

Reminders for Planning

11 December 2016 AM – James 4:13-17 – Jas16 – Scott Childs

Introduction: Jesus told of a man who made big plans but who never saw them fulfilled. (Luke 12:16-21) "*And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:*" (17) "*And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?*" (18) "*And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.*" (19) "*And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.*" (20) "*But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?*" (21) "*So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*"

In today's section in the book of James, James turns his attention to the sin of boasting about future plans.

Transition: James identified five things we must remember when planning our future.

1. The Future is Hidden (v.13-14)

a. Planning is part of life

- 1) James is not saying that planning is evil. We ought to plan. The gardener or farmer plans for the future when he plants his crops. The shepherd plans for the future when he cares for his flock. The carpenter plans for the future when he builds for others. The housewife plans for the future when she writes her list of jobs for the day. The student plans for the future when he studies for his exam.
- 2) God tells us to learn to plan and work from the ant. (Proverbs 6:6-8) "*Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.*" Proper planning is wise.
- 3) However, we must beware of greedy planning. James describes a man who makes plans to take a trip to city, spend one year buying and selling to get gain. If he is motivated by greed, this is wrong.

b. Such boasting is evil

- 1) James tells us that ALL such boasting is evil. To brag about what we plan to do is not right.
- 2) We have no assurance that what we have planned will ever come to pass. When we boast, we are saying that we are in control when we are not.

5. Knowing Right Without Doing it is Sin (v.17)

a. This principle applies to planning

- 1) Do you see the principle? God is saying that if we know a good thing that He wants us to do and we do not do it, we are sinning against Him.
- 2) When applied to making plans, God said that we ought to say "If the Lord will" about any plan we make. If we make plans and ignore God's will, we sin against Him.

b. This is also a general principle

- 1) Sin is not just doing some forbidden thing. It is also a sin to neglect a God-given command or duty. The Bible is full of commands and duties that God gives to Christians like getting baptised, witnessing, praying, reading the Bible, tithing, dressing modestly, forgiving others, being kind, putting on God's armour and walking in the Spirit.
- 2) Any time we know what God wants and we choose not to do it, that is sin. Are you neglecting a duty that God has given Christians? If so, God says that is serious.

Conclusion: James has reminded us that 1) The future is hidden, 2) Life is short, 3) God may override our plans, 4) Boasting about our plans is evil, and 5) Knowing right without doing it is sin. We must always qualify our plans with "if the Lord will" or "Lord willing." If we become boastful the Lord can turn our plans around in a moment. Let's not forget Jesus' parable of the rich fool.

If there is something that you know God wants you to do but you have not been doing it. Do not make excuses. God says that such neglect is sin.

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b. We cannot see the future (v.14).

- 1) We do not know what will happen tomorrow.
- 2) God had Solomon give us a similar warning. (Prov 27:1) "*Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.*" You may die tomorrow. The market may change tomorrow. The crop may fail.
- 3) This is a good time to note that seeking to learn the future from a medium, witch, palm reader, tarot cards or astrology is all very evil. These get their information and power from the devil. (Deut 18:10) "*There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,*" (Deut 18:11) "*Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.*"
- 4) When planning for the future, we must remember that it is hidden and beyond our sight.

2. Life is Short (v.14)

a. Life is like a vapour

- 1) A *vapour* is like steam, mist or fog. Steam disappears within seconds. Fog lifts within hours. Vapour does not last. It is short-lived.
- 2) God reminds us that life is like vapour. The word translated "*appeareth*" means to bring forth into the light, to shine, exposed to view. Life is like a flare that lights up the sky for a few moments and then vanishes.
- 3) Job compared life to a swift loom. (Job 7:6) "*My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope.*"
- 4) Peter portrays the shortness of life as a flower. (1Pet 1:24) "*For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.*"

b. Life passes very quickly

- 1) When we were young, life seemed to move slowly.
- 2) The older we get the faster life seems to speed by.
- 3) As we plan for the future, we must not forget that life is

short. Putting off things that are important is not wise. This is especially true when it comes to preparing for heaven. Neglect can be damning. (Heb 2:3) "*How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;*"

3. God may Override our Plans (v.15)

a. God can lengthen or shorten our life

- 1) Think with me of the promise God gives to children who honour their parents. (Exod 20:12) "*Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.*"
- 2) Solomon wrote, (Prov 3:1-2) "*My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.*"
- 3) Our lives are in God's hands. If we obey Him, we will live longer than we would if we disobey Him.

b. You ought to seek God's will

- 1) James reminds us that each time we make plans for the future that we ought to say "If the Lord will".
- 2) The apostle Paul said this in (1Cor 4:19) "*But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power.*"
- 3) When we say, "If the Lord will" we are acknowledging that God is sovereign and that He can change our plans if He so desires.
- 4) As we make plans, we must not forget that God may override our plans.

4. Boasting about our Plans is Evil (v.16)

a. We are tempted to boast about our plans

- 1) Isn't it just like our human nature to proudly tell our friends (and anyone who will listen) about our plans for the future?
- 2) Sometimes we boast of our plans as if they were already fulfilled.
- 3) Remember the man Jesus told about who boasted of his future? He died before any of it came to pass.