

Draw Near

[Jas 4:8-10 ESV] 8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

I. Intro

- A. Speak on Seder service, financial reporting in bulletin, and Boston partnership/mission trip
- B. Continuing through the high points of this chapter in James
- C. Last time: Submit, Resist, Victory
 - 1. Submit to God
 - 2. Resist the Devil
 - 3. Walk in Victory
- D. This weeks key words: Near, Cleanse, Mourn, Humble, Exalt

II. Text

- A. Draw Near to God, He will draw near to you: promise
- B. Cleanse your hands, you sinners: only possible through the shed blood of Jesus by faith
- C. Purify your hearts, double minded: only possible through continued discipleship and connection to the body.
- D. Be wretched...: the view we should have of our past life, die to self
- E. Humble yourself: an act of responsibility
- F. Before the Lord:
 - 1. the closer you get to our Lord Jesus, the more humility you will have.
 - 2. You will see His sacrifice as the only one worthy to be called sacrifice
 - 3. You will find JOY in HIS presence
- G. He will exalt you
 - 1. Exaltation is not our business
 - 2. We trust HIM

III. Points

- A. Don't forget where you came from
 - 1. What you were, is a part of the story of God's grace
 - 2. What you were is in the past, once you were forgiven:
 - 3. Forgiveness:
 - a) [Mat 6:14-15 ESV] 14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.
 - b) [Psa 103:11-12 ESV] 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.
 - 4. New Creation
 - a) [2Co 5:16-17 ESV] 16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.
 - b) Newness in Christ is for you to become, because of the work of Christ.
 - 5. What you once were before Christ has been replaced by a new reality that IS Christ in you!
 - 6. When you think about where you came from spiritually:
 - a) Recognize the beauty of the rescue
 - b) Understand the supernatural transformation that has taken place
 - c) Don't go back, don't glorify the past, and don't wallow in the past.

B. Don't stay where you were

1. The Biblical truth of dying to self is all over this text.
2. [Eph 4:20-27 ESV] 20 But that is not the way you learned Christ!-- 21 assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. 25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. 26 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil.
3. You were rescued for a purpose, and that purpose is God's.
4. So many believers live in the past:
 - a) Many only speak of how defeated they are, and if they don't speak of it, they live like it.
 - b) Many are stuck in the miry clay of regret, but Christ is the rock your feet should be set on.
 - c) Many others only speak about God's work that happened 20 years ago, also missing the joy of relationship.
5. A healthy view of the past:
 - a) Understand the past
 - b) Move past the past
 - c) This grows your humility and positions you for walking in victory.
6. [Col 3:9-10 ESV] 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

C. He will exalt you, in His time

1. Exaltation will come:
 - a) From Christ alone
 - b) Only after humility
2. Victory is a Spiritual Reality
 - a) Our state of victory is based upon our relationship with Christ by grace through faith
 - b) Understanding the victory is a matter of discipleship and continued faith.
3. This is truly a walk of faith:
 - a) When we desire for our circumstances to change, but God has not changed them, we trust the Lord
 - b) When we want to see God do His work in us, but our requests seem to go unanswered, we trust the Lord
 - c) So, know that God is always at work ELEVATING our dependence on Him, and this is the battle of the spiritual man in the carnal flesh.
4. I was speaking to a pastor this week:
 - a) He was struggling with what He needed to do regarding a budget deficit
 - b) He was coming up with all kind of ideas about how to remedy the situation
 - c) And I had the opportunity to explain what happened last year at NP.
 - d) We were in a spot, we prayed and fasted, God brought a victory in His time.
 - e) We had to walk by faith, and use the tools of the spiritual world, rather than our own cunning.

IV. Close

- A. The point: DRAW NEAR
- B. The Method: Prayer, fellowship, worship, study
- C. From a humble heart and spirit