

SERMON OUTLINE James 4:13-17

You Do Not Know What Tomorrow Will Bring

BY GOD'S DESIGN, THE WORLD WORKS IN FAIRLY PREDICTABLE WAYS (13)

WRONG PLANS FLOW OUT OF TRUSTING IN GOD'S DESIGN (14, 16)

You Do Not Know What Tomorrow Will Bring

Life Is a Mist

RIGHT PLANS FLOW OUT OF TRUSTING IN GOD (15)

Most of the Lord's Will Is Hidden from Us

All That Is Required of Us of The Lord's Will Has Been Revealed in The Bible

SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

MAIN POINT

This passage is about making plans. More specifically, this passage is about right and wrong motives behind making plans. Within that, the main point of this passage and sermon is that there is a critical difference between trusting in God's design for the world and trusting in God. James's readers were trusting in the former and James wrote this passage to rebuke them, explain why this was a problem, and call them to humbly repent by trusting in God instead.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What were your thoughts on the text/sermon? What most stood out? How was it helpful? Confusing?
2. What are the longest plans you've made that ended up working out? Likewise, what's the most frustrated you've ever been at well-laid plans getting fouled up (and what caused them to get fouled up)?
3. Which aspects of the rhythm of God's creation are you most in tune with? In what ways does that affect your life?
4. What kinds of things are you making plans for?
5. Do your plans stem more from trusting in the rhythms we've discovered in the things God has made or in the God who made those rhythms? Are they tied tightly to the commands and promises of God? Are you continually conscious of the awesome power of God, constantly at work to maintain the rhythm, or do you move to the rhythm unconscious of the one playing it?
6. Would you describe God's will as your delight? Why/not? How might you grow in this area?
7. Is it clear to you how God intends you to make plans in light of James 4:13-17?
8. In what way do you most clearly see the greatness of God in this passage?

AREAS OF APPLICATION

9. Try to identify a few aspects of God's predictable rhythm in your life (sunrise and sunset, gravity, hunger, etc.). Do your best to acknowledge God as Lord over them rather than simply being carried along by them. Consider Lamentations 3:22-24.
10. Make a list of the first five plans you can think of (vacation, Dr. appointment, shopping, retirement, etc.). Check to see how closely tied each of those are to the will of God (the commands and promises of God as revealed in the Bible). Change any of those plans that are not according to God's will.
11. Share the gospel with someone this week.
12. Begin, return to, or continue on with a Bible reading plan.
13. What is one specific thing you mean to do differently in the power of the Spirit as a result of the things you saw or heard in this text or sermon?

PRAYER POINTS

14. Adoration. Praise God for His sovereign governance of the world. Praise God for being orderly. Praise God for being perfect in His promise-keeping. Praise God for having a perfect will. Praise God for being eternal.
15. Confession. Confess any deistic planning you've done. Confess any planning you've done apart from the commands and promises of God. Confess any failure to plan for the things of God.
16. Thanksgiving. Thank God for His mercy and grace in Jesus Christ. Thank God for the gospel. Thank God for giving us His Word and therein the complete revelation of all that He requires of us. Thank God for James's letter.
17. Supplication. Ask God to rescue those who are not yet trusting in Him. Ask God to give our entire church a distaste for plans that are not according to His will. Ask God to give us the wisdom to make the right plans regarding future staff, building needs, and church planting. Ask God to strengthen His Church around the world in her planning.