

The Meekness of Wisdom

James 3:13

Introduction:

- A. James deals with overly ambitious, self-seeking, would be teachers in chapter 3.
 - 1. He is not discouraging qualified teachers in the church (cf. Heb. 5:12; 2 Tim. 2:2)
 - 2. They were like kids all wanting to be pitcher or quarterback in sandlot games.
 - 3. James reminds these self-seeking teachers of three facts.
 - a. Teachers have greater responsibilities – more too it than “limelight.” (v. 1)
 - b. The ease of offending with the tongue (vv. 2-12)
 - c. The wise need to be governed by the “meekness of wisdom” (v. 13; cf. 1 Cor. 8:1)
- B. James then contrasts two sources of wisdom – beneath and above.

Discussion:

I. The Wisdom from Beneath (vv. 14-16)

- A. Characterized by “bitter envying” (of another’s good fortune, ability, position, etc).
- B. Characterized by “strife” or “self-seeking (NKJ), or “selfish ambition” (NIV) or “faction” (ASV)
 - 1. Such prevents us from being of “one mind” (Phil. 2:1-4)
 - 2. Such is not the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5ff)
- C. Characterized by the earthly, sensual and devilish (v. 15)
- D. Produces confusion and every evil work (v. 16)
- E. The would be teachers who thought of themselves as wise were being governed by this wisdom.

II. The Wisdom from Above (vv. 17-18)

- A. Makes purity the top priority - “first pure”
 - 1. Moral, doctrinal and practical purity of the church comes first.
 - 2. No room of yielding here – not even for the sake of peace (Gal. 2:5; 1 Cor. 5:7)
- B. Makes peace next in order after purity is insured (Rom. 12:18; 14:19)
 - 1. Peace requires gentleness (cf. 2 Tim. 2:24; Gal. 6:1)
 - 2. Peace requires “easy to be entreated” or “willing to yield” (See NKJV)
 - 3. Peace requires fullness of mercy (Jas. 2:13; Matt. 5:7; 23:23)
 - a. Willing to give a benefit of a doubt.
 - b. Willing to make allowances, grant exceptions and consider extenuating circumstances.
 - c. Even in sinful matters exercise longsuffering and forbearance (Rev. 2:21 asv)
- C. Makes our lives be full of good fruits.
 - 1. Without partiality (cf. Acts 10:34,35; Gal. 3:28)
 - 2. Without hypocrisy – “what you see is what you get”
- D. Makes us peacemakers rather than peace breakers (v. 18; cf. Matt. 5:9).

Conclusion:

- A. There is only one thing more important than peace - purity.
- B. Was no room to compromise as to the need for teachers – room to compromise as to who teaches.