

## **The Fruit of Love** **James 4:4-10**

*<sup>4</sup> You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.<sup>5</sup> Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"?<sup>6</sup> But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."<sup>7</sup> Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.<sup>8</sup> Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.<sup>9</sup> Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.<sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.<sup>11</sup> Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.<sup>12</sup> There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?*

### **Introduction:**

The book of James is all about the difference between a profession and possession of Christ.

### **James 2:14 – Faith without works is dead (paraphrase)**

Christianity is more than adopting a set of values, beliefs or ethical code. Faith is in Jesus and creates a living relationship so that all of your life is changed.

ILL - Peter didn't keep fishing. James quit tax collecting. Simon put away his dagger. Everything about them changed.

James is threading a needle between two extremes -

- a) It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you live a good life.
- b) It doesn't matter how you live as long as you believe.

**James 1:23-25** - *For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. <sup>24</sup> For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. <sup>25</sup> But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.*

If you are a Christian, you never forget who you are.

Christianity is looking in God's law, seeing who you are, and your life being changed.

In 7-11 James offers a number of exhortations.

<sup>7</sup> Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup> Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup> Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. <sup>11</sup> Do not speak evil against one another, brothers.

These are not mere exhortations. James starts with the section with the phrase “*you adulterous people.*” What does he mean?

GR = The first word is “*Adulteresses.*” It literally says, “Adulteresses, you are.” He is calling every person in the church unfaithful to God.

God repeatedly defines our life with God as that of a husband and wife.

Isaiah 54:5 - *For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name;*

Jeremiah 2:1-2 - *I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown.*

Ephesians 5:32 - *This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.*

Almost the whole chapter of Ezekiel 16 and the entire book of Hosea displays this relationship.

“*Hosea, now you know what I feel like. For I too love a woman and she doesn’t love me.*”

Romans 7:1-4 - *Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? <sup>2</sup> For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. <sup>3</sup> Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.*

- 1 – You are married as long as your spouse lives
- 2 – If you are unfaithful to that spouse it is adultery
- 3 – That relationship ends when a spouse dies
- 4 – You are free to marry again

v 4 - *Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.*

Salvation is marriage to God that produces the fruit of good works

Revelation 19:6-8 - *“Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. <sup>7</sup> Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; <sup>8</sup> it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.*

v 4 – the ‘friendship’ of which James speaks is not platonic.

I’ve said all of this to say that James isn’t just saying, *“Be good. Be moral.”* When he looks at his congregation and uses the word “adulteresses” he’s reminding us about who we are: God’s.

How do we know that God is not just satisfied with works? How do we know that works don’t save us?

Revelation 2:2-4 - *I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. <sup>3</sup> I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. <sup>4</sup> But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.*

Why do you do what you do? Why do you live as a Christian? James answer is to remind us of who God is and who we are in our relationship to him.

### **First: God Chooses to Love Us Universally**

You became a Christian for the same reason you get married. You fell in love.

Christianity is not a business partnership. It’s not adopting a code. It’s not knuckling under and trying harder to live a certain way.

The Bible says that conviction triggers a desire that no human relationship can satisfy.

Song of Solomon 3:1-4 - *On my bed by night I sought him whom my soul loves; I sought him, but found him not. <sup>2</sup> I will rise now and go about the city, in the streets and in the squares; I will seek him whom my soul loves. I sought him, but found him not. <sup>3</sup> The watchmen found me as they went about in the city. “Have you seen him whom my soul loves?” <sup>4</sup> Scarcely had I passed them when I found him whom my soul loves. I held him, and would not let him go until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her who conceived me.*

9:1-16 – [He] *You have captivated my heart, my sister, my bride; you have captivated my heart with one glance of your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace. <sup>10</sup> How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride! How much better is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your oils than any spice! <sup>11</sup> Your lips drip nectar, my bride; honey and milk are under your tongue; the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon. <sup>12</sup> A garden locked is my sister, my bride, a spring locked, a fountain sealed. <sup>13</sup> Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates with all choicest fruits, henna with nard, <sup>14</sup> nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all choice spices— <sup>15</sup> a garden fountain, a well of living*

water, and flowing streams from Lebanon. <sup>16</sup>Awake, O north wind, and come, O south wind! Blow upon my garden, let its spices flow. [She] Let my beloved come to his garden, and eat its choicest fruits.

Think about the exaggeration of love songs that attempt to depict human love

*My love is deeper than the deepest ocean  
Wider than the sky  
My love is brighter than the brightest star  
That shines every night above*  
- Petulia Clark

*I've Loved You Since Forever*  
- Hoda Kotbe

*Before birds flew over rainbows  
And monkeys swung on trees  
There was you, and there was me  
Before the sun set in the sky  
And honey came from bees  
There was you, and there was me  
Before the moon lit up the night  
And elephants wandered free  
There was you, and there was me  
Before otters swam together  
And rivers reached the sea  
There was you, and there was me*  
- Kelly Clarkson

None of that is true. It is all hyperbole. But salvation is not an exaggeration.

Ephesians 1:4-10 - ...he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us<sup>[b]</sup> for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, <sup>8</sup> which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup> making known<sup>[c]</sup> to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ <sup>10</sup> as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Only God can speak of love in universalistic terms...and he does.

There are many ways to view our relationship to God, but God repeatedly views it as a romance of redemption.

## Second: God Commits Himself to Us in Vulnerability

Why do you do the things you do when you are in love with someone? You don't seek to please them out of fear but love. Christians see God's law romantically.

Christians see God's laws as an expression of God's passion for us.

Ten Commandments –

1 - God loves you so much that he sees marriage as a means to rid your relationship of competition

- *You shall have no other gods before me –*

2 – God loves you so much that he wants to be the Center of your world

- *You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.* (this is like pornography)

2 - God loves you so much that he sets up your names like rings on the finger

- *You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.*

3 - God loves you so much that he has created a weekly date night

- *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.*

4 - God loves you so much that he wants you to have prosperous relationships

- *Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.*
- *You shall not murder.*
- *You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*

5 – God loves you so much that he wants an exclusive relationship with you

- *You shall not commit adultery.*

6 – God loves you so much that he wants you to see him as a good provider

- *You shall not steal.*

- *You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.*

If you've ever been in love, you know how much you want your relationship to be face-to-face.

You do what you do, not out of a sense of obligation but love.

James: *Why should you obey God?* Because you love God. Because you know he loves you.

Love joyfully and openly confesses, *"I'm not free and I am glad."*

The reason you may be afraid of this is because you have lovers who have abused you. This is a lover whom you are abusing.

This is a lover who became vulnerable and whom we killed and who nonetheless continues to love us.

### **Third: God is a God of Passionate Intimacy. Ezekiel 16:1-22 & 30**

What other religion on the face of the earth talks about God like this? Or talks about a relationship with God like this?

What are you sleeping with? Your weight? Your relationships? Your education? Your children? Your stuff? Your parents? Your future? Are you committing adultery with these things? Are you loving them more than God?

**James 1:1-4** - *What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? <sup>2</sup> You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.<sup>3</sup> You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. <sup>4</sup> You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

**The only way to live wholly is to live holy**

### **Conclusion:**

God defines Christianity as a love affair. God describes your salvation as a love affair. God expresses his relationship to you as a love affair.

For James, it's not just what you do but why you do it.

**Why are you a Christian?**

If the answer is anything but love, you will not live the Christian life for long.

**Community Groups:**

- 1 – What is James' theme? **Faith without works is dead.**
- 2 – But what is the only appropriate motivation for works in Christianity? **Love.**
- 3 – What two extremes are people prone to?
  - a) **It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you live a good life.**
  - b) **It doesn't matter how you live as long as you believe.**
- 4 – Discuss the Scriptures in which God compares himself to our husband and we as his wife
- 5 – Why does God place our relationship with him in such intimate terms? Because we are all looking for a love that only God can satisfy.
- 6 – Discuss how it is that only God truly loves us universally? (How does all human love fail? And remember, that even in death, our love fails those we love)
- 7 – How did Jesus make himself vulnerable? **Perhaps Phil 2:5-8 will illustrate it.**
- 8 – How do the Ten Commandments illustrate God's love for us?
- 9 – Using Ezekiel 16:1-22 as your timeline, review God's goodness to Israel.
- 10 – How did Israel respond to God's love?
- 11 – Talk about how “the only way to live wholly is to live holy.”
- 12 – What are the various reasons we become Christians? Why is it that only love will get us all the way home?