**

- And go on about life

- **as if they will live forever.**

Like the prosperous man
in Jesus' parable:

12:16 *The ground of a certain rich man
brought forth plentifully:*

12:17 *And he thought within himself, saying,*

What shall I do,

*because I have no room
where to bestow my fruits?*

12:18 *And he said, This will I do:*

*I will pull down my barns,
and build greater; and there
I will bestow all my fruits and my goods.*

(Luke 12:16-21)

- **12:19** *And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.*
- **12:20** *But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night your soul shall be required of you: then whose shall those things be, which you have provided?*
- **12:21** *So is he that lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*
(**Luke 12:16-21**)

- The uncertainty of tomorrow **was stressed by Jesus** who said of the grass of the field,
 - *"It today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven"* (**Matthew 6:30**);
 - Peter saying, *"All flesh is as grass"* (**1 Peter 1:24**),
 - **How uncertain is life!**

- People can watch the [Twin Towers](#) falling to the ground.
- People jumping out of the top 107th floor.
- Or have watched the catastrophe of [Hurricane Katrina on TV,](#)
 - Looking in disbelief [at the bodies floating in the water,](#)
- **And go about their daily routines** as if they will never face something like that!
 - **It's indeed amazing!**

- Jesus taught us
how to think

when we hear about
such disasters.

- Some people
reported to Him
about some

Galileans

whom Pilate had slaughtered.

- (**Luke 13:2-5**)

- Jesus responded:
“*Do you suppose
that these Galileans
were greater sinners
than all other Galileans
because they
suffered this fate?
I tell you, no,
but unless you repent,
*you will all likewise perish.**”

- ***Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”***
(Luke 13:2-5)

- The question is:
 - Are you ready?
 - Or do you plan to perish?

- **God is sovereign.**
 - This means,
we are not sovereign!
- **The problem was not**
that these businessmen
were making plans for the future.
 - Nor was it a problem
engaging in business
to make a profit.
- Planning is commended to us
in Scripture
(Luke 14:28-32; Rom. 15:20-28).

- The problem that James hits was, they were planning **as if they were sovereign.**
- They were assuming that they were in control **of their future.**
- Instead, they needed to acknowledge ***“If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.”***
(James 4:15)

- James is not giving **a trite formula** that we need to tack onto every sentence.
- Sometimes Paul used the phrase, **“If the Lord wills,”** when speaking about the future. (**Acts 18:21; 1 Cor. 4:19; Rom. 1:10**)
 - But sometimes **he did not.** (**Acts 19:21; Rom. 15:28; 1 Cor. 16:5, 8**).

- James is giving us **a mindset** that needs to permeate all of life.
- We need continually **to be aware** of our dependence on God.
- Sometimes we should say, **“if the Lord wills,”**
 - But even if we don't say it, **we should think it.**

- There is simply no such thing in this world as **financial security.**
- Our **economy** may crash.
- Our country may be go to **war.**
- Retirement investments may **fail.**
 - **Trusting in God**
is the only
true source of security
for the future.

- So James states that life is a vapor

and

God is sovereign.

- Now, our problem:

Pride is a great sin

that easily plagues us all.

- Verse 13

reeks with arrogance:

- “**Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.**”
- There is a lot of mention of what we will do,
 - But there isn't any mention of God!

- **In James 4:16** (NET),
He directly confronts
the sinful attitude.

***But as it is,
you boast about
your arrogant plans.
All such boasting is evil.***

- “Arrogance” (4:16)
was originally used of
wandering hucksters

- Who were full of
empty and boastful claims.

(R. C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament [Eerdmans], p. 98).

- It is used in 1 John 2:15,
“the boastful pride of life.”

- It refers to the
arrogant self-sufficiency
of the world
apart from God.

- The most notable instance of this is when the Persians were attacking the Babylonian Empire.
 - The rulers were feasting while the Persians were attacking because:
 - They thought it couldn't happen.
 - They were too powerful.
 - The city was too fortified.
 - The army was too strong.
 - Yet the Babylonian Empire did fall.

- What they thought could not happen did happen.
- James point out that you and I do not have the power that we think we have.
- We do not have the control that we think we have.

- You see this attitude in the powerful Babylonian King **Nebuchadnezzar**.

- While walking on the roof of his royal palace, he said,

- ***“Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?”***

- Daniel 4:30-32 continues,

- While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven saying,
 - ***“King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you, and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field.”***

- You will be given grass to eat like cattle,
- and seven periods of time will pass over you
- until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes.”

- **Napoleon Bonaparte**

was a military genius,

but his pride led to his downfall.

- **He was about to invade Russia,**
but a friend tried to dissuade him.

- But Napoleon would not be persuaded,
so the friend shared the familiar proverb:

“Man proposes, God disposes.”

- Napoleon angrily snapped back,
“I dispose as well as propose.”

- How then should we live
in view of the fact that:
 - Life is a vapor,
 - God is sovereign,
 - And we're so prone
to pride?

- I would counsel you to do this:

**Think about what
your life
will look like
on your deathbed.**

- What have I accomplished that really matters **in light of eternity?**

- The problem is not making plans.
 - Planning is not the problem.
- The problem is that we act like we have the power and we have control.

- James
is demanding
a new attitude.

- **Matthew 15:18**

***“The things that
come out from the mouth
proceed from the heart,
and it is these that
defile a man”***

- **The last verse**
must not be detached
from what goes on before.

***"To him, therefore,
that knows
to do good
and does it not,
to him it is sin."***
(James 4:17)

- Sin does not consist
only in doing evil.

- **If we do not**
the good we know,
it is also sin.
- If we do not act according
to the fact that we are
entirely dependent on God
as to the future,
 - **We sin.**

• What is
your life?

- **Think on these things**
- **Philippians 4:8**

**The doors of the church
are open.**

The Spirit and the Bride

Say

“Come”.

Revelation 22:17



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