A Tale of Two Wisdoms

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Date: 21 October 2026

Preacher: Joey Snodgrass

[0:00] Well, it's good to be back with you this evening. You can open with me to James chapter 3.! We'll continue our study through that great book of James.

I had the privilege of being at Southwest Covenant this morning for their chapel, so it was fun. Covenant people, it was good to see you this morning. The elementary school at Covenant also had a pastor's breakfast this morning, so I just spent the entire morning at Southwest Covenant. It was a good time.
So, I had fun with that. Grateful for our Southwest Covenant students and you guys being here tonight again. So, we'll be in James 3, verses 13 through 18 tonight.
But to begin our time together, I want you to imagine two great students. Okay? Both great grades, very respectful, do well in school, obey their parents, are always on their best behavior.
And of these two students, one of them is prideful and the other is a Christian. The prideful person looks at their good behavior, their good grades, their good life, and takes full credit for being the smartest, for working the hardest, for always doing what's right.
[1:19] They take full credit and take pride in what they do. The Christian student humbly gives credit to parents, to teachers, to friends, and obviously to the Lord as well for his kindness.

As we look at both of these students, both of them are wise. We can say that they are wise, but the wisdom they possess is different.
The wisdom of the prideful student leads them to bragging and boasting and thinking they're the best and thinking they're always right. The other student's wisdom leads them to humility and kindness and to a willingness to give credit to others and seek the interest of others.
One of these wisdoms is good. One of these wisdoms is bad. And that's easy to see in a silly, made-up example, but it's almost impossible to see when it's us who are being prideful, when it's us who are in the wrong, when it's us who are in possession of the bad wisdom.
And James teaches us in this passage tonight that there are only two kinds of wisdom. When you boil everything down, there's just two kinds of wisdom.
[2:44] There are two types of wisdom that come from two different places. And so we need to be careful because there's a way in which you can be wise, but not in a way that's pleasing to God.

You can be wise in the eyes of this world, wise in the eyes of your teachers, wise in the eyes of your coaches, but not wise in a way that's pleasing to the Lord.
So we need to pay careful attention to where our wisdom comes from and what kind of wisdom we have. Because James tells us there's a wisdom that comes from heaven and there's a wisdom that comes from hell.
Two different wisdoms from two different places. The wisdom that comes from hell is chaotic and destructive, while the wisdom that comes from heaven is peaceful and productive.
And so we can look at ourselves, I can look at a room of students, I can look at a cafeteria full of students at a school and say everyone in here is wise. The question is what kind of wise are you?
[3:48] What kind of wisdom do you possess? Do you possess a wisdom that leads you to glorify God, or do you possess the wisdom that is chaotic and destructive and comes from hell itself? Which wisdom do you have?

And how can you know? How can you know if you have the wrong kind of wisdom? How can you know if you're living a life that's not pleasing to the Lord with the wisdom that you possess? And James' focus here in this passage is more on what wisdom does rather than what wisdom is.
He's not out to define what wisdom actually is, he's just wanting us to see what wisdom does, what wisdom accomplishes in someone's life. Because both kinds of wisdom, the wisdom from heaven and the wisdom from hell, produce certain kinds of actions in the people that possess it.

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They produce certain kinds of lifestyles among the people who possess these types of wisdom. And so James' point is that whatever kind of wisdom someone has, it's going to be clear in their actions. You can see it based on how someone listens to a sermon. You can see it based on how someone responds to a sermon. You can see it based on how someone uses their free time.
[5:04] You can see it based on how someone talks to their parents. You can see what kind of wisdom people have. And James says that will be clear through actions. And so I think it would be helpful just to start off by answering the question again, what is wisdom?

James isn't going to focus on that here. So what is wisdom before we dive into talking about the two kinds of wisdom? Well, according to the Bible's use of it, wisdom is, we could call it, skillful living. Skillful living. It's living well. It's applying knowledge to life. Or we could define it as obedience. Wisdom is applying knowledge in the streets. It's living life based on what you know to be true. And one preacher defined it. He said, wisdom teaches knowledge how to act.
Wisdom is proved by its works. And so I want to read our passage for us tonight. James 3, starting in verse 13, and we'll read down through verse 18.
[6:11] Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct, let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth.

This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.
But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.
And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. That's our text for tonight.
And we'll cover this in three points. The first one is, who is wise? Who is wise? In verse 13. And that question comes straight from verse 13.
[7:19] James starts this section with a question. Who is wise and understanding among you? And this question isn't a real question. It's more of a challenge.

James is saying, raise your hand if you're wise. And as soon as someone raises their hand, he's going to swat their hand down. That's his point. If you start thinking like, well, I'm pretty wise, James is going to rebuke them because the wisdom they have is not leading to peace.
The wisdom they have is not leading to a good, harmonious life in the church. It's leading to chaos. And we'll see that in the next couple of weeks as James starts to deal with more problems that they're having with each other.
And James' point is, okay, who's wise? Raise your hand. The way you show you're wise is not by giving a good speech. It's by living a good life. The way you show you're wise isn't by saying you're wise.
It's by demonstrating it with your actions. And so he says, who's wise? Why don't you show me? Why don't you live like it? Why don't you demonstrate it through what you do?
[8:21] And so it's very similar to the discussion he had in chapter two on the relationship between faith and works. They're like, well, yeah, I have faith. And James is like, prove it to me. Show me. How do you show me your faith?

It's through your actions. And same thing here. How do you show your wise? Do it with your life. Do it with how you choose to live your life. And so these Christians seem pretty proud of themselves. They seem pretty satisfied with who they are. They seem pretty impressed by their own wisdom. They think they're wise. They think they're understanding. And they think, to some extent, they're impressive.
They think they've accomplished something. And that's exactly what foolishness is. Have you ever met someone who thought they were a fool?
No, because fools don't think they're fools. That's what folly is. You think you're wise when you're actually an idiot, according to Scripture. You think you've arrived. You think you have accomplished something.
[9:22] And you're blind to your actual shortcomings. A fool is always right in his own eyes, Proverbs says. So James says, who's wise in understanding among you by his good conduct?

Let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. And so the way you prove that you're wise is by how you live your life. Wisdom is proved by good conduct, not the ability to get good grades, not

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the ability to speak well in public, not by getting good scores on test.
It's proved by a life that is lived well. And so James is saying, show your work. Let me see your wisdom.
And some of you love math, my people. Some of you hate math. I still love you. And you may hate on math tests or homework where there's a problem and it says, show your work.
Okay? That can be challenging. The reason they do that is because they want to see that you can actually do the math. Am I right? They want to see the way your brain's working.
[10:37] Because it's possible to get the right answer in a wrong way. So you could make a mistake and still stumble upon the right answer or you could just cheat and write down the right answer but not do any of the work.

And so your teachers will say, show your work. Let me see that you understand how to do this. That's what James is saying. He's like, who's wise? Who understands what's going on? Show me. Show your work. Let me see it in your life.
You don't have to tell me you're wise. I'll see it by how you live. Your actions speak louder than your words. And so any claim to wisdom is proved or tested by life.
And James says that they need to show it in the meekness of wisdom. True wisdom is meek. True wisdom is humble.
But fools are arrogant and proud but they think they're wise. They like to talk about how wise they are. And if you think about what this world values, this world does not value meekness.
[11:41] This world does not value humility. They might be amazed by it. They might be puzzled by it. But they don't prize it. They don't appreciate it.

And so people don't really want someone who's humble. People don't really value humility. And similar to when the Bible was being written in the first century, humility wasn't a virtue in Rome. That was a sign of weakness. That was something that was fitting for slaves but not for people who wanted to be prominent. Not for people who wanted to be leaders. This world hates humility. This world hates meekness.
And so people in the world will do whatever they can to avoid being meek. to avoid being humble because they don't want to look weak. They don't want to look like they can be taken advantage of. And so people will put on an act whether it's through aggression or pride or anger to try to appear strong. To try to appear like they're not humble. Like they're not meek.
[12:38] Whereas the Bible actually prizes this meekness. It prizes this humility. This world wants strong leadership even if it's toxic. This world wants powerful people even if they're evil.

And there's nothing wrong with strong leadership. There's nothing wrong with powerful people. But there's a way to lead well. There's a way to be influential that's pleasing to the Lord that's meek. But that's unfortunately rare in churches. That's rare especially in the world. And it was definitely rare in the churches that James is writing to.
James is saying show me your wise by how you live a humble life. By how you serve others. Show me the wisdom that you have through a humble life.
So what happens when the wrong kind of wisdom comes to church? What happens when the wisdom from hell fills chairs at church?
[13:42] Well we see that in our next point. Number two we see wisdom from hell in verses 14 through 16. Wisdom from hell. James says in verse 13 show me by your good conduct what kind of wisdom you have in verse 14 he says but if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts do not boast and be false to the truth.

And so he talks about two things here bitter jealousy and selfish ambition. And so this bitter jealousy is a competitive desire to have what other people have.
And it's not just an innocent like man it would be nice if I had a pool like that person or it would be nice if I had that person's job or if I was smart like this person. It's not this kind of innocent thinking that would be nice if you had what someone else had.
This is a competitive personal bitterness. It's wanting their status. It's wanting their stuff. It's wanting their looks, their gifts, their knowledge, their accomplishments.
It's wanting desperately what someone else has and that leads you to resent them because they have it. It's this I wish I was good at that and so I'm angry at this person because they are.
[15:01] It's this kind of bitterness that will divide friends and really destroy a church. And then he says there's also selfish ambition is the second thing he mentions. This is easier to recognize than

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to describe.

This is someone who always looks out for number one, always looking out for themself. It has no room to sacrifice for or serve others.
It's the people that think this world revolves around them. No one else matters. They only serve people who can help them out and can increase their status or elevate their life.
This is a worldly wisdom that James is describing. And you will face this temptation every single day of your life and I face it every day of my life. Because we don't have to go out into the world to be influenced by the world.
We've got sin in our hearts that draws us towards these things. Our natural bent is towards these kind of sinful desires. And so worldly wisdom, this wisdom from hell wants you to live your best life.
[16:16] It wants you to treat yourself, to live an easy life, to have the best, most convenient life possible, but Jesus calls you to deny yourself. I just watched in the last week the new Saban documentary that's on Disney+.

Wouldn't super recommend it because Nick Saban cusses like a sailor. But anyway, it was interesting to watch how he rose to prominence as the football coach of Alabama at the end of his career. And he's the winningest college football coach in the history of college football.
He's won all these championships. Phenomenal coach. Incredible results on the field from his players. But he said this in the documentary at some point.
He said, I like players who are selfish, prideful, and ambitious because those are the guys that have drive.
Now, when they're playing for Alabama, he's no longer the coach, he retired, but he doesn't want them to play like that. He wants them to be good teammates, but he's on the lookout for guys who are like that because they want to go somewhere.
[17:24] They want to be great. They want to be successful. And he feels like he can harness those things. He feels like he can point those guys in the right direction if they have drive to be great.

But that's worldly wisdom. It's wanting people who are selfishly ambitious, celebrating people who are looking out for themselves and only interested in what others can do for them.
And Nick Saban is really wise. Probably the greatest college football coach in the history of college football. He's really wise, but it's with this wisdom that's from the world.
It's with this wisdom that's from hell. It's not the wisdom that's from God. And James says, pay attention if this is in your hearts.
Now what's in your heart is always going to come out in what you say. It's always going to come out in the way you live. But the heart is where sin comes from in our life.
[18:28] And now it's important that James mentions in your hearts at this point because it's pretty easy to kind of mask or hide some of these things.

When you think about selfish ambition or you think about jealousy, it's easy to kind of dress those sins up and make them not look so bad. They will come out, but it's easy to kind of disguise them.
So, if you think about this reality, it's easy and it's possible to say nice things from an ugly heart. It's possible to say the right things but not have the right heart motives behind it.
And we know that's possible but just a couple of examples. If someone, if your friend gets a job that you wanted, you wanted that job and they hired your friend and not you and you can say like, hey, I'm happy you got it.
But deep down, you wanted that job. You said the right thing but it wasn't necessarily from the right heart. Or if your friend gets an Xbox, do they still make Xboxes?
[19:32] Is that still? Okay, that wasn't super convincing. I'm still confused. Anyway, we'll just go with it. Xbox. Let's say your friend gets an Xbox and you wanted an Xbox more than anything else in the world and didn't get it.

And you're like, hey man, that's great. Deep down, you're hurt. Deep down, you don't like that. You say the right things but they come from the wrong heart. And so these two sins can be easy to kind of dress up and make them not look as bad as they are.
And so they won't, this bitter jealousy and selfish ambition won't always present themselves explicitly in what someone says. And no one just goes around saying, I'm bitterly jealous and selfishly ambitious.

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You don't say that. But it's easy to let those things fly under the radar in your own hearts. And so James says, if you find these things in your own hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. Don't be proud and act like you're wise. And boasting is another thing that's expected from the world. It's celebrated in the world. You expect people who are prominent and influential and successful to brag and to be prideful.
[20:43] And James says, if you do that, you're being false to the truth at the end of verse 14. And when James talks about the truth, he's usually talking about the gospel. And so in James 1.18, he says, you were born again through the word of truth.

The word is a reference to scripture. The word of truth, the truth is a reference to the gospel. At the end of this letter in chapter 5.19, he's going to say, if anyone among you wanders away from the truth, so walks away from the gospel.
And so when James talks about the truth, what he's meaning, he's referring to the gospel, the good news of what Jesus has done for us as sinners. And James says, if you brag, if you have these things in your heart and you boast, you are being false to the gospel.
You might say you believe the gospel, but you're denying it with your actions. Because the gospel message is saying, we are sinners, we need to repent of our sin and turn to Jesus. And if you say you believe that, but then brag in yourself and are proud of yourself, you might say you believe this, but you're denying it with how you live.
This wisdom that's on display is not from God and it's being false to the truth. He says in verse 15, this is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, and demonic.
[22:06] Now James is not going to use the words heaven and hell, but when he talks about wisdom from above, he's talking about wisdom from God, wisdom from heaven. And when he talks about wisdom from below, he's meaning not just the earth, but even under the earth.

It's earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. So what does earthly mean? It's worldly. It's restricted to the here and now.
It's limited in its perspective. It's limited to the things that we can observe. And so this earthly wisdom says things like, it's not possible for God to have created.
All of this must have taken a lot of time to get this complex. That's a worldly, earthly form of wisdom. It's limited in its perspective. It's limited to the here and now, to the things that we can see and observe.
It's unspiritual, James says. This wisdom desires and loves and is interested in a lot of things with no reference to God, without a thought of who God is or what He wants and desires.
[23:13] and He says, thirdly, it's demonic. It's hellish. The source of this wisdom is Satan and his demons. And so Satan wants you to believe that God's Word cannot be trusted.

And as he tempts people to believe that, he's wanting you to trust His Word. So Satan's message is God's Word can't be trusted, believe mine. There's still a message that has to be believed, a message that has to be received.
He just doesn't want you to accept what God has spoken. And so James says that this wisdom is earthly, unspiritual, and demonic.
But here's the catch. The people that have this kind of wisdom always think it's their own idea. The people in possession of this wisdom think they're the brilliant ones, think they're the creative ones, think they're the ones who are powerful and influential.
They think they're the brilliant ones who came up with these lies. And so it's like someone stealing your joke. Like you say a joke with your friends, no one hears you, your friend next to you repeats it, everyone laughs, and they take credit for it.
[24:30] And you're like, you loser, that wasn't your joke, that was mine. That's kind of what these people are doing. This wisdom doesn't originate with them. It comes from the world. It comes from Satan and his demons and they take credit for it.

They boast in it. So I think a good example of this in our world today, there are churches that will believe all kinds of lies.
And so there are churches that will be affirming of homosexuality, the LGBTQIA++ whatever movement.
they will say, you know, let's be affirming of this, let's welcome them in, let's give our stamp of approval on things like this because we're called to be loving.

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And they think they're being inventive, they think they're being loving, and this is just a worldly form of wisdom, this is not from God. And there are churches all over the place that maybe it won't go that extreme, but will adopt all kinds of things from the world as if they're a good idea and it's just wisdom from below.
[25:41] This wisdom that James is talking about is evil, but sometimes it's hard to recognize. You think about Eve in the garden, she was tricked by the serpent.

Satan is crafty, Satan is deceptive, but his message hasn't changed. His message to Eve was God's word can't be trusted.
God doesn't have your best interest in mind, he just doesn't want you to be like him. God is the one who's selfishly ambitious, God's the one who's jealous of what you could become. You can't trust his word, trust mine instead.
His message and his method have not changed. Now why does James speak so harshly about this? Why does he speak so directly about this wisdom and calling it demonic?
Well, look at its results. Verse 16, for where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, okay, these two things we've been talking about, where those things are, there will be disorder and every vile practice.
[26:47] Absolute chaos will break out in a church that accepts these two things. And so, if you think about the book of Judges, at the end of Judges, there's a lot of horrible things that are described in the book of Judges.

At the end of the book of Judges, it says, there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. And so, everyone was just free to do whatever they wanted and it led to chaos, it led to a hectic living situation, it led to evil, it led to darkness.
And if a church embraces this kind of false wisdom, and if individual church members are only willing to think of themselves, only willing to think about what they want and what's good for them in their individual life, all hell will break loose in that church.
That church will be divided, that church, there will be hatred in it, there will be gossip, there will be slander, there will be bitterness, there will be jealousy. It would be like having a band director that's like, hey, you guys, just do whatever you want, it'll be fine.
That's not going to lead to anything good, that's not going to lead to anything beautiful or helpful or presentable. It's going to be chaos. And James says, where these two things are, it's chaotic, it's disorderly, and there will be every vile practice.
[28:03] Bad thinking leads to bad living. That is always true. And so bad thinking in a church leads to a chaotic church. And when there's chaos in the church, when there's bad thinking in the church, there's an unlimited amount of sin that can take place.

There's almost no limit to the extent of their evil. It truly is chaos. And James says, every vile practice will be there. This is true of churches.
This is also true of individual Christians. And so if someone claims to be a Christian and claims to be wise, but their life is marked by self-centeredness and pride and jealousy and arrogance and worldliness, they're unsaying with their life what they claimed with their mouth.
They claim to love Christ, they claim to follow Him, but they're unsaying those things with how they live. That's the wisdom from hell. Anyone enjoying James?
He does not hold back because he's very, very direct in what he says. But there's another kind of wisdom and it leads us thirdly and finally to wisdom from heaven. We see this in verses 17 and 18, a wisdom from heaven.
[29:24] And he gives seven characteristics of this godly wisdom, seven characteristics of this wisdom that comes from God or comes from heaven. And again, James is more focused on what wisdom does rather than what it is.

And so here are seven results that this godly wisdom produces in someone's life, in the life of the church. Verse 17, but the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, and sincere.
True wisdom comes from God. And so he says in chapter 1, verse 5, if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault.
And there's a striking contrast here between the wisdom from hell and the wisdom from heaven. The wisdom from heaven is like a, just a tranquil river.

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It's quiet, it's peaceful, it's life-giving, and the wisdom from below is like a rock band. It's loud, it's chaotic, it's crazy, no one, a part of it, looks like they should be within 150 feet of a school, like it's just chaos.
[30:41] Chaos is erupting. But the wisdom from above is, James says, first pure. That means it's uncontaminated, it's unpolluted, it's good.

And then it's peaceable. It gets along with others. It lives life well with other people. And there are some people that drama just seems to follow them everywhere they go and it seems like they're always the victim too.
Everywhere they go, they cannot get along. There's just head-butting that takes place. There's no peace. But James says the wisdom from above is peaceable.
It's gentle. It's not combative. It's not aggressive. It's considerate. It's open to reason. It's willing to listen. It's approachable. It's coachable. It's willing to learn from others.
He says it's full of mercy and good fruits. It's willing to forgive and it's productive. It's willing to forgive and it gives life.
[31:43] It leads to growth. And then he says it's impartial. And so it doesn't play favorites like he talked about in chapter 2. It doesn't cater to the rich and mistreat the poor.

And then lastly, it's sincere. It's truthful. It lacks hypocrisy. And I want to consider this in light of something that Paul wrote.
So save your spot here in James 3 and go back to Galatians chapter 5 with me. In James chapter 3, James is talking about wisdom.
He talks about a wisdom from the world and a wisdom from heaven. And Paul talks about something very similar but he's going to use different terms. He's going to talk about the works of the flesh and the fruit of the spirit.
But you get kind of a similar vibe in both of these categories to what James is talking about. So in Galatians chapter 5, pick up with me in verse 16.
[32:50] Paul says, but I say, walk by the spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. So the spirit and the flesh are the two categories he's thinking in.

For the desires of the flesh are against the spirit and the desires of the spirit are against the flesh for these are opposed to each other to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the spirit, you're not under the law.
Now here we go. The works of the flesh are evident. Sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.
I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.
Against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Verse 25, if we live by the spirit, let us also keep in step with the spirit.
[34:07] Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. And so you can see these two categories. James calls it wisdom from hell. Paul calls it the works of the flesh.

James calls it the wisdom from heaven. Paul calls it the fruit of the spirit. There's a lot of similarity between these two things that are described. And so going back to James, we can say that worldly wisdom produces chaos.
Heavenly wisdom produces peace. Worldly wisdom produces chaos. Heavenly wisdom produces peace. And that's how James concludes in verse 18.
It's a little bit confusing at the first reading, but I think his point is clear, so I hope I can help you understand this. Verse 18, a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.
So this section of James where he's talking about good wisdom is very similar to the beatitudes that Jesus tells in the Sermon on the Mount. So when he says blessed are the meek, blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are the merciful, and one of the things that Jesus highlights is he says blessed are the peacemakers.
[35:20] Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God. And so James is highlighting that wisdom from God produces peace. It produces harmony in friendships.

It produces harmony in relationships. And so what James is saying here is that those who are wise are peacemakers. They make peace.

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peace. And so those peacemakers, they sow the seed that leads to an abundance of righteousness. And so people who make peace in the church, they're planting seeds that in the future are going to lead to righteousness for them and for others.
And when James talks about righteousness, he's talking about righteous acts, a righteous life. And so what he's saying is that the peacemakers in the church, those who are wise according to God's standards, through their actions will lead themselves and others to more and more righteousness as they go on in life.
They'll look more and more like Jesus and help others around them do the same. The wisdom from hell makes us look like Satan. The wisdom from heaven makes us look like Jesus.
[36:32] And he is the wisdom from heaven. Paul in 1 Corinthians 1, we looked at it in Sunday school, it's he became to us wisdom from God and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

And Colossians 2, Paul also says that in him are the fullness of the treasure of wisdom and understanding. And so we need to ask God for true wisdom.
He's the source of good wisdom. And this wisdom from God produces humility in us. Wisdom from God produces humility in us. And one more place I want you to go, go with me to Luke 18.
Luke 18. True wisdom produces humility. And we see a great example of humility in this story that Jesus tells.
It's a made up story. It's a parable. But it accurately reflects what was truly going on. And so Jesus was always talking against this group called the Pharisees.
[37:40] They were self-righteous. We could say they were jealous and ambitious, to use James' terms. And Jesus tells this story to humble them, to show them that they're wrong.

And some of the people that the Pharisees hated the most were tax collectors. These Jewish people who had turned their backs on the Jews to work for Rome and work for Rome's IRS to collect taxes from their own people.
They viewed them as traitors. And Jesus is going to tell this story of a Pharisee and a tax collector. And so let's read in Luke 18 starting in verse 9. He, that's Jesus, also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and treated others with contempt.
That's the kind of person James is talking to. You're mistreating the poor and you're proud and jealous and ambitious. He says, two men went up into the temple to pray.
One a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed, God, I thank you that I'm not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.
[39:01] I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I get. But the tax collector standing far off wouldn't even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast saying, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

I tell you, this man, the tax collector, went down to his house justified rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.
Everyone in this room will be humbled before Christ. The question is, will it be willing or will it be forced? In humility, you can humble yourself before Christ tonight and ask him for forgiveness and submit your life to him, or you can continue to rebel against him.
But every day, you have a choice to submit your life to Christ or go your own way. We as believers want to have lives that are marked by submission to Christ.
And if you're not a believer, you can either humbly submit to him in this life or you'll be forced to recognize for all eternity that you were wrong.
[40:30] But either way, you will exalt Jesus. That's what Jesus is teaching here. If you exalt yourself, if you pride yourself on your accomplishments, you will be humbled.

But if you humble yourself, you'll be exalted with Christ. That's the hope of the gospel is that we will be like Christ is, not because of what we've done, but because he has been merciful to us.
Let's pray. Our Father, we thank you so much for our time together this evening. Thank you for the students who are here. Pray for the students who are not here that they'd be safe if they're traveling.
For those who are sick that you would help them be well again. Thank you so much for our time together shared around your word. I pray your word would convict and your word would produce fruit as you've promised that your word won't return void, but it will accomplish the purpose for which you sent it.

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And so we thank you ultimately for Jesus who you sent to save us from our sins and deliver us from our pride. And so we pray that we'd seek him every day of our life.
[41:38] I pray as students go to small groups that they would be helped by them as they consider some of the things we've looked at in the book of James. It's in Christ's name we pray. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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